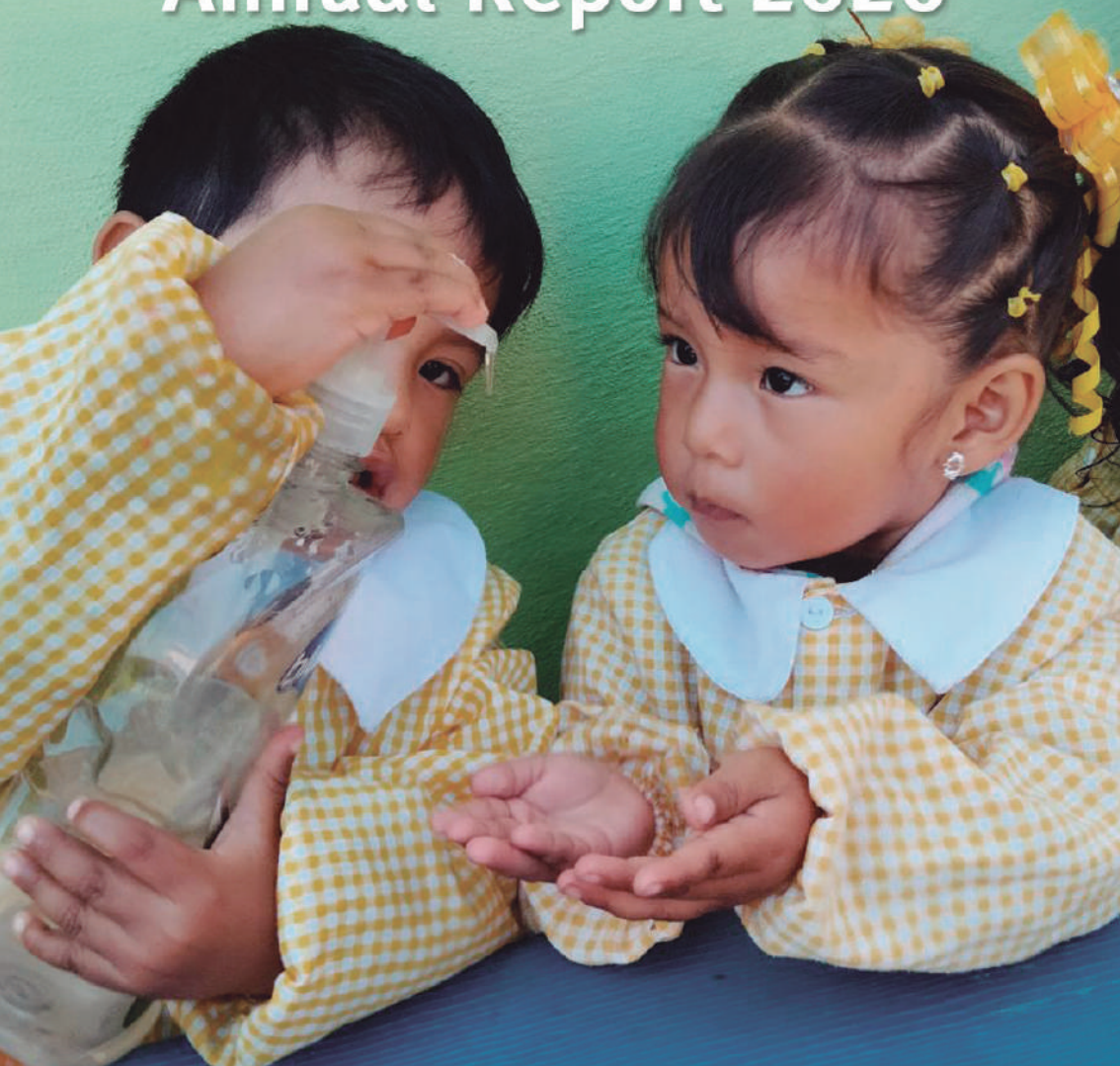




Community
of Saint Paul

Annual Report 2020



Introduction

The Community of Saint Paul (CSP) is a Public Association of the Faithful of the Catholic Church, comprised of priests and laity, both men and women. Our members are from Bolivia, Colombia, Spain, the United States, India, Kenya, and the Dominican Republic. Our headquarters are located in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, in the United States. We are also present in Mexico City, Mexico, in San Juan de la Maguana in the Dominican Republic, in Cochabamba, Bolivia, in Bogotá, Colombia, and in Meki, Ethiopia.



