



### **A spiritual front-line service**

By Annick Boulet and Daniel St-Vincent

***Every Wednesday morning, about 150 of Actionmarguerite Saint-Vital's 154 residents "attend" Mass via a closed-circuit TV system, since COVID-19 precludes the possibility of Mass being celebrated publicly. Annick Boulet, the residence's Spiritual Care Provider, and Daniel St-Vincent, Resident Experience Manager for Actionmarguerite, explain how offering Mass in this way contributes to the quality of life of this confined community of the seniors in need of personal and long-term care.***

**Annick Boulet:** The vast majority of the residents at Actionmarguerite-St-Vital are devout Catholics. More than 95% of them are taken to the chapel for Wednesday morning Mass. Of course, since the beginning of the pandemic, there's no way to come together. But after we ran our new closed-circuit television system (CCTV), we were able to continue to offer this essential service.

**Daniel St-Vincent:** We had been planning to offer Mass and entertainment via CCTV for quite some time, because many of the residents have reduced mobility. In February last year, the system was installed in the chapel. And then the pandemic forced us to stop. The installation of cameras in the solarium, where entertainment events take place, had not been completed either.





**A.B.:** To ensure the safety of all, we follow a very strict process, approved by our health specialists. In the beginning, Father Alphonse Bongo of St. Eugene Parish was our celebrant. Now, it's his successor, Father Mudishi Kazadi who presides. The priest celebrates Mass alone, and I recite the readings. I take my lectionary and microphone with me. Father has his own microphone. We often disinfect our hands. And the host that the priest blesses and eats is never put in the ciborium, which remains covered. Father's host doesn't come into contact with the other hosts.

**D. St.V.:** Residents can see Mass in their rooms or in the dining rooms. The impact has been enormous. Since our residents receive no visitors, this spiritual service has boosted the morale of the entire community. Our residents feel listened to and respected. When we were putting together a CCTV system, we weren't thinking about a pandemic, but our timing has been impeccable.

**A.B.:** I would even say providential! What particularly touches me is the reaction of the residents when I bring them communion. Their faces light up. I arrive with a trolley with the covered ciborium. I open the ciborium with one hand, take the host with the other hand, and then close the ciborium. When I'm done, I wash my hands. So many precautions... but it's worth it! Residents count themselves lucky to receive the Eucharist in the midst of a pandemic. And when I see them so happy, I'm happy.

*Interview by Daniel Bahuaud, Communications Coordinator at the Archdiocese of Saint Boniface*