

How much bad news can a person cope with?

Over the past few weeks, I've repeatedly come across headlines like this on the internet. These headlines are often followed by detailed explanations about how, with all the crises and bad reports we are confronted with daily, we should take enough time for our own mental health and not get too preoccupied with all the negative news. But what about the people for whom this news are reality and everyday life? What about the men, women and children whose stories are told in these reports? Every day in Odesa and throughout Ukraine, we are confronted with death, loss, fear, worry and uncertainty. As so often, we find encouragement, comfort and reassurance in words from the Bible that prove to be reliable and true at all times throughout history. This also applies to bad news. Psalm 112 has the following to say: 'Blessed is the man who fears the LORD, who delights greatly in His commandments! He will not be afraid of bad news. His heart is steadfast, trusting in the LORD.' Both we find in the world we live in - a massive amount of negative messages and yet an inner peace that is grounded in our faith.



Three months of summer holidays lie behind us, which we spent primarily organising enjoyable activities for 'our children' from the day centre and making their days as relaxed as possible under the given circumstances. We were able to bridge the regular, often lengthy power cuts with a high-



capacity generator, which we purchased thanks to your donations. As a result, we were able to provide a delicious hot lunch every day and ensure that all activities - including the much-needed speech therapy sessions - ran smoothly. Highlights were our group trips to the seaside, visits to the cinema and two BBQ parties in our garden, where the children also could enjoy funny water games. Despite all efforts, many of the kids show obvious signs of constant stress after more than two years of war. It is always a challenge for us to find the right balance between understanding their needs and with

empathy and setting up rules that help them to grow and develop.

In the meantime, the purchase and distribution of individual items of material aid has also become a large part of our ministry. As before, we do not organise large-scale distribution campaigns, but provide aid on an individual level and adapted to people's respective life situations. In the past few months, this has included weekly food parcels for single mothers who are unemployed due to a physical disability or other difficulties, the purchase of medicines and aids for elderly and sick people who do not have enough to live on a pension of 60 to 100 euros, as well as the purchase of school clothes and materials for children from socially disadvantaged families.

We also covered the costs for the rehabilitation of a man who was seriously injured as a result of the war. His wife, who has been accompanying him for over a year on his way back to a more or less independent life, turned to us after they had already used up all their private funds. We are very happy that we were able to help this family with your donations. By doing so, we are able to give small moments of hope to people who are discouraged and depressed by terrible news. A month of intensive physiotherapy has resulted in great progress and now the exercises learnt can be continued by the family independently at home.



The worst news during the war, however, are those of fathers, husbands and sons killed or missing on the battlefield, friends and relatives who have not survived bombing attacks or families who are forced to flee once again as the war front draws closer and closer. In these situations, often all we can do is to listen. This has been a significant part of our work over the past few months - we listen patiently when people tell us about their suffering as a result of the war. Just last week, a friend called me whose husband was recruited four months ago. He was killed on 14 August. With her four children, she is left a widow. The father of a colleague was also mobilised six weeks ago and has now been transferred to the front. Waiting for a sign of life and the fear of bad news are now her constant concerns. This is precisely why it is important to continue to be here on site. Every day we can do our part to make life in war more bearable. We thank you from the bottom of our hearts for supporting us in this.



For the Christmas season, we are planning to distribute Christmas presents and food parcels as we usually do. We will soon be publishing a list of required items on our website www.hope4kids.de. We would be very happy if you would participate generously.

We thank you very much for all your prayers, donations and friendship and wish you God's protection and blessing.

Slavik and Nicole
with children and staff at Living Hope in Odesa

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