



The Church of Bangladesh

NEWSLETTER

● Newsletter ● March-April Issue 2020 ●

Volium 2

Gospel in Actions to Respond COVID-19

MESSAGE

from the Moderator



Dear Mission Partners, Development Partners and Friends,

Warm greetings to you all from the Church of Bangladesh.

Being the Moderator I would like to thank you for your generosity and solidarity amidst the worldwide same pandemic situation, towards the Church of Bangladesh. Referring from the Bible, James 2:17 "So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead. **"Gospel in actions to Respond to COVID-19"** was my appeal to you all. Some of you have responded with a little or big and some couldn't but have sent prayers and valuable advices to overcome the present and the post Covid-19 situation. Well, we are very happy with the both responses at this moment. But one thing I must apologize to you all that "What I did, I did mistake; I really made you inconvenience since the same has been exacerbating in the worldwide till now and I suddenly gone back in asking the relief/ generosity from you for the distressed, struggling, starving and suffering people on the humanitarian ground in Bangladesh; since the situation of our country is different than the western, it will be due to the same pandemic, pestilence and nightmare COVID-19! I shouldn't be doing it again! I have received many good

advices from many others; which perhaps more valuable contribution to avoid our future dependency. But I am so thankful to those who followed my appeal that sometimes the Gospel should be taken into action; only showing solidarity and prayers sometimes do not work at all. A Bengali famous poet, Sukanta Bhattacharya, once stated that, **"In the realm of hunger, even the full Moon gives a feeling of a piece of Chapati to a hungry person"**.

So, perhaps you may be happy to know (yet to accomplish) that how sincerely, dedicatedly, transparently the team members that I have formed to go ahead with the appeal into action, responding to the COVID-19 were! And for this I just thank God for them! In this NEWSLETTER issue you will find the news, reports, pictures of their wonderful works and dedication towards helping these suffering and struggling people in countrywide by your generosity that you made for! And you shall be astonished that how the local parishes and our institutes alongside responded and even helped and worked in collaboration with the Bangladesh Government their little! So, although I also don't like relief giving but in this pandemic situation what they have set (the CoB offered herself to the nation what she has!) example too we should appreciate and encourage them for their coming up for the humanity and for the country and have made the CoB missional! We shouldn't be going back to the relief dependency but should encourage people to stand up on their own feet and adopt the advices of the experts to solve the post economic fragile and recession would be greatly emerging shortly! The COVID-19 really has taught us many practical lessons to respond in action for the humanity and for spiritual lives to be transformed indeed! Which Bill Gates describes "whereas many see the COVID-19 virus as a great disaster, I prefer to see it as a Great Corrector!"

Let me conclude my message with what Pope Francis said in this Easter vigil in an almost empty St. Peter's Basilica, focusing his homily on Jesus' message of hope and gift of courage due to "The conviction that God is able to make everything work into good".

Blessings!

The Most Rev. Samuel Sunil Mankhin
*Moderator & Bishop of Dhaka Diocese
Church of Bangladesh.*

Church of Bangladesh and Diocese of Singapore are working together for 160,000 Bengoli migrant workers in Singapore through the Project 'My Dorm Our Home'.



The Most Revd. Samuel S Mankhin

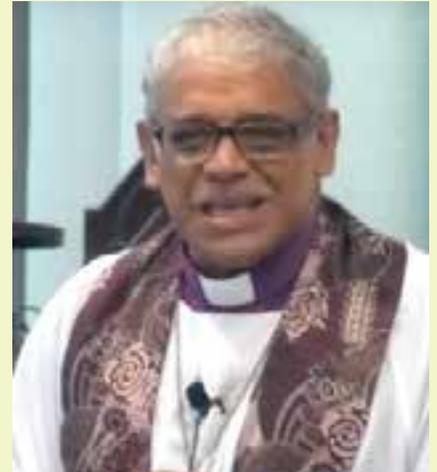
'My Dorm Our Home' project is to strengthen the communal and social emotional resilience of over 160,000 migrant workers (MWs) in Singapore's dormitories during this COVID period and beyond. The project plans to address this concern by supporting Dormitory Room with online programmes to help foster social cohesion within the rooms. We hope for outcome is their social bonding growing beyond the period of the 'circuit breaker'. Church of Bangladesh will lead the work with

a local production company. The work of the teams involves adapting existing programs or developing new content ranging from personal skills development, English lessons, to music and art etc. in order to facilitate group interactions within the room.

The Primate of Church of Bangladesh (CoB) Rt. Rev. Samuel Sunil Mankhin has come forward to work hand in hand with the Diocese of Singapore based on the request from Rt. Rev. Rennis Poninah of the Diocese of Singapore. The Most Rev. Samuel Sunil Mankhin is also the Secretary of the Global South Anglican in the Primates Steering Committee.

Convenor of the Special Appeal Project Gospel in Action, Mr. Paul Subrata Malakar and Moderator's Secretary Mr. Prodig Chand Mondal will act on behalf of the CoB from end of this April 2020 till next six months and support the Diocese of Singapore with their expert team in Bangladesh to achieve the ultimate objective of the project.

The Mission development Director,



Rt. Revd. Rennis Poninah

Operational Head and other experts in Singapore are jointly working together on how to help the people who are in home quarantine in Singapore. Rev. Lewis Lew is the Associate Director of Missions. He is executing this project with a working team. Col James Tan is the Head of Operation of the Diocese of Singapore Missions Department. He is heading the working groups to produce the content for the three languages.

