



## Pag-Asa News April 2020: Things often turn out differently than we think (02.04.2020)

Hi, nobody expected or planned this situation. The whole world changed within a short time – because of a little virus with big impact.

### **Lock down in Manila**

Manila, Friday 13<sup>th</sup> of March 2020: I got information about the shutdown in Manila on the 15<sup>th</sup> of March. Entry and leave from Metro Manila would be forbidden. In my life it was the first time to have limitations in my personal freedom. This unsettled me as I lived alone. I thought about leaving Manila and joining other missionaries temporarily. But that didn't work out. I also found out that lots of other regions on the Northern Island of Philippines, where Manila lies, were about to be locked down. Moreover, the missionaries I asked for taking me in were not very open to the idea (or only under special conditions), because I lived in a Covid-19-risk area. So I decided to stay in Manila.

I had been looking forward for my intern Tabea, who wished to support me for a few weeks. Unfortunately her entry to Manila was denied because of Covid-19. More limitations followed. We had an exit lock at special times of the day. Another missionary I called told me to buy food stocks, because in the Philippines a limited food supply during the crisis could be possible.

I invited a young Filipina whom I knew from my local church to move in. Just shortly after that, an announcement was made that leaving the house in Manila except for a walk to a pharmacy or for buying food was forbidden. And just one person per household was allowed to leave. Almost everything closed, except for stores for vital supply. The public transport was stopped by the government. The streets of Manila, normally crowded, were suddenly empty. Actually, lots of people don't have enough money to buy food. Partly the government provides relief supplies, but it is not enough and not everyone gets it.

In those days I was very grateful for my scooter. On my last days in Manila I bought 200 kg rice that was given to 20 needy families by Gina, Maricon's mother. I asked her to add leaflets with encouraging bible verses.

### **A hard decision**

If I stayed, I would not be able to go to Germany for a long time because there would be no flights to Germany after the special returning flights organized by the German foreign affairs department. But there is a entry ban for Germans who want to go to the Philippines because of the high number of infected Covid patients in Germany. If I left Philippines, I would not be able to return for a long time. It was not an easy decision. I prayed, thought about it and asked for advise. Of course I had contact with Globe Mission. The following aspects influenced my decision:

- Because of the lockdown I could not go to Libjo or Baseco. It was just possible to communicate via internet or cell phone and to help them getting food. These things I can manage from Germany, too. On the last days I made a contact with Gina Geocada from Libjo, so she can bring
- food in my stead. She is now my official staff and will be able to manage Bible studies and other meetings when the lockdown will be removed. I know her as a loving and welcoming woman with life experience, leadership and trust in God. I am grateful for her help.



*Rice given to 20 families*



*Kids program before the lockdown  
Ate Gina reading a Bible story*



*part of Ate Gina's family*



- Several missionaries I asked for advise recommended that I should travel back to Germany to stay there till the situation on Philippines would be better.
- The foreign affairs department send flights to bring us back to Germany – but there will be no further of such endeavours.

So with a heavy heart I decided to take the plane. In that short time I could not move out of my apartment with my things that quickly, so the young women that moved in some days before stays there. At that time, she had her school studies online. By giving her school supplies, I helped her to keep her studies going. She nearly has no financial supply. Now she can feed herself with the food I bought for us before I left the island. So good, that there is someone in my rooms to use it and let fresh air in. Hopefully I will return as soon as the crisis is over.

### Detours: My journey to Germany

On the 19<sup>th</sup> of March my neighbors brought me to the airport, because public transport had been stopped. Unfortunately after some hours of waiting at the airport, I was told that I couldn't take the first plane. Neither was not possible to drive back to my apartment. Luckily, the Philippine department of tourism arranged a transfer to a nearby hotel by shuttle. During my waiting time, I met a German volunteer, Kathi, who believes in Jesus, too, and we became friends. We shared a room in the hotel and had a good time. I am very grateful to God, who took care of me that time! On the following day, I was able to take the second flight to Germany. The Deutsche Bahn (German train company) allowed the homecomers to drive home for free. So on 21<sup>th</sup> of March I arrived at my parents' house in East Frisia.

