

COR Newsletter – 09 July 2008

Dear all,

Last Saturday

If you had turned on your **TV** at the right time you would have been able to watch the **wedding blessing** of Israela Vodovoz and Liviu Arteni which was conducted by myself at our church on Saturday. Being largely ignorant of "celebrity" here in Romania I still have no real idea who Israela is, but what I do know is that I couldn't move for TV cameras during the ceremony itself. I really did ask that they should be as unobtrusive as possible, but as with many things here in Romania - it didn't turn out that way!!

Nevertheless it was an emotional and lovely service.

Florin, our organist tells me he saw our service televised on "Romantica" that same evening and that it looked good and John phoned me to say he had caught the civil ceremony carried over earlier in the day broadcast on "acasa" on Sunday morning.

Apparently it was also on "PRO - TV" news.

Whatever their status in the eyes of the world, we pray for them as we pray for every couple who has their wedding blessed in our church

Last Sunday

The seventh after Trinity saw us walking over rose petals left over from the wedding the previous day. Frans is on holiday and so are a lot of families with children, so the Sunday school is temporarily suspended for about six weeks. Also, Lillah is not in Romania at the moment, but the produce sale nevertheless took place as usual. Thank you to everyone who brought in cakes to sell.

Letters to the editor.....

I enclose the following email I received regarding Sunday's service not just because it is very nice about me (though God knows, isn't that reason enough!) but it is a ringing endorsement of the *whole church*. John got a special mention and also the warm welcome this young American received from the congregation thousands of miles from home obviously made him feel among friends. We will never be perfect but I think we must at least be facing the right way and heading in the right direction.

Dear Martin

I just wanted to give you my positive thoughts on your little parish in Bucharest. I thought the service was great even though I was extremely tired from an overnight train ride. Your sermon was a refreshing endorsement of the gospel as presented to the saints (or whatever that verse is). It was nice to hear a clear Biblical message being presented in the Anglican Church in Bucharest, when so many churches, especially in the CofE and TEC are presenting a false gospel. Your lay reader, John, was excellent and will make an excellent addition to the Anglican presence in Skopje. Also, I felt warmly greeted and several people took time to do more than just say the peace and really introduce themselves.

I wish the best upon your church and the work in you all do in Romania, Bulgaria and now Macedonia. I truly appreciate the Anglican presence of the Diocese of Europe when I travel - I am from Memphis, TN.

Next Sunday

is the 8th after Trinity. Paul carries on his sustained argument and exclaims in Romans 8 "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ

Jesus" and in Matthew Jesus tells us the parable of the sower as a kind of explanation as to why some people accept the kingdom of God and some don't.

Daily prayer

Do you desire to pray every day, yet find you never seem to have the time or the energy or the resources? I came across a wonderful - at least I think so - on-line prayer sight that is well worth a look. If you are receiving this, you already have the means, and they provide the material. It takes about ten minutes. Take a look by clicking on the following: <http://www.sacredspace.ie> In fact once our webmaster, Jo Kinberger is back on-line after her well earned rest I think it would be good to have a permanent link from our own website which is of course, <http://www.churchoftheresurrection.eu> (in case you had forgotten).

Need anything sent home?

Stan Platt's charity lorry is returning to the UK, departing next Sunday 13 July, travelling via Cluj, