

Dear all,

### **Last Thursday**

The Eucharist with **Bishop David Hope** presiding and preaching was well attended and the Bishop talked about Thankfulness during the sermon. Afterwards there was a dinner in his honour at the British Ambassador's residence. When asked what the main change had been in the intervening years the first reply from the Bishop was "the traffic". Something I'm sure we can all relate to. I would just like to record my personal thanks to the Bishop who never at any time made any demands on us whatsoever but was willing to fit in to whatever we usually did in church and didn't stand on ceremony. Pictures and commentary are already on John's Blog which can be reached via our website <http://www.churchoftheresurrection.eu> and then clicking on the "COR Blog" button.

### **Last Sunday**

Frans and Hankie were away, but their children were still in church accompanied by Grandparents who also stepped in and took the Sunday school - well done and thank you. Thank you to Alison, back from Switzerland reporting on the Romanian football team, for stepping in as chalice bearer and to the readers and everyone who made this an uplifting service. In our intercessions we remember of course John Barker who would normally have been with us as ever but was instead in hospital recovering from an operation on his knee. I spoke to John on Saturday afternoon, but the operation went well and I know that John was with us in Spirit this morning.

### **Next Sunday**

The sixth Sunday after Trinity. Holy Communion at 10am with Sunday school. I hope that every Sunday is special in the Church of the Resurrection but this Sunday will be even more special because two of our members will be re-affirming their marriage vows during this morning's service. **Maureen and Andy Pearce** will be doing so and have even chosen all the Hymns this morning. And you guessed it - Fight the good fight is one of them! Maureen cannot be in Bucharest all the time but Andy is now a very familiar face to all of us - and is also a member of our church council. They are a lovely couple and we pray for God's blessing on the rest of their married life together.

### **The British Garden Party**

Even if you haven't yet bought your ticket - get yourself along to Aleea Alexandru nr 5 this Friday from 7pm onwards for a lovely night out. In our auction you can bid for such diverse prizes like the ever popular "Beer for a year", a days yacht cruise on the Black sea, a weekend in Skopje with a pool party(!) and BBQ with the reader, and even a week in a cottage in Frinton-on-sea! Plenty of other things to whet your appetite and of course a raffle with great prizes on the night. ALL DRINK AND FOOD INCLUDED IN THE ENTRANCE PRICE of just 60 RON for adults, 30RON 12-18 years and under 12s FREE.

### **Wikipedia**

We've arrived. As Jo was presumably checking our Google rating she happened upon our entry in **Wikipedia**. You didn't know that we had one - no neither did I. As far as we can ascertain our church went on in March, together with a photo of the

church, and is excellent with all the links working accurately - even to my profile in the Sofia Echo and John's Blog site. I don't know who entered us, or even if you want to remain anonymous, but whoever you are - thank you! Put in "Anglican church Bucharest" into Google and you will see it as one of the options on the first page.

### **Open church**

Due to a lot of work piling up - not least to do with the final preparations for the garden party - I will only be in church for pre-arranged appointments this week and not at all today (Wednesday). Apologies for any inconvenience.

### **James Ramsay**

After Bishop David Hope, yet another former COR chaplain passed through Bucharest this week and it was a pleasure to meet James again after about two years. He was in good form and on his way to a conference in Iasi - though when I met him his luggage was still in Vienna. I hope he will be reunited with his trousers very soon. He is happy in the East end of London - he even has homeless Romanian immigrants camping in his garden at the moment just to make him feel at home. Christians are a very small minority in this multi-cultural part of London and Anglican Christians an even smaller minority. One of the most interesting facets of ministering there is that many local Hindus seem to have no problem at all in joining in Christian services, especially at Christmas time, one reason being that they also have a connection or affinity with Mary and the local RC church has a steady stream of Hindus praying in front of their statue of Mary. What a complex and wonderful world we live in.

### **Thought for the day**

Just recently I have been feeling out of sorts for many and various reasons - not to say a bit depressed - it happens to all of us from time to time, but it is truly amazing that at these times some lines from the Bible can speak to you and almost make you cry. They can pierce your soul, and not because they are particularly uplifting - but because you *identify* so closely with what is being said that it has the ability to speak directly to your heart. This happened this week with the set psalm for Sunday and I could feel myself faltering reading the words during the service - getting to verse 20 of psalm 69; "Insults have broken my heart, so that I am in despair. I looked for pity but there was none, and for comforters but I found none".

It also brought to mind Adrian and KC - both in Rahova prison.

No words to tell you to "snap out of it" or "pull yourself together" - or "isn't life wonderful" but words that reflect how you are *actually* feeling and what you are *really* experiencing.

Another example of this from my own experience, (probably recounted by me before), happened some years ago in France. I have experienced many different cruddy, manipulative, muddle headed forms of Christianity in my time (It's a wonder I stayed the course) and after one particularly horrible brush with the charismatic movement, really felt that God couldn't exist, or at least that Christianity was a bad joke. I wasn't going to have anything more to do with the church but for some reason that escapes me, I continued to read the Bible.

During that holiday in France, the set text from my Bible reading guide (I know, I know, but in my defence I was a product of an evangelical church don't forget) was the book of Ecclesiastes. This is the one that starts "Meaningless, meaningless, all is meaningless". It is quite a powerful tract that taps into the view that all existence is

cyclical and pointless. While hardly being the gospel, it was nevertheless noteworthy that it was not the gospel that coaxed me back to the fold in my dark time but this nihilistic book that brought me back to God - simply because I could *identify* so strongly with the point of view. That a book like Ecclesiastes can hold a place in the canon of the Hebrew Scriptures is a testimony to the breadth of the Bible. The strength of both the words of the Bible and the word made flesh in Jesus is that both can and do *identify* with every state and condition of mankind. Both are embedded in *real* life, not an idealised fabrication of life. The suffering and execution of Jesus tells us in stark terms that all of life, even in its most extreme forms has been lived and identified with by God. And most important of all, all of it - every last bit of it, even the dark and cruel bits have been and can be redeemed and transformed into something bright, fresh and wonderful. This is the true power of resurrection.

The **prayer for today** was written by a former Archbishop of Canterbury - Robert Runcie.

*Eternal Father,  
source of light and life,  
whose love extends to all people, all creatures, all things;  
grant us that reverence for life which becomes those that believe in you;  
lest we despise it, degrade it, or come callously to destroy it.  
Rather, let us save it, serve it and sanctify it,  
after the example of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.  
Amen.*

Love and peace

Martin