



Registered association for the promotion
of medical care and social support in
Northern Samar, Philippines

Bugko, December 2020

Dear members, dear friends, and supporters of Mabuhay!

My last newsletter reached you on August 10th, just as the situation in the Philippines was escalating. With up to 6,000 new infections per day, the Philippines had been declared the epicenter of the coronavirus pandemic in Southeast Asia. At that time, there were still few infected people in Northern Samar.

At the end of August, the numbers also rose in Northern Samar, primarily due to returnees from Manila. The Philippine government sent people who had become unemployed in Manila back to the provinces. Another factor was that more tests were being conducted. On August 24th, the first coronavirus case was registered in Mondragon. Other cities in Northern Samar followed suit, triggered by a politician's birthday party where coronavirus regulations were not observed.

From then on, everything happened very quickly. On August 29th, Catarman celebrates Fiesta, the most important religious festival of the Catholic Church in Northern Samar. All celebrations were cancelled at short notice; Holy Mass was celebrated, but without a bishop and without the more than 50 priests who would otherwise have come.

On September 1st, stricter quarantine regulations were reinstated. The villages, called barangays here, were "locked down." People were only allowed to leave their villages in an emergency. Instead of wearing face masks, they were now required to wear face masks and face coverings, there was an alcohol ban, and travel outside the province was completely suspended. This situation continued throughout October. The start of school in Bugko, postponed from June to October 6th, began in the form of modules. The children received workbooks each week, which they had to work on and answer at home. The mothers then brought the modules to school for assessment, and again each week. This situation was particularly difficult for children with learning disabilities and for children whose parents cannot read and write, as they cannot provide the children with any help. The children remain confined to their homes and are only allowed out for doctor's appointments.

Therefore, it wasn't until the first week of October that more children began coming to our doctor's office. In addition, due to the coronavirus pandemic, we saw significantly more patients with mental health problems, ranging from simple sleep disorders to suicidal thoughts.

In mid-October, we decided that we could not travel to Germany in December because the risk of infection is too high on both sides and one has to expect a 14-day quarantine in Germany, as well as in the Philippines.

An exciting year is coming to an end. Mainly dominated by the coronavirus, with its fears, illness, but also hope. Despite the pandemic, patients came to us every day. Fewer than in previous years, but still about... Thanks to your help, we were able to help so many people and do good again. Thank you/SALAMAT for all your help and support! Be it financial support or donations in kind. I would also like to thank you on behalf of Sister Veronica for the many encouraging words in this difficult year for everyone. We have felt your closeness to us. Knowing that you can't just go or drive anywhere is oppressive. And the feeling of constant danger from an invisible enemy in the form of a virus is not always easy to bear, especially since there is still no vaccine for everyone. We were exposed to danger every day, as we have patients from all over the province in the clinic. We are grateful for our volunteers who have been and continue to be at our side every day. All your help is being received and used where it is needed. And so, I wish you a joyful Advent season and a blessed Christmas, much strength and power, and that you all stay healthy.

Yours, gratefully,

Sabine Korth

Malipayon nga Pasko (Merry Christmas) from Bugko!



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