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Sr. Maria Bach Thi Tuyen of the Daughters of Our Lady of the Visitation, left, and her mother pay visits to their relatives and neighbors in Phu Cat commune in Hue, Vietnam, during this year's Tet or Lunar New Year festival. Tuyen works in Nha Trang in Khanh Hoa province. (Joachim Pham)

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By tradition, the Tet or Lunar New Year festival is a good time for people to live together in unity; express their gratitude to parents, relatives and those who have helped them; pray for ancestors; and visit friends, including followers of other faiths.

On the first day of the new year, which this year was Feb. 12, Catholics in Vietnam pray for national prosperity. On the second day, they pray for their ancestors, and on the third day, for good crops and jobs.

Sisters in Vietnam's central provinces of Quang Tri and Thua Thien Hue return home to welcome the new year, visit relatives and friends, talk about environment protection and religious life, and bring Christian values to others during their nine-day holiday. They returned to their convents Feb. 16.



Sr. Mary Duong Thi Nguyet of the Daughters of Mary Immaculate, right, who works at Kim Long Charity Clinic in Hue, Vietnam, and two friends offer incense



in front of an ancestor altar of a Buddhist family near her family's home in Quang Tri province. A local Buddhist family asked Nguyet to teach catechism to their daughter, who plans to marry a Catholic in the near future. (Joachim Pham)



Sr. Agatha Tong Thi Lien of the Lovers of the Holy Cross of Hue, Vietnam, center, attends a Tet fair at her home parish of Ngoc Ho. She offered prizes, including soft drinks, children's toys and chickens, for winners of traditional games at the fair. (Joachim Pham)



St. Paul de Chartres Sr. Trinh Thi Loan, second from right, and her mother and aunt visit and give gifts to her youngest sister, a Discalced Carmelite, in Hue, Vietnam. "Tet is a good time to express our deep gratitude to those who love and pray for our vocations," Loan said. (Joachim Pham)





St. Paul de Chartres Sr. Josephine Huynh Thi Ly, right, who works at Hue Central Hospital, and Buddhist nun Thich Nu Bich Mai pose for a picture at Tu Dam Pagoda in Hue, Vietnam. "I visit and give Tet wishes to my friends and staff members so as to promote solidarity among Catholics and Buddhists," Ly said. (Joachim Pham)



Sr. Mary Nguyen Thi Ngoc of the Daughters of Mary Immaculate, center, and St. Paul de Chartres Sr. Maria Le Thi Hoan visit a 90-year-old Buddhist woman and offer incense in front of the altar of the woman's daughter, who died of AIDS. "We try to console deprived people and help them integrate themselves into the community," Ngoc said. (Joachim Pham)





Sr. Mary Consolata Bui Thi Bong, former superior of the Daughters of Mary Immaculate, prays for her ancestors in front of her family's altar at Lai An parish. "We are not happy on this Tet because only a few of our cousins and relatives returned home to celebrate Tet due to the COVID-19 pandemic," she said. (Joachim Pham)



Sr. Maria Nguyen Thi Hong of the Daughters of Mary Immaculate, second from right, and two members of the state-run Women Association at Xuan Vinh commune visit Le Thi Huong, third from right, a widow with three children. Huong lost one ton of rice and five sows in the severe floods caused by several tropical storms in October and November. (Joachim Pham)





Sr. Lucia Truong Thi Ha of the Daughters of Mary Immaculate talks to couples celebrating Tet at Nam Dong parish about the prevention of disease caused by climate change. "I have nothing to give them but want to teach them how to look after their health," she said. (Joachim Pham)



St. Paul de Chartres Sr. Agnes Le Thi An shares her daily activities with women who are interested in religious life at Chanh Xuan parish. "I want to inspire them to find their real vocations," the nun, who is an expert in psychology, said. (Joachim Pham)

[Joachim Pham is a GSR correspondent from Vietnam.]

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