STAY HOME



STAY SAFE

All government instructions will be followed.

- Maintain social distance of two meters between each person
- Wear a mask when you go out
- Wash your hands with soap for at least 20 seconds after handling anything
- Try not to touch your face, eyes, or nose. Disinfect your phone when possible and before holding them to your face.

Online Sunday Service and Message from the Revd. Duncan Dormor, General Secretary of the USPG



We are very happy for the special message from far away, Rev. Duncan Dormor, General Secretary of USPG, London in which He shared a special sermon for Sunday Service for Kushtia Diocese. We are so grateful to USPG for their heart for the Church of Bangladesh as well. We want to express our appreciation with thanks to our

Jesus wanted to say here that he went to the disciples' home and began to serve them and proved the servant leadership among them.

friend Mr. Davidson Solanki, Regional Manager, Asia & Middle East who has arranged this opportunity of listening to and watching this sermon. We have not translated his sermon thoroughly but requested our local worshippers to understand to the sermon with patience which is very relevant to our present context. This helped us to know deeply about Jesus through it. The main theme of his sermon has been taken from the Gospel of Matthew from where the disciples were going on the way of Emmaus village but they did not

recognize Jesus. But Jesus was behind them and Jesus himself was, and He was talking with them. He went to their homes and prayed for them, thanked and took the bread and then the disciples were able to recognize Jesus and became very glad to know Him and believed that our Savior Jesus Christ was with them and He has risen indeed. The disciples were afraid of recognizing him. We also fail to recognize Jesus in our lives in fear. What is happening, what happened, they lost faith.

We are also afraid of Corona virus. In the midst of the fear, the resurrection of Jesus is observed- what is the significant meaning that can bring in our lives today, Jesus wanted to say here that he went to the disciples' home and began to serve them and proved the servant leadership among them. He is the host and the disciples became guests. He served food for them.

In our lives; entertaining is the great quality as God himself served us as host. Jesus called children, sinners and served them food. Living from far away how we can entertain one another and come forward to each other need, we need to realize and we can learn through the life of Jesus Christ.

Synod Office Update

Daily activities depending on Zoom Meeting amidst in COVID-19

According to the guidance of the honorable Moderator, Church of Bangladesh, the Most. Revd. Samuel Sunil Mankhin, Zoom meetings were held during April and May 2020 in Lockdown and which were hosted by the Moderator's Secretary and Synod Office Admin, Mr. Prodig Chand Mondal and most of the senior high officials felt their interest and participated in different times. The Heads of different ministries/project/CMCY/Shalom joined to discuss on the burning issue of COVID-19 and how we could respond and work from home due to lockdown by Government of Bangladesh to take actions for not spreading the COVID-19 pandemic to the society. The Synod level staffs and respected Diocesan Bishops also joined the meeting, they are the Rt. Revd. Shourabh Pholia, Bishop of Barishal Diocese, Bishop Hemen Halder, Kushtia Diocese, Mr. Lorance Mondol, Synod Treasurer, Mr. Ronan Gomes, Director of Shalom, Mr. Tarun Mondol, Director of CMCY, Mrs. Monita Mankhin, Synod Education Coordinator, Mr. Paul Subrata Malakar, Head of MSP4, Mr. Philip Mondol, Programme Coordinator of Health and Swarupantor Programme, Mr. Timothy Tuhin Karmaker, Synod Accountant, Mr. Shyamal Sarker, Accountant of CMCY, Mr. Charles B Sarker from CMCY, Revd. John Probhudan Hira, Principal of the Saint Andrew's Theological College (SATC). The following matters are accepted as consensuses followed by the discussion in those meetings:

1. Shared how we will spend time with family and situation due to lockdown and office closed.
2. Planned how to respond from the local Church and combat the challenges that had been created by the COVID-19.
3. Followed up the ongoing assignments for the project by the Convener, Mr. Paul Subrata Malakar and Co- Convener, Mr. Prodig Chand Mondal.
4. Prepared the Concept Notes and Project Proposal and implementation guidelines to respond staying at home as team.
5. Sent the above documents to the Mission, Development and Global Partners/Friends to respond for meeting the specific needs of the victim of the COVID-19.
6. Received feedback from the Mission, Development and Global Partners and shared by Mr. Prodig



Chand Mondal with the team members and Diocesan Bishops.

7. Organized a zoom meeting in social media how to respond the affected people for our Church members and neighbors from the received fund for COVID-19.
8. Prepared draft Format for data collection and disbursement formats, guidelines in Bengali and English and shared with the Diocesan Bishops, and Synod Operational Committee under the leadership of the honorable Moderator, Church of Bangladesh how to implement those fund to the local level.
9. Received feedbacks from the Synod Operational Committee and Diocesan Bishops to prepare the criteria for the distribution of the fund in the local Churches through the deaneries.
10. Shared the timeline and some strong policies when to hand over the materials or cash to the affected/ needy people under the jurisdiction of the Church of Bangladesh.
11. Sent the Forms to the Diocesan and all Synod Operational Committee to check it and got the comments for finalizations.
12. Agreed to work on the implementation guidelines for the distribution by the Diocesan Bishops and Synod Operational Committee.

