

Cartaxo,

Sometimes we run out of ideas and reach a point of exhaustion in the fight to understand how we can reach to the heart of the people here in Portugal. It looks like everyone is asleep and, no matter our efforts and creativity you will not reach the heart and soul of this generation. I have reminded myself many times of the words: "Unless the Lord builds the house, the builders labor in vain." I asked the He gives me the grace of finding a meeting point to call people's attention. God, sometimes, uses the circumstances to take us on another way.

Due to the current health and economic crisis which we find ourselves in, I felt the necessity to make a certain type of work of "making tents" in order to aid my financial support. That was when I had the idea of working with artisanal gastronomy, by selling jam, spices and sweets. I have been going to the Municipal Market of Cartaxo every Saturday in the morning to sell de produce I prepare. I was really



surprised with the reach of this type of approach. I have met people which I would not have the opportunity to ever do so if I was simply in the role of a missionary. I have acquired more credibility and attention among the community of Cartaxo, as well as a way to demonstrate respect and cordiality to salesmen and customers. I have also understood that with this type of approach people become more relaxed and friendly when compared to a more "religious" approach. Mr. António, Julia, Tatiana and Ana are some of the new friendships which I am establishing here in Cartaxo. Many appreciate the jam and sweets and I am anxious to tell my new friends that the Word is sweeter than honey.

Love breaks barriers! Ms. Maria José was very rude and would never have a conversation. Amid the pandemic I went to her flower shop and demonstrated empathy to her, and also bought a plant. In little time she started to talk to me in a much friendlier way, and I discovered that she loved to read. I have given or borrowed some Christian literature with the message of the salvation of Jesus. She has willingly accepted these books and has already read some. I continue helping Ms. Julieta weekly with grocery shopping, documents, health needs among other things. She was also someone who was very difficult to establish a friendship. For more than once I have talked to her about the message of Jesus Christ, however, she always demonstrates impatience. But I trust that God is preparing something special for Ms. Julieta and that the Lord will have joy in her life.



My colleague Pt. Adil is meeting with my younger sons in order to establish a discipleship. It is a very positive thing because there is a god interaction among the three of them and Gabriel and Quévin fell valued and encouraged with the figure of a spiritual leader. I believe that the two of them can become a great influence to reach friends of their age.

Thank the Lord that the coronavirus situation has de-escalated, and we can resume our presential services and planning reunions. On April 21 we will have a meeting with Pt. Fabiano Fernandes to talk about vision and strategy to watch the birth of more churches in the outskirts of Lisbon.
Pray with us so that God builds his work in the heart of the Portuguese and that our eyes may see it in this land.

In Christ,
Isabel Fernandes

