

Living Hope in times of crisis

“By loving forces wonderfully sheltered, we are awaiting fearlessly what comes. God is with us at dusk and in the morning and most assuredly on every day.”

Dietrich Bonhoeffer in December 1944

When I began to read the biography of Dietrich Bonhoeffer at the beginning of February, I could not yet imagine how up to date the words from the text of the well-known German theologian would become for all of us in a short time.

We in Odessa are also affected by the "corona crisis" - a nationwide quarantine and the great fear and insecurity that afflicts so many people. On top of that, we in Ukraine are facing massive disinformation, a desolate health system and chaos in politics and society that is reminiscent of the time at the beginning of the conflict in eastern Ukraine and perhaps even surpasses it.



What a treasure it is to be safe in God's hand at this time and to draw strength and confidence in our faith. We are glad and grateful that we can offer help and support in these challenging times to the families whose children are otherwise cared for in our day care centres.

Since March 12th all schools have been closed and since March 21st there has been no public transport to the countryside. This means for most parents of our children in Petrovka that they cannot come to work in Odessa anymore. Many have lost their jobs immediately and are now without any income staying at home.

During the first week of quarantine only 10 families accepted our offer to have food packages delivered. Last Friday about 30 families took advantage of this offer. It is a sad fact that there are already families who have little or nothing in stock and no chance to earn anything.

In addition to this practical help with food and medication, our employees also help with driving services for important medical appointments or errands (for example, the supply of lifesaving medication for HIV therapy, which must not be interrupted under any circumstances), as it is no longer possible to use public transport without an official permit.

Since all education now takes place at home, we too have changed and offer homework help, foreign language teaching and children's Bible lessons online. In addition, our employees call parents or children and teenagers daily to get an idea of the situation at home. In this way we hope to prevent violence and neglect in



this time of crisis. This dove as a symbol of hope for a new beginning after the crisis was sent to us yesterday by a little girl in our joint WhatsApp group.

Our team were amazed and some even embarrassed when they received their full salary this month, in times of crisis like these an exception in the Ukraine. As I already mentioned many others have lost their income. Thank God, we are able to support our team members during these days fully.

We would like to thank all of you from the bottom of our hearts who, although your countries have not been spared from this exceptional situation, continue to think of us, pray for us and support us financially. Thank you for helping us to support people who are forgotten by most others to show that they are not forgotten at all.

I would like to close with a poem or prayer by Bonhoeffer. The time in which he wrote it was different from what we experience today, but no less challenging. His words can encourage us and become our prayer.

“Lord, in me it is dark, but with thee there is light. I am lonely, but you will not leave me. I am fainthearted, but with You there is help. I am restless, but with you there is peace. I do not understand your ways, but you know the way for me.”

Remain safe and be blessed.

Yours,

Nicole and Slavik Borisuk with the children and the team of Living Hope Odessa