Diocesan bishops are the responsible persons to implement the project and will be working with help of deaneries' deans for the collection of the prescribe forms, within the specific timeline by following the guidelines and selecting policies which designed by the Chief Executive Officer, Synod Operational Committee, Church of Bangladesh.

SHALOM... a development organisation of Church of Bangladesh

Response to COVID-19 pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic is overwhelming and excruciating for many people in the world and feeling of utter helplessness in the face of widespread suffering and hardship. This is a novel crisis in our modern world where low-income countries are at high risk for their livelihood and food security. Middle class family members are taking two meals in a day and most of the low-income family finished their household food within a month of lockdown. Projection says that poor people will die of starvation. Shalom has taken some initiatives to aware beneficiaries about COVID-19 virus. Staffs are doing awareness activities by following Governments/WHO guidelines and instructions. Simultaneously our dedicated team members succor through the community and distributing leaflet, medicine for leprosy patients, hand sanitizer, arranging video shows, installed hand wash plant, and food support activities.

What SHALOM have done so far on COVID-19



Leaflet Distribution

SHALOM has distributed awareness leaflets with the targeted beneficiaries for preventing Corona virus outbreak and make the people aware of the disease. They described how Corona virus spreads, how to maintain social distancing in the community, how to protect the infected and widely took part in the community people.

Video Documentary Display

We enlightened beneficiaries by showing video documentary about corona virus, its affect and impact.



Sanitizer Distribution

SHALOM distributed healthcare materials in the targeted family and distributed sanitizer, soap, mask and described how to wash hands and maintain social distance in the community.

Hand wash plant Installations



SHALOM has installed 20 hand wash plants in several important public places such as fish and vegetable markets, hospital, union parishad, where people are washing their hands with soap.

Every day Shalom's helping 1600 people to prevent Corona virus through the hand wash installation activities. Our main focus is "To increase hand wash practice among community people in order to prevent Novel Corona transmissions".

Food and medicines Support activity

SHALOM has already distrusted 500 food packages among 500 most vulnerable families as an emergency response. Each package carried 10 Kgs of rice, 2Kgs

Respond from Director for COVID-19

The COVID-19 situation has evolved further and we are dealing with a significant global challenge where life has changed drastically. SHALOM has already been working closely with its entire partner to support the destitute & vulnerable members as they can live & continue their livelihoods. We incorporate Corona virus responses in all of our communications and programs, efforts moving forward to supporting those needs will have to address the threat of this new disease.

SHALOM has already been working with community members to support most vulnerable people through awareness program (e.g. Leaflet, Video Documentary), Wash and Livelihood Activities (e.g. Sanitizer Distribution, Hand Wash Plant Installations, Food Support Activity). I would like to recognize in particular our frontline colleagues – their commitment and dedication towards the community people and staying beside them by taking the risk of their own life is remarkable.

I also appeal you to help and support our emergency activities, so that, SHALOM can work to prevent a worst-case scenario, mitigate consequences of a devastated livelihood and alleviate the upheaval felt within our community.

Ronan Gomes
Director, SHALOM



of pulse, 3 Kgs of potato, 2 Kgs of onion, 2 liters of soybean oil, 6 pieces soap, salt, some necessary medicines and vitamin tablets.

Government administrators, Church of Bangladesh and people's representatives were present at the emergency response program

Entire emergency response program was performed by following social distance and government's guideline.



CMCY Christian Ministry to Children & Youth Response to COVID-19

The children are totally in lockdown at home:

The management of the CMCY has closed its hostel. The management of the CMCY has closed its hostel programs and have sent the children to home to stay with their parents to avoid the Corona virus infection.

For Corona crisis, the poor parents are living in miseries and severe poverty with the children for lock down situation. The education of the children is greatly hampered, even they cannot feed them properly, in resulting-distressing, mental agony and indifferent towards life.

The school exam will be held in next June, 2020, therefore, it's a big challenge to the children to sit in the coming exam. To this situation, the office management has distributed cash gift delivery with taka 2000 each children in saving the life of the children on the consequences of COVID-19.

The local priest, committee members, church leaders, helped the project in-charge to distribute the cash relief smoothly. Moreover, the local church run clinics also helped the children to get health treatment and education. Now all the children are safe from the devil covid19 by the grace of God.



Cash delivered at Home of Bethany CMD Girl's Hostel, Bollobhpur



Cash delivered at Dhamshor Boy's Hostel



Cash delivered at St. Mary's Girls Hostel & St. Andrew's Boys Hostel, Haluaghat



Cash delivered at St. Philip's Boys Hostel, Dhandoba



Cash delivered at Usha Children Village, Edilpur

Distributed food packages and sanitizers to the Children's doors



CMCY responded to the COVID-19 during the lockdown situation and 25 projects were closed including residential hostels, vocational training centers and daycare centers with 3500 children and their families. The projects had taken active initiatives on building awareness on Covid-19 prevention for Children & their families through communicating over phone, delivering message, leaflets distribution and telling them how to use hand wash, face mask & hand gloves, maintain social distancing and staying at home etc. Food packages and cash gifts were delivered twice among 2300 children and parents through compassion projects in cooperation with the Compassion International Bangladesh (CIB). CMCY has the future plan to give cash gift delivery to the Hostel Children & their parents from our own budget. We are assuring safety for our children and families by staying at home in cooperation with all project in-charge and project managers from the terrible consequences of Corona- virus pandemic crisis regularly.



