

“MY STORY”

Storytelling is common among human beings and, through story, people have been connected and are still connected to one another.

With the advent of Coronavirus in the world, people are forced to stay at home in order to curb the spread of this deadly virus. South Africa, not left out in the fight against the further spread of this worldwide enemy, imposed total lockdown on the whole nation on 26th March 2020.

Old and young had to remain at home behind closed doors. Movements were only allowed for essential workers and when people need to get their basic necessities from the shops. Many people became frustrated after the first three weeks due to the fact that they could not visit friends, go to work, go to worship places, shopping, relax at a park or have family or friendly meals at any of the eateries. Oh, how frustrating it was and still is because things are yet to go back to normal.

Desperate for connection with friends and family, human beings explore the use of technology more than ever. Social media has become the order of the day. Churches now have their Masses, services, and meetings, prayer groups, conferences and workshops online. The virtual world is buzzing with “online” presence.

Conscious of the age and time we are in with young people and technology, the Youth Department in an attempt to reach out to young people all over the Archdiocese, has partnered with an NGO known as “Heartlines”, popular for their different promos of “My Story”.

Many of the young people in the Archdiocese and, by extension, Gauteng, Mpumalanga and Free State had the opportunity to share their experiences of the lockdown – the implications it has on each of them both positively and negatively, the “Black Lives Matter” movement, gender-based violence, racism, and above all their faith and how they have learnt to worship God without gathering at their usual places of worship.

Furthermore, Heartlines’ act of kindness to the young by providing data to each participant made it very easy for the connections of young people to meet through Zoom. The meetings were a sense of relief for many of them as they shared in their personal stories and their wishes for the future of the church, country and their youth groups.

The facilitators of the sessions, Fana Ndlovu of Heartlines and Sr. Juliana Mary Abioye EHJ of the Youth Department of the Catholic Archdiocese of Johannesburg, made it very interesting and engaging for the participants.

We hope the fruits of these meetings will yield positive behaviour in the young participants, and that they will be the change they want to see in their families, communities, church, youth groups, nation, and the world at large.

These are trying moments for all. We strongly encourage each and every one to STAY AT HOME, observe social distancing, constantly sanitize / wash your hands. It is our joint effort to reduce the spread of this virus. It is our responsibility to stay safe and be responsible for the safety of others.

Lastly, family prayers are encouraged at these meetings to help us connect as people of God and see the good in others.

Sr. Juliana Mary Abioye EHJ