



SCJM Convent, Goalpara, Assam

'Quarantine Home'

"Whatsoever you do to the least of my people that you do unto me" (Mt. 25: 40)

The SCJMs in Goalpara, Assam was approached by the District Commissioner, Mrs. Barnali Deka, to see whether we could make available any building as a quarantine centre for the migrant workers as well as the students who were returning to their places from other states. We were more than happy to be of service in any way possible, to the suffering humanity. Shedding our initial fears and that of our neighbours, of the invisible virus, we took a leap in faith, and went all out of our way to be part of this work of mercy during this pandemic.

There are forty quarantine centres in Goalpara district. Our Parish Church campus is also one of the quarantine centre. The arrivals at our centre began on May 27 at 01.00 A. M. Our large bedrooms on the first floor of the Women's' Development Centre could easily accommodate 20 inmates at a time. Two women police personnel stay on the ground floor round the clock. Then there is a gentleman, a government school teacher, who is appointed as in-charge of this centre to see to all its needs. By agreement with the DC, ours is only a supervisory role. The duration for Institutional quarantine is seven days followed by another seven days of home quarantine. The first batch consisted of local students who were doing higher studies in different states of India. At present we have 20 married ladies and two children. Their husbands are quarantined elsewhere in the centres meant only for men.



On their arrival here, they are given a kit with all the essentials. Well prepared hot meals arranged from outside, are delivered to them on time every day. Teams of competent doctors visit them daily and provide them with good health care. But low and behold, on the 12th June, the third day of their arrival, one of the inmates was tested Covid positive and she was immediately shifted to civil hospital for better treatment. It was really scary news for the people of Goalpara town. The 13 persons who came in contact with the Covid 19 positive girl was required to remain in quarantine for another week. The rest of the inmates are doing well, but their inner most thoughts and fears are writ large on their faces.



On the completion of their stay at our place, they are allowed to take along with them all the articles they were using except the mattresses and beds. Before they leave the centre for home quarantine for another week, the back of their right palm is stamped with an indelible ink. At their departure they are provided with a sack of food materials like rice, pulses, vegetables, etc., for the duration of home quarantine. So far 42 persons have stayed in our centre. Since we are supposed to follow social distancing strictly, we do not have close interactions with them, but somehow a bond is established with all those who come and go. We pray for them and sent vibrations of Peace.

We are truly grateful to God that He gave us a modest opportunity to take care of them and place ourselves and the little space we have at their disposal.

Sr. Gladys Sandhu, Goalpara