Message from the Director, CMCY



The Savior Lord Jesus Christ has commanded us to take the Gospel to the poor-irrespective of caste, creed and religion, aiming to establish His kingdom, righteousness and justice. In addition to that, we know the faith is dead without actions, here action is very important to all of us in keeping the faith alive, with this end in view, and the CMCY desperately has been doing some development works for the needy and the poor children and their parents during the consequences of COVID-19 pandemic crisis. This time is very awesome; nobody can save us, but only the merciful Lord Jesus who is our past, our present and our future, so we completely depend on Him for our safety, peace and existence.

Let us propagate the Gospel through positive actions that will bring love, joy, peace and prosperity for all creation in the society.

Sincerely yours,

Tarun Mondol,

Director, Christian Ministry to Children and Youth (CMCY)



Swarupantor training programme held in Khagrachori District



evaluation on the training were given by the participants about the learning and they were agreed to exercise the Swarupantor process and Bible study in a regular way in the Churches and communities after returning home and Church.

Area Coordinator, Mr. Bijoy Dhamai conveyed his thanks to all participants for their valuable time and active participation in the training. The training was ended off by Rev. Promosh Chambugong with his prayer and blessings.

Swarupantor training was held on 1st March, 2020 at St. Joseph Church, Geriful, Khagrachroi with Church Secretaries, Church leaders and Catechists from five local Churches. Rev. Promosh Chambugong, Mr. Philip Mondol, Mr. Bijoy Dhamai and Catechist Mr. Ripon Roy were present in the training.



Rev. Promosh Chambugong reflected on the main theme and it is- 'Walk in the light of Jesus (John 1:7)'. He says, "We as believer in Christ, we need to be like light by reading God's Word regularly, walking in the light of Jesus for bringing transformation in each life in order to enlighten in the darkness".

Programme Coordinator, Mr. Philip Mondol facilitated the training and explained how to lead Swarupantor Bible Study groups in the Church

through different lessons and examples based on Swarupantor process. The participants were well motivated and learned how Church people can find resources within themselves where to use those resources for bringing out the changes and in order to be self-supported and become spiritually enriched in the Church and community.

Mr. Ripon Roy and Mr. Bijoy Dhamai communicate with the Church leaders and Catechists and encourage them continuously those who come from the local Churches in Khagrachori district. The feedback and



**Use mask and
Maintain social distance of two
meters between each person.**



Response from the St. Thomas' Cathedral for COVID19

The St. Thomas' Cathedral too had done the services through live streaming and helped the poorest in Dhaka by distributing cash (since not possible to buy things in lock down) for the 25 poorest families of Cathedral, Kalachandpur and Tongi Parishes in Dhaka BDT 50,000.00 (Fifty Thousand) from the Cathedral Parish Fund what so far



the Cathedral Parish has collected till now from regular offerings and deposited in the Bank, nothing left in the Bank now, with the following teaching of Jesus in Matthew 22:37, You shall love your neighbors who are hungry for food in this pandemic time "with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind". The Cathedral Parish believes that they will again receive the blessings from God and He will fill up the emptied fund.

Blessings

Rev. Simson Mazumder

Chaplain, St. Thomas' Cathedral
54, Johnson Road, Dhaka-1000.

Good Friday Online Service from St. Thomas' Church, New Center, Moghbazar, Dhaka!



Activities and ministries of our Church (like Bible School, Women Fellowship and Youth Fellowship) are remain closed due to the global pandemic and outbreak of the COVID-19 and whole country lockdown. Our Church members/ devotees are participating in every week on Friday at 8 a.m. and Sunday at 6 p.m. through online services from every home. Besides, there are many family prayers are being held each day in different homes of our Churches from 6-7 p.m. In this way, we are conducting services in each parish under Dhaka Deanery. Church is communicating with the believers regularly through the social media and phone. Each member of the Church is healthy and safe till now. There are some families of our Church who could not work outside are going through the financial crisis due to the lockdown and outbreak of the COVID-19. Those who are financially stable in the Church are being requested to support those disadvantaged families to help them. Church also is supporting them in many ways according to their ability. We hope that more information will be shared from our Church in the future. We are planning to do some things for those who are suffering in our Church because of the pandemic of the COVID-19 and we urge you to pray and raise your helping hands for the affected people in our Churches.

I appreciate your prayer and work to tackle the pandemic of the COVID-19 and to be with the victims who are in need as a Church.

Rev. Immanuel Mithu Mollick

Dean, Dhaka Deanery
Church of Bangladesh

St. Andrew's Church, Mirpur Online Worship Service

We are working from our home even in lockdown. Many things God has opened and unlocked and to do new ways within lockdown i.e. family prayers, proclaiming Good News through online, renewing whole creations. It's high time to changing hearts of the people to come back to God, to hearing His voice and doing His will to love human being and care His whole creations. Many things the World has learnt from Corona Virus that



money, power, wealth are noting before God and His Creations. God and His Living Word is the way to renew relationship with family, Churches, nations and world. God's love is the way, to love each other and change the world. After the Government declaration of lockdown since 25 March onwards, Parish Priest with his family and Saint Andrew's Theological College-SATC Seminary Students have been leading online worship services on Holy Week, Good Friday and Easter Sunday with the help of our Catechist Suvojit Mondol to proclaim the Gospel and to reach out to the people through FaceBook Groups.