Community Life

In 2020 the Community of Saint Paul continued its presence in the various countries and dioceses in which it has been working over the last several years.

This year, two CSP priests had new assignments: Javier Guativa finished his term at Saint Lucy and Saint Sebastian parishes in Racine, Wisconsin (USA) and was appointed pastor of La Sagrada Familia parish, in Sabana Yegua, in the Diocese of San Juan de la Maguana (Dominican Republic).

On the other hand, Archbishop Jerome ListECKI, Archbishop of Milwaukee, temporarily released Michael Wolfe from Archdiocesan assignments to work full time for the Community. Consequently, at the end of his term as parish priest at *La Sagrada Familia* parish, he moved to Colombia to be part of the CSP pastoral team in charge of *La Resurrección* parish in Bogotá.

In 2020 the CSP members were in the following places: seven members in the United States; three in Mexico; six in the Dominican Republic; three in Colombia; three in Bolivia; six in Spain, and two in Ethiopia.

Community Activities

In 2020, Community life was affected by the coronavirus pandemic, due to the restrictions implemented worldwide to avoid contagion. The General Assembly scheduled for October had to be canceled, as well as intra-community and family visits.

Similarly, meetings with benefactors, the annual mission appeals, and missionary awareness visits in the United States were canceled.



Milwaukee, U.S.A.

The Archdiocese of Milwaukee (WI, United States) is the CSP headquarters. Its members live in Racine, in the Community's main house. All the CSP priests are secular priests of the Archdiocese. Five of them are ministering in different parishes within the Archdiocese, one is a pastor in the Archdiocese of México, one in San Juan de la Maguana Diocese, and two in the Archdiocese of Bogotá. In addition, Dennis Beltré and Denny Jacob, who are members of the CSP, continue their formation for priesthood at the Archdiocesan Seminary of Saint Francis de Sales. In August, the

Archbishop of Milwaukee presided the Eucharist in which both were officially declared candidates to the presbyterate, together with eight more seminarians.

The CSP priests in Milwaukee worked in the following parishes:

- Three-parish cluster of Saint Patrick (mainly Spanish-speaking), Saint Richard and Saint Edward, in Racine. The three parishes have around 2,600 families. Antony Thomas is the pastor, and Juan Manuel Camacho, the associate.



- Sacred Heart parish in Racine with 570 families. Ricardo Martín is the pastor.

- Saint John Paul II parish, in the southside of Milwaukee, serves 1,800 families, and it is mainly Spanish speaking. Esteve Redolad is the associate pastor.

Saint Patrick, Saint Richard, and Saint Edward parishes have a twinning partnership with *La Sagrada Familia* parish in the Dominican Republic, served by the CSP. Sacred Heart parish sponsored, in part, the CSP *Casa San José* in Cochabamba.

Academically, Dennis Beltré and Denny Jacob continued their studies at Saint Francis de Sales Seminary and José Mario Nieto his doctoral studies at the Catholic University of America in Washington D.C., with virtual classes because of the pandemic.

In Milwaukee, social restrictions to combat the coronavirus began in March. The measures included the closure of churches, social distancing, monitoring of attendance, use of facemasks, and hand sanitation. Despite these restrictions, the parishes were able to organize the following activities:

- **Live streaming Sunday Eucharists through digital platforms:** In May, the Archdiocese allowed parishes to open the churches with limited attendance, hand sanitation, social distancing, and mandatory face-mask. Sunday and daily Eucharists continued to be broadcasted.

- **Online Bible study workshops and talks**



- **Online first Communion classes**

- **Confirmation classes**

- **Celebration of first Communions and Confirmations,** following safety protocols

- **Distribution of food to struggling families from food pantries:** Saint John Paul II parish distributed eighty-five packages of food monthly.

- **Parish schools:** All virtual classes have continued at St. John Paul II parish school in Milwaukee and in-person and virtual classes at Racine parochial schools.

