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IL RETTORE

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Initially, crises and tragedies throw us back on our heels. When we lean back into them, they often become the motors of long needed change. Covid-19 is one of those crises. It makes us reflect on our health care systems, our concerns about ecology, and our care for one another.

At the Pontifical Oriental Institute, a papal university in Rome, we had also been wondering how to put into practice the now famous statement on ecology by Pope Francis, *Laudato si*. Our friendship with Delos and its International Well Building Institute (IWBI) has enabled us to make concrete steps on both these fronts with already measurable results.

After several conversations with Delos and studying the benefits of healthier spaces, we decided to raise the health status of our building. Delos provided science-backed air filtration units and UV wands for the Covid-19 situation. We then decided to add high quality air conditioning to our classrooms to regulate both air temperature and quality. The air filtration units from Delos have already made a notable difference in our residence. People report sleeping better. We are aiming for the same level in our academic building.

The science on healthy buildings today is quite secure. We have done our own research which only underscores how thoroughly IWBI and Delos have done their work. So, with Covid-19 still threatening, there was no excuse for further delay. We have enrolled in the WELL Health Safety Rating program by IWBI. We are doing this for at least three reasons. First, we should. Health concern is human concern. Second, studies show that improved air quality and temperature control improves learning and general performance. In our case, this has proven to be true. Third, as a leading learning institution, we should be teaching by example. The Pope himself asked the church not only to talk about ecology but to act ecologically with human beings in mind.

Delos and IWBI have inspired us to turn the Covid crisis into an enduring health opportunity.

Sincerely,

(Rev.) David E. Nazar, sj
Rector