Our SATC Students led prayer, fasting during the lent Season and also are combating against the COVID-19 where there is no medical facility for the Corona Virus affected people. Moderator Rt. Revd. Samuel Sunil Mankhin. We collected lent collection with the help of Church members through

bKash. We are really thankful and grateful to our Church members for their generosity and kind help especially to our Catechist Suvojit Mondol who was rendering all services through his mobile and Bkash during the time of lockdown and extended their hands to the needy people.

We have been praying and communicating with our church members, women fellowship, external students and friends

through phone, text messages, email, messenger, whatsapp etc. We are giving encouragement not to be scared but to face the challenges with awareness and prayers by faith in God. Our honorable Church members are also sharing time to time information, concerns in the groups for the awareness, prayers, motivational and inspirational video clips to give hope and strength in this time of uncertainty and pandemic of Corona virus.

of COVID-19 Pandemic and bless and touch us all with His wounds in form of healing this world to help and encourage all people in prayers to stand firm in faith to tackle the challenges of the Corona Virus in Bangladesh and World as well.

Sincerely yours,

Rev. John Probhudan Hira

Parish Priest, St. Andrew's Church and Principal of the Theological College, Mirpur, Dhaka.

Food distribution



St. Andrew's Church, Mirpur, Dhaka



St. Andrew's Church has provided the packet for the 40 needy families of Mirpur & Kalachandpur Church by raising fund from the Church members and distributed rice, lentil pulse, potato, onion, flour, oil and soap and also helped other

deaneries from our limited sources to the affected people amidst in the Lockdown.

COVID-19 is a great disaster of the world at the same time it has given us many learning to come back to God and bringing change in our daily life style. As a result, people are staying at home and leading simple life by avoiding luxurious food habit, praying as a family, listening word of God, praying through connecting with each other in groups, helping each other, helping the needy people by sharing their resources, doctors-nurses-police-army, government officials specially medical department have been giving their whole hearted service even life.

May the joy, peace, glory and new life of the message of Easter brings "Wholeness and Fullness of Life" even in the midst of fear, uncertainty

Among the needy families of Haluaghat Deanery



Rev. Bhanu Chisim, Dean of Haluaghat Deanery arranged the food distribution on 23, 24 & 25 April, 2020 at Monikura, Chinabill and Rangrapara areas of Haluaghat among the needy people in Haluaghat through St. Andrew's Mission by collecting donations from Church members, individual, family contribution, offering and lent collection. The food like pulse, oil, potato, soap, and cash were distributed among 57 helpless families in those places. We are so grateful to those who offered money and supported in many ways to be with the poor people in their crisis during the pandemic outbreak of COVID-19



Let us come and extend our helping hands for the needy people.

Senior Nurse and staffs are continuing their clinical services for rural people due to **COVID-19 at Barujani clinic.**



Sister Jorila Chiran is checking pressure a woman at the clinic

Senior Nurse and staffs are continuing their clinical services for rural people due to the pandemic of COVID-19 at Barujani clinic. There are many poor and underprivileged people especially children and mothers who get treatments like blood pressure, sugar test, testing fever and weight measuring by our Barujani clinic, Nalitabari, Sherpur. Nurse in Charge Sister Jorila Chiran is very dedicated and working hard to serve the rural women and children through the clinic. Sister Jorila is serving tremendously with the health worker and staff for the rural people who come with different physical issues at the clinic. The clinic has limitations (PPE) to provide necessary services by the Nurse and staffs to serve people from its own resource when people come for the treatment from different villages. Clinic needs support to provide the daily treatment for the people, let us keep them in our prayers if possible; raise our hands for the clinic and staff to continue their service for the people with their recourses through the clinic.



Wash your hands with soap for at least 20 seconds after handling anything.

Message from **Bishop of Kushtia Diocese**

If one of you says to them, 'Go in peace; keep warm and well fed,' but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? (James 2:16, NIV)

I trust everyone is doing well by the grace of Almighty God in spite of COVID-19 Pandemic.

Let me begin by saying I am impressed with the ways in which people have responded so far to the restrictions we face due to COVID-19. Here in Kushtia Diocese the people are united in one God, His Son and Holy Spirit and we are asked to perform online services during this year Holy Week, Good Friday and Easter Sunday. We beg mercy to our heavenly Father. So far I knew all the priests who are having technology with adequate speed to run Facebook Live, YouTube, have been trying their best to telecast the online service with prepared sermons for the worshippers.

I am also trying as many as possible to publish our messages and update to the lay people so that they can be connected accordingly in Christ.

That being said, for many of us it is not easy as we enter into the seventh week of being at home. I am not going to come up with any slick ideas about how we deal with the situation.

For those of us who are finding it hard, my words will probably not be very helpful.

I like to tell that this is the most unusual Holy Week and Easter we have already passed. For me it means less rush than usual and more time to reflect on the stories which made up Jesus' last week-His teachings-The Encounters He had in the Temple-The Last Supper and on into the Passion.

Again, I recognize that for me that pandemic is relatively easy. There are five of us in the house, and we can talk to each other. There are no unsettled or anxious children wanting our attention.

This time to reflect has made me ask if there is a need to re-orient after the restrictions are lifted. Can we easily slip back into the way things were? Will something have shifted at a deep level in all of us?