As per the Archdiocese's advice, Holy Week celebrations were canceled. In-person Masses began to be celebrated at the end of May, following safety protocols.



Bogotá, Colombia

The CSP works in Bogotá at the parish of *La Resurrección*, which includes the neighborhoods *La Resurrección*, Granjas de San Pablo and El Pesebre, in the Rafael Uribe locality in the south of Bogotá. The parish has a population of 20,000 people. These are working-class neighborhoods, and most of their inhabitants live without savings and many with informal jobs (streets vendors, temporary jobs, etc.). The lockdown and strict quarantine, due to Covid-19, left many households, vulnerable before the pandemic, in a situation of extreme poverty and want.

In March, the Colombian government declared a state of emergency, and all churches in Bogotá had to close down. In-person celebrations were canceled until September.

During most of 2020, the CSP members in Bogotá were Martí Colom and two young men in formation. In October, Michael Wolfe, a diocesan priest from Milwaukee and a CSP member, joined them.

In November, the Community of Saint Paul and the Archdiocese of Bogotá





signed a five-year agreement by which the Archdiocese entrusted *La Resurrección* parish pastoral care to the CSP.

Pastoral Work

Despite the quarantine, various pastoral activities could be conducted:

- **Livestream of Sunday Masses** through the parish digital platforms until September, when the Archdiocese of Bogotá and the mayor's office allowed the reopening of the churches, following strict biosafety protocols: registration of people attending, sanitizing, limited capacity to maintain social distancing, etc. Several volunteers in the three centers of worship

had to be organized to handle the logistics.

- **Celebration of Baptisms**, limiting the attendance to the parents and godparents of each child.
- **Virtual first Communion classes** for those with digital media in their homes, and first Communion masses following protocol.
- **Virtual Confirmation classes**. Some, without digital means, had to postpone their formation.
- **Daily live-streamed biblical message** on the Gospel of the day.

Social Work

- **Health Outreach:** In August, the CSP hired a nurse to conduct home visits in the parish territory, providing health care for the sick. Since then, she has visited almost a hundred people afflicted with various ailments (diabetes, hypertension, etc.). The nurse is also in charge of a newly established parish pharmacy, equipped mostly with donated medicines.

- **Food pantries:** Between March and December, some 3,500 food packages were distributed. The food was purchased, or donated by the Archdiocese of Bogotá's Food Bank and by other institutions.

- **Care to immigrants from Venezuela:** Many Venezuelan families who recently arrived in Colombia were hit by the pandemic and faced extreme vulnerability. Many received food and some financial aid for their rent to



avoid being evicted.

In March, the *Casa Garavito* community development center had to suspend most of its activities. Some however, could continue, and in fact, had to be extended over the months.

- **Sewing training center:** The lessons took place as usual but with smaller groups to maintain social distancing. Fifty women participated in five different groups.

- **Manufacture of facemasks and disposable medical gowns:** From March to May, the sewing center produced facemasks to be sold in the neighborhood. In September, a health service provider signed a contract with ten women to manufacture disposable gowns for medical personnel carrying out Covid-19 tests. These women used the facilities and sewing machines of *Casa Garavito* to carry out this IGA.

- **After school program:** A significant number of students in the area do not have internet in their homes. *Casa Garavito* organized a schedule for them to use the center's equipment and participate in the online classes. Thirty children participated in this program.

- **Psychological support:** The CSP hired two psychologists to continue offering support to those who requested it, one psychologist at *Casa Garavito* and the other at the *La Resurrección* parish premises. The confinement required during the pandemic caused stress, depression, and anxiety in numerous people. In 2020 the two psychologists assisted about sixty people.

- **College Scholarship Program:** The CSP helped 30 college students in their virtual training from March to November (when the academic year ends in Colombia).



Cochabamba, Bolivia

In Bolivia, the state of emergency for the pandemic was declared on March 21st, adopting various confinement and preventive measures that affected the development of the projects that the CSP is carrying out in Cochabamba.

Montserrat Madrid, Gemma Regales, and Aniceto Arroyo are in charge of the various programs carried out in the Archdiocese of Cochabamba.

