

COR Newsletter – 9 April 2008

Dear all,

Last Sunday

We heard the beautifully crafted story of the road to Emmaus on this third Sunday of Easter. Another large congregation *walked the walk* just like those two men on the road to Emmaus who encountered Jesus through the Bible and through the breaking of bread together. I think it fair to say that we battled through the first three hymns, but the singing came together in a spirited rendition of the more familiar "And can it be" at the end. We welcomed back Andrew Littauer after a long absence and also said *au revoir* to Rosalind and Nigel Shakespeare at the end of the service, before we had a break and had coffee and the "**Produce sale**" which this week was very successful. Then after coffee we re-convened for the **AGM**. A new church council was elected and our two church wardens were appointed unopposed for another year. Unfortunately neither of our two wardens Lillah Houghton (still hurting after an operation) or Nicholas Hammond (who had to work) could be there in person but they were there in spirit.

Next Sunday

Easter 4. Holy Communion with Sunday school at 10am.

Charity links

One of our links is to **Casa Ioana** a charity working in Bucharest. John Barker went there to distribute some lovely blankets hand made by Scottish pupils in Fife and donated by the mother (the headmistress) of Joan Johnson at the British Embassy. Some pictures of this and of "low Sunday" are already on John's Blog site which as you know can be reached via our website <http://www.churchoftheresurrection.eu> and clicking on "COR Blog". You can also access Casa Iona's own website for more information on what they do by again going to our website, clicking on "links" and scrolling down. Cue Morecambe and Wise. "Have you got the scrolls?" "No, I always walk like this" .

But seriously, again as John announced, he and Ella will be distributing clothes to worthy causes all over Bucharest very soon. We already have a lot of clothes at the church but if you have anything else you can donate please bring it to church either during the week (please check by phone if I am there first - 0740 243789, normally 11-2pm Tues, Wed, Thurs) or next Sunday.

Tonight (Wednesday)

The new church council has its first meeting at 7pm in church.

Outside the church

Thank you to Dieter Stanzeleit who has organised and is paying for people to regularly keep the outside small garden areas of the church clean and tidy. I met Alexandru and Mariana on Tuesday morning who made a start round the back of the church and cleared the rubbish from the front garden. They have keys to the padlocks now so they will be coming on Fridays in future between 11 and 12 o'clock - so if you're passing the church on Fridays and see people in our garden - don't fret!

Painting for sale

An original painting by the same artist who painted the Christ figure for our church - Eugeniu
- is also for sale. The reserve price is 500 Euro. This painting will be auctioned at our garden party on the 27th June, but if it is sold before then, Eugeniu has generously promised to paint another one for the garden party. It is on display in church.

Day off

For those that don't know, my normal day off is Friday, but this week, because I have appointments on that day I shall be taking tomorrow (Thursday) off instead.

Thought for the day

Who are you? I mean, Who are you *really*?

It is a commonplace that the person we present for public consumption can be quite different from the person our families know and love behind closed doors - sometimes markedly so.

We all project an image, or hide behind a mask or a role or position of some sort, and sometimes we can end up believing our own projection at times (Priests are particularly vulnerable to self deception). That image can be endlessly subtly modified depending on who we are with at the time.

The confident, decisive, well adjusted, well liked pillar of the community can actually be, when the spotlight is turned off quite different - a diffident person, a mass of doubts and contradictions, a truly lonely person yearning to be loved.

So we are able to be different people in different situations. There are at least two of us - the public and the private me, often quite different. There is also another person that lurks deep within us that most of us can suppress for almost all of the time, the person we don't dare let out in polite company - the ambitious, lewd, xenophobic, foul mouthed philistine with a chip on each shoulder, consumed with naked self interest.(or it that just me?). This dark version of ourselves only ever sees the light of day *in extremis*, but nonetheless this other me is still there however deeply buried. But there is also another me besides the ones just mentioned. This is the true me - the real me -the person that God created, the essential person that I am and more pertinently, that God wants me to be, the real me that God knows and loves - stripped of all the pretensions and of all the masks I wear to protect myself from the world and that I project to others around me. This me lies even deeper within us - at the very core of our being. This is the person that people who practice contemplative prayer reach inside of themselves to reach. For at that centre also lies God. There lies communion.

I said on Sunday that the Christian understanding of peace is based on the Jewish concept of shalom which speaks of unity, wholeness and harmony. To have peace with God and each other means also that we must be at peace within ourselves. These different manifestations of ourselves need to be integrated into one whole person if we are to be truly at peace - where even the nasty selfish bits, buried within us can be taken and transformed by God into something beautiful. This does not happen overnight but is an ongoing process. And this process starts at the centre, with the real person that you are, stripped naked of all the accretions of rank, position, culture, personal history, vanity, life's struggles, your victories and defeats - and of all that has hurt and marred God's image in you.

The template for Christians of the "whole" completely integrated person is of course Jesus. A man who was the same person in every situation - who didn't have a secret other side of himself. As Christians we struggle for Christlikeness. To be Christ-like

means to be at one with yourself, God and all creation. It is the goal of the Christian life (called *theosis* by the Orthodox). This transformative process must start somewhere and it starts with prayer and worship. It is the true and deep meaning of the words in the Eucharist "We break this bread to share in the body of Christ. Though we are many we are one body because we all share in one bread"

The prayer for today is the collect for the Blessed Virgin Mary

*Almighty and everlasting God,
who stooped to raise fallen humanity
through the child bearing of blessed Mary;
grant that we, who have seen your glory
revealed in our human nature
and your love made perfect in our weakness,
may daily be renewed in your image
and conformed to the pattern of your Son
Jesus Christ our Lord
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and forever.
Amen.*

Love and Peace

Martin