Please be assured that I am praying for you every day, praying that God will come close to us, and praying that he might change us. I ask for your prayers

"I firmly believe that God is larger than this dreaded virus as other people state. However, I request you everyone to stay home until Government has withdrawn its directives.



We beg people to understand the severity and the seriousness of this, because people are saying it's not just about us, it's about everyone around us. I pray for our poor hard working people who have been exhausted with their capacity to afford their families. They are staying home because they do not have work outside. They need to earn but there is no ways open for them. The opportunity has been compressed for the virus. However, through a special appeal, 'Gospel in Actions to Respond COVID-19', our honorable Moderator has been raising financial supports from the local and global mission and development partners. I thank all the concerned mission partners who are trying their heartfelt supports though they are in the worst situation. We pray for their good health and peace for His Kingdom. In fact, it's not an easy status quo, but the people that are standing with us made it a little bit easier to get through it.

I may also request you to:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Use a hand sanitizer only if soap and water are not available.
- Avoid touching your eyes, Nose and mouth.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when coughing or sneezing.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces like your cell phones, computers etc.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Avoid contact with sick people.
- Avoid non-essential travel.

Blessings!

Rt. Rev. Hemen Halder,
Bishop of Kushtia Diocese

Christian Mission Hospital, Rajshahi Responses to COVID-19 Pandemic



At present the world is heavily afflicted as it is passing through an unprecedented time, due to a sudden pandemic caused by COVID-19. This is a tiny organism, a novel corona virus, originated from animal species sometime in last part of 2019 that started attacking people in Wuhan city of China in last December, which ultimately took the shape of an epidemic killing huge population there and that later spread to other parts of the world including Bangladesh. The city of Rajshahi in Bangladesh is also passing through this critical juncture of time due to Corona virus. This has left humankind to a fight against an unseen enemy that proliferates in several proven forms to clinically attack people in everyday life at every place. For long decades the Christian Mission Hospital (CMH) Rajshahi has been running as Missionary Charity under Church of Bangladesh (COB) providing clinical care and support for people in health needs, but due to this changing situation, the Christian Mission Hospital (CMH) now has to respond to needs of the humanity. And that was really a huge challenging time for CMH in the month of April 2020. This is a shift of priorities for CMH no doubt.

Corona Situation

By now COVID-19 has taken the shape of a pandemic worldwide. As per latest WHO report, more than three million people came out positive of Corona virus and over two hundred thousand people were killed worldwide till today. The disease COVID-19 is now in more than 200 countries. In Bangladesh, the first COVID-19 case was confirmed in last part of March 2020 and since then the countrywide cases have been swelling in number, till today, to 13,770 with 214 people being killed so far by this deadly disease. In Bangladesh the virus has spread to almost all districts, to almost all nooks and corners. It is said that there is community transmission of the disease now. As per IEDCR report the countrywide news cases identified per day range between 600 to 800. In Bangladesh, the district of Rajshahi is not a heavily stricken one, like Dhaka, Narayangonj and Gazipur. In early April, new Corona virus positive patients started to be identified in Rajshahi, but they were said to be migratory people coming to this locality from Dhaka and Narayangonj. As per report till today less than 26 confirmed cases have been found in Rajshahi district as on 9th May 2020. However, some people are coming with clinical symptoms similar to Corona symptoms and they are being tested. Considering

this changing and deteriorating scenario, the higher government authorities of Rajshahi district started taking pre-cautionary measures, since mid-March in a way to fight against corona virus. Like in any other part of Bangladesh, the measures here included promoting social distancing, closing all market places, shutting educational institutes, cancelling public transport, etc.

A generalized panic started developing among common people since then and they started use of face masks when they were outdoors. With upcoming threats the Rajshahi Authority declared full lockdown of the city in beginning of April.



Getting preparation to serve people with well PPE for the affected people at CMH, Rajshahi

A Call from Government Health Sector

Since the beginning, the government health sector at Rajshahi, working to make adequate plans for taking appropriate preparations to face local Corona virus situation, was also grossly concerned. They thought to intensify their efforts.

In early April 2020, the government health official at Rajshahi made a call to the Church of Bangladesh (COB) to come up and work side by side with the government to participate in the countrywide COVID-19 health services. The government in particular chose Christian Mission Hospital (CMH) Rajshahi because of its suitable location and spacious capacity and wanted it to be directly involved in Corona Care Service at Rajshahi, as a part of Rajshahi Medical College Hospital. Christian Mission Hospital for the COVID-19 Center in Rajshahi This request was quite sudden, a bit 'unexpected' too, but indeed was a humanitarian call and a special opportunity for Church of Bangladesh (COB) to work for the country in the time of national emergency. And

immediately the Board of Trustees (BOT) of Christian Mission Hospital Rajshahi stood out positive to respond to this call. It was a very timely and crucial decision, taken by Church of Bangladesh (COB), to allow CMH hospital to be COVID-19 Centre and to collaborate with the government.