Social Work

The CSP projects in the department of Cochabamba are carried out in two different regions: in the rural areas of *Independencia* and *Vacas*, and in the city of Cochabamba itself.

AREAS OF INDEPENDENCIA AND VACAS

Independencia is located in the Andes mountain range. The population is predominantly of Quechua origin and has preserved their ancestral characteristics influencing their community organization. With unpaved roads, people live scattered and isolated from one another with difficult communications. They are farmers practicing grazing livestock farming on a small scale. The economy is based on agriculture primarily for self-consumption, and a small portion is used for sale. The cash flow is limited, and trading is still common. Houses are in precarious conditions, built with mud, wood, and stones, with thatched roofs and dirt floors.

The COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 disrupted most day-to-day activities. Farmers were unable to sell their produce or buy essential supplies due to a shortage of transporters.



Without cash, many could not buy essential commodities (sugar, rice ...) and had to consume what they produced, being unable to save seeds for the following season as is usually done.

These are the activities that the CSP members, together with five other employees, have undertaken:

Health and environmental health

- **Program to Promote Health and Primary Care:** The program, operated by a nurse, served 311 people from eight rural communities in the municipality of Independencia. The program included:

- Basic hygiene and nutrition workshop in homes, providing 128 hygiene kits for COVID-19 prevention.

- Vision screening and providing of eye-glasses for 11 people.

- Referral to specialized centers in Cochabamba for medical attention.

- **Environmental sanitation project through the construction of adequate toilets** in three rural communities in the municipality of Independencia. With the assistance of a community representative and a builder, 76 bathrooms with toilets and hot water showers have been built, benefiting 467





people. In 2020 the community representative emphasized the implementation of measures to prevent covid-19 prevention during the in-home visits.

- **Drinking water supply for the rural population of Totorani in Independencia municipality:** This project included the construction of a water catchment network from six water sources in the upper area, a 2 km long underground pipeline, installation of de-pressurization tanks, two 8m3 storage tanks (one for each sector of the community), and the connections from the system to the houses. The pipeline is 3.5 km long. A builder and two assistants were hired for this project that benefited 328 people.

Empowerment of women

- This project benefited 138 women from 14 rural communities in the municipalities of Independencia and Vacas.

Although many activities were canceled due to the pandemic, some could still be implemented:

- Training in artisan textile production
- Training and orientation workshop on gender equality
- Training workshop in rural business management
- A group of five women with advanced textile artisan production level continued to make quality alpaca wool garments as an income-generating activity.

Childhood

- **Support of children and teenagers' rights,** especially those with disabilities, in five rural communities in the Independencia municipality, strengthening their social, educational, and cultural

ral integration. The project involves several educational and recreational activities at the Totorani Community Center. Through these activities, and besides the formal education, they have more and better learning opportunities. Thirty-eight children and youth (from 1 to 13 years old) and 12 parents participated in this project coordinated by an educator. The activities included:

- After school program with individualized assistance for students with difficulties in their classes.

- Study classroom and support in school homework.

- Setting a play and recreational area to stimulate their abilities to learn, to socialize, and to educate them on values.

From April to September, activities were suspended due to the government's measures to prevent the coronavirus.

Environment

- **Reforestation of pine trees and fruit-tree planting** in 18 communities in Vacas and in 12 communities in Independencia, which has benefited 201 families. The project included the following actions:

- Nursery management of pine and fruit trees.

- Adapting the approximately 192 thousand seedlings to the height and climate.

- Planting around 150 thousand pines on the families' land.

- Production and planting of fruit plants (papaya, avocado, custard apple, "banana passion fruit," watermelon, and melon) on the families' land.

- **Distribution of pantries and seeds:**

Since the State of Emergency declaration in Bolivia, car traffic was forbidden, and consequently, transport of the harvests was stopped. The continuity of their crops was at risk, and the families had to struggle to obtain food, as the distribution of essential products was interrupted. The program ensured food security for the families with food pantries and seeds and setting up of vegetable gardens for day-to-day consumption.

Cattle raising

- The program focused on **improving the local sheep breed** in 11 rural communities of Vacas and 12 in Independencia, with veterinary technical advice and the introduction of 50 specimens of improved sheep.