These days, I am working a lot from my home office - chatting with Filipinos, encouraging them, praying for them and organizing things. Now I took part in an online-training for Member Care in Mission and created a Facebook-page about Pag-Asa:

<https://www.facebook.com/PagAsaMission/>.



*A crowd of Germans ready to return*



*Kathi and I*

### Contracts and donations

As you see: I do still work as a missionary from Germany. But my contract had to change: From April 2020 on, I work for Globe Mission in a Mini-Job, but the compensation is still financed by donations. Furthermore there is a new staff, Gina, as I mentioned. An the people still need food and many other things, because they now have less or no income. So supporting my Mission is still a good and needed investment.

### My vision

I see the changed situation as a chance, to communicate my vision in a better way. I am building a Pag-Asa-Team in Germany to make plans and pray together, so we can carry the vision of God together. I want to serve God and other people and convey the hope I have in Jesus – especially in Manila, but also online and wherever I am.

*“But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect.” (1 Peter 3:15)*



*Amelie visited me last year for some weeks in the Philippines*

Word and deed should be going hand in hand. Additionally, I wish that some people will come with me to the Philippines and work with me as soon as the entry will be allowed. Two young women – Amelie and Kathi - already agreed to work for Pag-Asa from Germany.

### Anchor in the storm

I chose the anchor intentionally to be an element in my logo. It is a symbol for the unshakeable hope we have in Jesus: *“That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong*

*consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil.” (Hebrew 6, 18-19)*

What a great message in this time, where we are threatened by the Corona crisis. Even hospitals, doctors, banks, scientists and the own wallet can not give us the safety we wish though all those have an important place, too.

If I had a medicament for treatment, but I chose not to tell it to anybody, what kind of woman would I be? Well, Christians do know a medicine that saves lives. It is the blood of Jesus Christ. Everybody who knows about it and takes it in faith (accepting the forgiveness through Jesus for our sins and dedicate our lives to him), receives this anchor as a gift: This hope that we have a loving God whom we can ask for help and who has the power to heal illness and gives us the chance of life after death, where there is no misery. In my opinion there is no better offer. But it is everyone's own decision to accept it. I can not be silent about this hope that saves lives!

### Teaser: Next Episode

For today, this should suffice. But maybe you're asking yourself what I have been doing in the last weeks before I left the Philippines? There is still much to tell.

My next Mail is coming soon:

- Fire aid in Baseco – this is what happened (thanks to all donors)
- God has humor: The beetle
- News: women's meeting, leaders' meeting and keyboard lessons
- On the mountain: searching and finding God
- Medical mission: Volunteer work with chiropractors and a physiotherapist
- Teddy bears for Libjo

### Prayer requests:

Thanksgiving	Intercession
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- For the work of Ate Gina in Libjo and Amelie and Kathi in Germany</li> <li>- that I was able to get to Germany in time</li> <li>- that I am well</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- against Corona and for healing of the infected patients</li> <li>- care and provision for the families in Libjo and the whole Philippines</li> <li>- for team building in the next season</li> </ul>

Thanks for our e-mails and support through prayer and finances! May God bless you and give you peace! Greetings from Moormerland, Germany!

Yours, Sara-Lena Thomsen

My cost of living and my work are based on donations. Whoever would like to support my work can transfer money to the following account:

**Pay Pal:** Please scan the QR-Code or use this link:

[https://www.paypal.com/donate/?token=ozAVQvH9F\\_wDUDWssDhQe0T-IDU2glvKuP3eSD4V3Y8XiRidlEuvzliQaEpUXSOSU4p2P0&country.x=DE&locale.x=DE](https://www.paypal.com/donate/?token=ozAVQvH9F_wDUDWssDhQe0T-IDU2glvKuP3eSD4V3Y8XiRidlEuvzliQaEpUXSOSU4p2P0&country.x=DE&locale.x=DE)

**Bank transfer:** Globe Mission e.V. , Evangelische Bank,

**IBAN:** DE20 5206 0410 0004 0022 53, **BIC:** GENODEF1EK1

**Reference (!): Project number 138 (Sara-Lena Thomsen)**



More information about me and my work: <https://www.globemission.org/en/sara-lena-thomsen.html>