Activities of CMH in April 2020

In line with the CoB decision above, the month of April 2020 for Christian Mission Hospital (CMH) Rajshahi CMH was a period for transition and adjustments in Bangladesh context of Corona virus situation. From beginning of April, the CMH activities included

- Series and rounds of talks and discussions with government health officials, in line with above priorities
- Gradual closing of hospital's ongoing health services, like outpatient department, inpatients, maternity service, orthopedic, eye, ENT, general surgery, OT services, PHC, etc
- Informing the bonafide beneficiaries of CMH of the hospital's strategic move and finding alternative service avenues for them for their on-going care
- Infrastructural modification of the hospital to suit with upcoming COVID-19 program
- Designing the best security measures for the hospital, in consultation with the government health officials
- Orienting and training of the staff
- Paving the ways towards the final transition

Signing MOU with Government

On 15 April 2020 a formal Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between Church of Bangladesh (CoB) and the government of Bangladesh. On behalf of government Brig Gen Md Jamilur Rahman, Director of Rajshahi Medical College hospital signed it and on behalf of CMH Board of Trustees Mr Lorance Mondol, the Convener of



Local BOT Working Committee signed it. The MoU clearly specified about this collaboration with government that indicated Christian Mission Hospital Rajshahi to be running from 15 April 2020 under the supervision of Rajshahi Medical College Hospital as a Corona Care Unit. And this would go on as long as there is the need the collaboration in reality. The MoU with GoB has been translated into two practical aspects. The collaboration is solely for COVID-19 Programs, as a humanitarian response to the need of the people and the country.

The collaboration includes:

1. The whole infrastructural facilities of Christian Mission Hospital Rajshahi being provisioned for corona virus program
2. In addition 35 existing CMH staff to be working side by side with the government workforce in corona care

The Conclusion

This is a very big strategic transition for Church of Bangladesh (COB). With this Church of Bangladesh (COB)

has become the front-liner in fighting the pandemic disease of COVID-19 in Bangladesh. Among various church bodies and denominations in Bangladesh, Church of Bangladesh (CoB) is the only pioneer, as a faith-based organization, to such a bold initiative in such a bold move.

For Church of Bangladesh (CoB), this strategic transition is nothing but a support and involvement, though small, accorded from our side, to quickly end the epidemic COVID-19 in Bangladesh. This support truly aims at seeing the lives of the fellow countrymen being saved and making our fight against Corona virus being over. Above all, it is our efforts and an opportunity as well to proclaim the love of God, to glorify Him through our deeds in Bangladesh.

We would look forward to your continuous prayers for God's safety for Christian Mission Hospital staffs who are working in COVID-19 Program

Thanking you.

Dr David Khan
Medical Director, CMH

Nursing Institute, Christian Mission Hospital, Rajshahi as response to COVID-19 pandemic



Office Staff paying for Corona Situation

We are saved by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Our Institute is closed since 17th March 2020 that is why, only we are few people living in Nursing Institute since 24th of March 2020, our instructors are in home district, according to DGNM order, Instructors are not able to come back due to Government's order of general holiday until 15th May 2020. But two Instructors who are living in Rajshahi. Now they are coming office for some official works. At present in the month of April 2020, we have three students, two House Mothers and Principal, four Guards, four cooks, one Assistant Accountant, Cleaner, Office Bearer and also Office Assistant, we are doing Students License and other work in this Month. disease

When our Hospital is going to make Corona Unit by the requirement of RMCH and according to the permission by Moderator, Church of Bangladesh.

Then we tried to make clean all areas of Nursing

Institute, everybody shares their times to clean and disinfectant the areas. We set up more hand washing areas in front of main gate. We got more helps from director and management committee. We pray in our prayer room everyday by maintaining social distance with all our staffs and students. We are praying for our Hospital, our Communities, and Churches, Our Moderator, Deputy Moderator, Kushtia Diocesan Bishop, Priests, Doctors, Nurses and health care workers who are providing services to the affected patients of COVID-19. We pray in our room on holy day, Good Friday and Easter Sunday.

We are always trying to give support to hospital Admin Staffs and to follow the Instruction of Local Management Committers & Director. Our Nursing Institute cooks food for the staffs who are working in CMH for COVID-19 unit areas. Our Institute's driver also carries food for the workers where the quarantine place is located. Our guards are working for disinfectant the roads and other places where are needed to clean.

Thank you for your kind cooperation.

Nilsury Soren
Principal, Nursing Institute,
Christian Mission Hospital, Rajshahi

Against a background of Covid-19 in Bangladesh, Bollobhpur Hospital continues care of the community.



Nursing School: No patient has yet been turned away. But there have been changes. Nursing colleges across the country have like other schools & colleges been shut down & the students sent home. Not so Bollobhpur hospital nursing school. Bollobhpur hospital has a name for 'nursing care & this care' is given by our students, who teach to be go bedside, nurses among of the patients & on the wards.

With the advert of the 'Virus' our students understandably were worried & fearful. We sat down with them & their Madam Dr. Oishee Mondol explained carefully to them what the 'Virus' is & how to keep safe.

But nevertheless, on hearing that no buses would ply the roads for the next 15 days or more, 22 girls panicked, signed themselves out & caught the very last bus to their homes.

This happened a month ago & most of them are sitting at home, feeling foolish, & unable to return. It was a difficult situation for me too, I couldn't lock them in their rooms nor force them to stay & at such a time no one can give security for anyone else. We can just put everything in God's hands & trust him to keep us all well. But on the other side of the picture, a stalwart & dedicated group of students stayed behind & though small in number now are working cheerfully & tirelessly & we are proud of them.

Lovely comments could be heard as from a senior student- "How could I run away & leave those tiny babies in the incubators" & again from junior girls- "What would have happened to our grannies & granddad's in the G-ward (Geriatric ward) if we had not stayed to look after them".

