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Dear friends,

At this special, and unique time we are living in, God's church is not able to meet freely. It is not because of persecution, though it exists; it is not lack of motivation, though it exists. It is not because of man's ordinary choices. It is because an invisible "enemy", has arrived in this fallen world, and is moving freely, and recognises not human frontiers. In the case of Portugal in general and ourselves in particular, meetings had to be cancelled without time to give notice. We had made the plans to celebrate the 6th year of the worship place in Azoia, on 15th March. But it was on Friday 13th that we had to admit, it was a risk, according to the news about the danger of spreading the COVID-19, and with a unanimous vote we decided to cancel the celebration. The next step was to prepare a service, without people attending. In our particular situation, we took the advantage of the 5 years' experience of Filipe Rodrigues, teaching online, using Skype. A good number of the families adjusted to it, and a good number managed to get online. This last Sunday, people were better organized, and most of the church managed to get online. We keep the Sunday Skype, at the same time as the usual meetings. For the other days of the week, we send a daily meditation and meet by Skype, every night from Monday to Saturday. Every night we have a good response where people share their difficulties and opportunities. We organized the families of the church, and those more capable, are phoning those more isolated. For the most cases, the idea is to read the daily meditation and have a word of prayer and encouragement. We made a slogan: "Every home should be a church". We are experimenting a new approach that nobody planned, or even thought of. Nevertheless, things are moving forwards, and many are developing skills to counsel and minister to others in need of God's word.

So, in this new reality, we would like to highlight some matters for thanksgiving and prayer requests.

Matters for thanksgiving:

- We are, first and foremost, to thank God for his daily provision at such times as these we are living in;
- We are to give thanks for the fact, so far, no one among church membership, families and our neighbourhood has got Covid-19;
- We are to thank God for the many good opportunities He is giving us to witness to friends and neighbours;
- We are thankful for the spirit of unity and commitment to do good for the benefit of others; - On a personal level, Daniel Rodrigues had his oncology doctor's appointment last week and the good news is that according to the scan results, there is no evidence of the carcinoma he had near the jugular.

Request for prayers

- Ironic or not, in our last prayer letter we were asking for prayers concerning the church premises. Two weeks passed by, and we are making the best we can, for each and every home to become a church. I am not suggesting, we are giving up in the new premises, we are not, and we may be able to find a better price as a result of this calamity;
- For Elisa Rodrigues. Over two years, she has had 34 sections of five different chemotherapy treatments. Unfortunately, the results were not the best we would like to be. Though the marks of the tumour more or less had been controlled, the truth is that in the last five sections it gained resistance and gradually, has been

increasing the value marks. On 11th, she had another PET scan. On 25th she had an MRI. It is expected, decisions on any further treatment will be taken following the results and the mentioned examinations;

- Daniel Rodrigues, had good news about his health, and not so good news about his unemployment benefit. It was drastically reduced, and there is no work for him to go back to at this time. Things are difficult for him!

- We are keeping in contact still with Sandra and her 7-year-old son. They came to us for the first time at Christmas and they have come to us a few times since;

For those things mentioned, and for many others, we are, but thankful for your love and concern. Your prayers and support are means, used by God to strengthen and encourage us, step by step, to get this far.

Yours in Christ Jesus,

Pr.(s) Jose and Filipe Rodrigues



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