COCHABAMBA CITY

In Cochabamba, the CSP works with children and boys, from 5 to 14 years old, who were homeless or are at risk of homelessness. They usually are no longer in contact with their families and lived no more than six months in the streets. In exceptional cases, boys under five years are also welcomed if they have siblings at *Casa San José* to keep the family bond.

These children have not had some basic needs met, and, as a result, have serious physical, psychological, cognitive, and social deficiencies. Their

development is seriously compromised, and to address their problems requires intensive specialized treatment and specific programs for their recovery.

Childhood

- **Social insertion of children and boys through *Casa San José*:** The center temporarily shelters children and adolescents who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless, seeking solutions to their situation, so that they can be reunited with their families. In 2020, the center had 55 children and boys, and 144 relatives were involved in the process of being reunited with their families. Ten professionals worked at the center, including educators, psychologists, social workers, and adminis-

trative staff. Due to the pandemic, family visits were suspended. Still, children could communicate with their families virtually. In 2020 there was no coordination between *Casa San José* and other institutions as they prioritized the pandemic's emergency response.

Scholarship

- **Technical studies grants:** Twenty-eight students received their scholarships and were supervised through biweekly meetings. Due to the pandemic, classes were virtual for three months, but not all achieved their goals because of internet connection problems. Eight students in the program graduated: four in agriculture, one in industrial mechanics, and three in nursing.





Mexico City, Mexico

In Mexico City, the CSP works in two different neighborhoods: in Jardines de San Juan Ajusco, Tlalpan delegation, and in the territory that encompasses the *Rectoría de Nuestra Señora del Rosario*, located in the Álvaro Obregón delegation.

The CSP members in Mexico are María Ángeles Fornaguera, Pablo Cirujeda and Sarah Oduor.

RECTORÍA DE NUESTRA SEÑORA DEL ROSARIO

The parish includes around 22,000 people from five poor neighborhoods, with high population density, overcrowded conditions, scarce economic resources, precariousness, family instability, violence, and lack of development opportunities.

As of March, the rectory suspended all face-to-face pastoral services (liturgies, sacraments, ceremonies, and catechesis). Together with the pastoral council, the decision was made to establish a contingency pastoral team and to develop actions focused on assisting the population who were left with scarce resources and severely affected by unemployment and the cancellation of in-person classes at all levels.

Pastoral and social work from La Rectoría del Nuestra Señora del Rosario

Pablo Cirujeda is the *Rectoría's* pastor where the following activities were implemented:

- **Live streaming of Sunday Mass** on Facebook beginning during Holy Week.
- **Catechesis:** Combining outdoor in-person and live-streamed classes.



- **Celebration of 50 Baptisms**, limiting capacity to ten people per child.
- **Pastoral assistance to the homebound**, anointing of the sick, and supporting mourning families.
- **Distribution of food packages** to vulnerable families. Around 1,800 packages were delivered during ten months.
- **Distribution of hot meals**: Starting in April 2020, a group of laypeople in the community distributed hot meals every Tuesday and Thursday to almost 200 unemployed and homeless individuals providing more than 7000 meals in around 50 services.
- **Medicine bank**: The parish medicine

bank was reinforced, and it provided free medicines to nearly 3,000 people, including, in many cases, medical visits.

- **After school program** for 20 students, three volunteers offered extra classes and educational activities in the parish halls.
- **Support for access to online education** with donations of electronic devices for deprived families. Thirty-four devices (PCs, tablets, laptops, cell phones or televisions) were given to students.

All these initiatives were possible thanks to an extended network of volunteers, friends, and benefactors, who joined in solidarity to make a real and concrete pastoral presence possible in a year of many needs and challenges.



COLONIA DE JARDINES DE SAN JUAN AJUSCO

Jardines de San Juan (Ajusco) is a slum-type neighborhood located south of Mexico City, on the Ajusco volcano slope. It has an area of 31 hectares that were divided into 900 lots and distributed among the families. The community lacks essential services such as electricity, running water or drainage, and the streets are not paved.

Among the most frequent social problems in the area are overcrowding, domestic violence, alcoholism, and teenage pregnancies.

The *San José* Community Center for Childhood Development was built in

2005 on a property donated by the community, to serve mainly 1 to 6 years-old children, with a comprehensive kindergarten care program for 120 boys and girls.