They enjoyed themselves making a hundred & more masks on Binita's sewing machine & are all wearing masks as they work.

I am grateful to our Dr. Oishee & all our staff who keep solidly behind me, enabling the hospital to keep its door open for all who come.

Laboratory Students:

Unfortunately following a ring leader, one by one the students refused to handle blood anymore & have gone home leaving Michael on his own. Michael is working tirelessly & we are grateful to him.

Baby Care Unit at Bollobhpur Hospital

Despite the crisis in the country, ambulances have continued to arrive, sirens wailing, bringing tiny sick babies for care at Bollobhpur hospital.



The hospital now has a name for care of very sick babies & tiny premature babies & we are proud of this & happy to receive them. This month's prime moment was the arrival of an ambulance with tiny triplet babies. They weighed 1.6kg, 1.4kg & the tiniest 1.2kg, three boys. They have been with us for two weeks now, carefully looked after by our senior students & are doing well.

Several tiny babies were discharged well during the last month, to our joy.

The maternity ward is quite, few women coming for delivery, though the antenatal clinic is full of mother to be coming for check up.

We are obviously being careful & so far no patients with COVID-19 like symptoms have come our way.

Please keep us all in your prayer.

Sr Gillian M Rose

Director, Bollobhpur hospital

Message from Bishop of Barishal Diocese



Living in this present moment is crucial. Noticing each detail of my surroundings is owning where I am and who I am. During this pandemic, we pay attention to people around us, to tasks that need to be done, to sensible self-care. Today—this moment—is the moment the Lord has made. “And in this moment, I have everything I need.” Really—food, shelter, oxygen. But unfortunately for many it is a distressing experience of living in scarcity

and fear. This is the time we need to be Christ-like in our speech, thoughts and action. Jesus invested in people; he noticed them and paid close attention to them. Barishal diocese has been doing the same by paying attention to people’s needs, encouraging them and looking for opportunities to serve them. Since month of March the diocese has been creating awareness of the local communities through leaflet distribution and propagation about the COVID-19 virus and the prevention measure that can be taken locally. As the bishop of the diocese, I am in constant communication with the local administrative officers in Barishal & Khulna Divisions to ensure the church members are getting attention from the Government. All the local church ministers are given a guideline to follow during this pandemic. Most of the churches where it is possible to go online, they had live church services during the Holy week.

We are blessed to get some gifts from His Holiness Pope Francis, through the local Roman Catholic Diocese of Barishal. 29 families of St Peter’s church, Koligram, 30 families at St. Jacob’s Church and Chitalia have been benefited from this gift. I am also trying to raise fund from local donors to meet the needs of our church members who are affected by the lockdown and I am happy and grateful to all the CoB members who has spontaneously responded. The diocese is sharing its resources with

Blessings!

Rt. Rev. Shourabh Pholia

*Deputy Moderator & Bishop of Barishal Diocese
Church of Bangladesh.*

Foods were distributed among the needy families

We are blessed to get some gifts from His Holiness Pope Francis, through the local Roman Catholic Diocese of Barishal. 29 families of St Peter’s church, Koligram and 30 families at St. Jacob’s Church, Narikelbari and Chitalia have been benefited from this gift.



Clinic Based Community Health and Nutrition Program Responses to COVID-19 Pandemic

Activities of “Clinic-Based Community Health and Nutrition Program” (CBCHNP) has been started at five local church localities on 1st March. Dean of Khulna Deanery Revd. Monindra Boidya and Dean of Jobarpar Deanery Rev.

Revd. Santi Mondol inaugurated the clinics at their respective Deanery with the help of local priests. Priests of the churches, employees of the clinic and the key personnel of local churches were present on the occasion.

On 7th March Orientation Program of CBCHNP was organized at Meeting Room of Oxford Mission. Honorable Bishop of Barishal Diocese, Programme Coordinator Mr Philip Mondol, Area coordinator Mr Luke K. B. Sarker, employees of the clinic and the priests of the localities were present on the program.

To aware local people of our parishes, Barishal Diocese is leading an awareness program “Protection from Corona Virus” through leaflet and banner as a part of CBCHNP activities. These activities are ongoing and the priests of all churches also using the pulpit to spread the message and the Honorable Bishop is also constantly encouraging communities, staffs and the ministers through his ceaseless communication. We are extremely proud of our local congregations for their selfless contribution and effort to make their community a safe place.



Priest, Nurse and staff led the awareness through leaflet distribution

Visitors from abroad

The Revd. Dr. Canon Bruce Woodcock, Asia and the Pacific Partnership Officer The Episcopal Church in the USA who visited few parishes of the Church of Bangladesh in 2019



The Revd. Dr. Canon Bruce Woodcock visited Rajshahi Mission School last year in 2019.



From the Saint Mark Coptic Orthodox Church- SMCOOC of Egypt Fr. Demian, Fr. Augustine, Mariam Ayad, Marian Edward, Dr. Nabil Thomas, Dr. Yosef Yacob, Dr. Edward Ibrahim visited Madhupur Deanery and worked for local health care.



The missionaries called on the honorable Moderator Rt Revd. Samuel Mankhin at his Synod office located at 54 Johnson Road, Dhaka.



The missionaries visited Thanarbaid Clinic at Tangail District and were given traditional reception.