Besides the children attending the center, around 3,000 people from the *Jardines de San Juan Ajusco* also are the project's beneficiaries.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Secretary of Public Education announced the closure of educational centers in mid-March 2020 to avoid contagion. The *San José* Center children remained confined at their homes without receiving the three daily meals from the center. Besides, the increase in coronavirus cases forced the weekly public



markets to shut down. Families struggled to buy basic food in the surrounding small shops due to the price increase and the growing unemployment.

San José center set up a response team focused on collaborating with the Jardines de San Juan community to face the coronavirus spread. They did this by distributing information and promoting proper hygiene practices about handwashing, maintaining safe social distance, and stressing the importance of wearing a facemask.

In 2020, a food pantry was launched for the 120 families who had their children enrolled in the center and could not attend due to confinement. Besides, sixty adults living in extreme poverty were also assisted.

Social Work

Àngels Fornaguera and Sarah Oduor are in charge of the work carried out in the *Colonia de Jardines de San Juan Ajusco*:

Community Center for Child Development, *San José*

The CSP runs the *San José* Community Child Development Center in *Colonia de Jardines de San Juan*, Tlalpan. The center has 16 employees, including educators, support personnel (cooks, caretakers, driver, secretary), and it carried out the following actions:

- **Preschool education, maternal care, nutrition, and child health.**
- **“Learn from home” program:** due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Ministry of Public Education (SEP) announced the

closure of educational centers as of March 14th. The students remained homebound with their families until December 17th. Unable to return to class, the teachers started the “Learn from Home” program promoted by the government. During this time of confinement, the teachers worked with the children through text messages, teaming up with the parents by sending and receiving homework and other activities to continue the school year. Many, however, were left out of the program since not all families have telephone and internet access. On June 5th, the government ended the “Learn from Home” program, and the teachers evaluated the children for two weeks.

- **Academic coaching and support** to the children in the Center during the new school year that began on August 24th. The government offered a nationwide program for primary and secondary education via tv and radio. As they continued school from their homes, the children still had the educators’ support through text messages.

- **Food pantries:** Since the pandemic began, the Center has distributed food packages, essential cleaning products, and protective facemasks to address this situation. The pantry helped the 120 families of children in the Center and 60 more families, some elderly and sick in the neighborhood, all in a vulnerable situation.



San Juan de la Maguana, Dominican Republic

La Sagrada Familia parish belongs to the Diocese of San Juan de la Maguana, is attended by the CSP, and serves around 30,000 people. The parish is partnering with the Archdiocese of Milwaukee, which provides staff and funding.

In mid-March, due to Covid-19, the Dominican government asked to close all churches countrywide and restrict parish activities, forcing the parishes to be creative, broadcasting liturgical celebrations, short recitals and reflections. The parish started a food pantry program to help the

most vulnerable and provided them with cleaning materials and medicines.

In August, Javier Guativa joined the CSP team and became pastor of *La Sagrada Familia*. The members of the CSP in the Dominican Republic are Javier Guativa, Dolors Puértolas, Yomaira Cordero, Indhira Bautista and Perla Abreu.

From the Archdiocese of Milwaukee, Father Thomas Naidu joined the parish as associate pastor helping in the pastoral and sacramental work.



Pastoral Work

Despite the pandemic, the following pastoral activities could be carried out:

- **Online Sunday masses**
- **Celebration of 97 Baptisms** with limited parish attendance
- **Celebration of 99 Confirmations**
- **Christian formation for 20 adults**

Social Work

These are the development projects in *La Sagrada Familia*:

HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT

A team of seven people carried out the following programs:

- **Health Center:** *La Sagrada Familia* Health Center offers medical consultations, lab tests, pharmacy, dentistry, gynecology, and a ten first-aid kits service for the remote areas. The Health Center was closed at the beginning of the pandemic, and only the pharmacy remained open. It was later reopened with the required safety and protection protocols.
- **Recycling program:** Despite the pandemic, plastics recycling continued in all seventy collection points, with weekly plastic collection from designated homes and public places.
- **Construction of latrines:** In 2020 thirty-five latrines were built, although, due to the pandemic and the Sabana

Yegua sewage system's extension, the number of new latrines decreased and were mainly built in rural communities.

EDUCATION

- **After school program for language and mathematics** for 140 primary school students. Students clustered in groups of 20 with 12 educators in different communities and in the educational centers during the first quarter of the year. As covid-19 hit the area, the program was suspended temporarily and resumed in September with 14 groups with ten students meeting at the educators' houses. The program was adapted to the new situation to ensure the children could continue to learn as the schools took time to reopen.

- **Adolescent pregnancy prevention program:** It was implemented during the first months of the year in the "Proyecto-4" secondary school but stopped due to the pandemic. By November, this time in the community of "Kilómetro 15," the program continued following anti-covid-19 measures with groups of 10 to 15 young girls.

- **Scholarship program for College students:** The scholarship program helped 51 students who continued their classes, adapted to the new situation created by the pandemic. Twelve of them received a laptop in December.

CHILDHOOD

- ***San Agustín, Divina Misericordia and Nuestra Señora del Carmen* children's centers.** The centers, located in Sabana Yegua, Alto Ganadero, and Los Negros, respectively offered preschool classes and food to 160 children from 2 to 5 years old. There

are 18 people, including educators and cooks and a doctor running the centers, carrying out the following activities:

-Preschool education: In March, due to the pandemic, the three centers had to suspend their educational work. As of September, the educators started classes again through cell phone applications and sent homework and activities to parents, so that their children would not lag in their learning.

-Regular medical check-ups for children.

-Distribution of food packages: Every two weeks, the children received a food package for themselves and their families.

SOCIAL OUTREACH

The parish offered social assistance to the most vulnerable population in the area thus:

- **Office of social assistance**, providing guidance and support to people experiencing various needs.
- **San José Board of Trustees** helping one hundred elderly with monthly pantries, basic medical assistance and celebrating significant events.
- **Distribution of food packages for Haitian immigrants.**

A total of 5,000 packages were distributed.





AGRICULTURE AND LIVESTOCK

• **Construction of a reservoir:** In 2020, with the support of Saint John the Evangelist Cathedral in Milwaukee and Holy Apostles parish, New Berlin, WI, La Sagrada Familia successfully concluded the construction of a 16,000 m³ reservoir for the farmers' association Felix Ortiz, with 45 members who struggled to obtain good crops due to the precarious water infrastructure.

Volunteers and visitors

• **Ophthalmological campaign** at the beginning of the year. The campaign, coordinated by Saint Mary Parish in Kenosha (WI) had 31 volunteers from Kenosha and the Dominican Republic. They performed 911 ophthalmological examinations and 89 surgeries.

• **Milwaukee Archdiocese Missions Office pilgrimage.** At the beginning of

March, a group of pilgrims from Wisconsin visited the parish to witness different activities and projects.

• **Fr. Mike Ignaszak:** A priest of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee and pastor of St. John Paul II parish, where the former and current *Sagrada Familia* pastors worked.

• **Bishop José Grullón:** From December 25 to 27, for the feast of the Holy Family, Msgr. Grullón, bishop of San Juan de la Maguana, conducted his yearly pastoral visit. Bishop José visited seven communities and celebrated 78 Confirmations. It was his last pastoral visit since the Vatican accepted his resignation in 2020. The community thanked the bishop for all his years of constant dedication to the Diocese. His substitute, Archbishop Tomás Alejo Concepción, took possession of the Diocese in January 2021.



Meki, Ethiopia

In Ethiopia, the CSP is working in the Dugda District, in the city of Meki, 130 km south of Addis Ababa, and its surroundings. Meki has approximately 43,000 inhabitants and does not have adequate public services, especially in health, educational services, power supply, and technological facilities.

On March 31st, Ethiopian health authorities confirmed the first positive case of COVID-19 in Ethiopia. Since then, the government has taken steps to control the pandemic. At the beginning of March, all educational centers were closed, reopening on December 7th.

Two CSP members live in Meki, María José Morales and Mònica Redolad, running the following projects:

Social Work

PROMOTION OF WOMEN

- **“Kidist Mariam” vocational training center for women:** The Center employed 29 professionals and since 2016 offers vocational training courses. The students are mainly young women who did not finish their studies or emigrants returned from Arab countries. In 2020, 217 women received





training, 92 of whom got employment. The courses offered included these:

- Cooking, hairdressing, and sewing course.
- Public services to provide Income Generating Activities for the center's maintenance: dining room, cafeteria, hairdresser, making and selling uniforms and clothing, manufacturing and selling reusable facemasks, and producing and selling local spices and handicrafts.
- Care to the most vulnerable population in collaboration with Meki's Municipal Departments of Family Welfare and Women Aid, distributing blankets and food, and repairing homes for families living in extreme poverty.

-Distribution of reusable facemasks in rural areas.

- **Savings groups:** 1,200 women participate in these groups that allow them to save money and have access to small loans to launch entrepreneurship initiatives. Through the groups, they also strengthen relationships based on mutual help and solidarity. There are currently 40 savings groups in Meki and four in other rural areas. Each group has 30 women. Five professionals coordinated the groups and the following activities:

-Meetings every other week, to make their financial contributions and debate and decide on the loans.

-Creation of 11 new groups in the rural areas of Sera Wokele and Wolde Haffa.

-Training courses for 256 women of 32 groups to learn about saving strategies and about the regulations to request and return loans.

- **Raising dairy goats in rural areas.**

The project started in 2018 with women from the savings groups. The goal is to raise milk-producing goats instead of rearing goats only for meat consumption. Currently, 220 participants acquired 474 goats, from which they obtained meat and milk for their own consumption and for the Kidist Mariam women's center, where it is processed and sold. With the help of 7 professionals, the following activities were carried out in 2020:

-Training for 98 new participants.

-Workshops about improving goats' milk production.

-Construction of goats' pens in the women's houses' plots.

-Distribution of two goats per person for 98 women.

- **Decrease workload for women in rural areas.**

This program aims to ease the transport of water, food, goods, and people for women living in rural areas by acquiring donkeys and carts. They can use the carts for their own needs and use them to assist others, thus generating some income. The program has 180 members who are given a donkey and a cart. With the benefit they obtain, they pay for the cart, and when the donkeys have offspring, they give them to other women to replicate the project. With the help of 3 professionals, the follo-



wing activities were carried out in 2020:

- Training workshops on how to care for and feed donkeys, so they perform suitably as pack animals.

- Delivery of a donkey and a cart for 40 women.

- **Creation of vegetable gardens.** This project uses the vegetable garden in the Kidist Mariam Women Center as a model and as an educational ground to train women to start similar initiatives in their homes. Three hundred eighty-two women have benefited. In 2020 with the help of three professionals, these were the activities carried out:

- Training courses on creating vegetable gardens with permaculture method (permanent crops), compost, and fruit tree nursery.

- Integration of agricultural practices with water and animal management to achieve adequate production according to family needs.

- Workshop on optimizing production: balancing family consumption, animal feeding, and compost production.

CHILDHOOD

- **Health and Equality classes:** In April, the government ordered schools' closure. The primary schools in the rural areas of Melka Oda, Gabra Fila and Meja Lalu, remained closed, but from January to March and then in December, the project could be implemented. The anti-covid19 protocols established by the government included student shifts in the morning and

in the afternoon, with a maximum of 25 students per classroom, one student per desk, and mandatory use of washable cloth facemasks. A total of 2,000 students could benefit from the program that employed two nurses and did carry out the following activities:

- First-aid care to the students.

- Talks on health care and disease prevention.

- Activities to raise awareness about prejudices and social traditions that negatively affect women.

- After classes resumed, the nurses gave talks on the importance of preventing Covid-19 at school, at home, and in their community.

- **Building and equipping four primary classrooms in the rural school of Melka Oda (Meki):**

- Construction of four new classrooms at the Melka Oda school to extend their education program with 7th and 8th grades and thus cover all primary education.

- Equipping the four new classrooms with 100 desks, blackboards, tables and chairs for the teachers.

SCHOLARSHIPS

- **Scholarships, uniforms, and school supplies** were distributed as follows:

- Kidist Mariam Women's Training Center: 38.

- Aid with uniform and school supplies for primary school: 60.



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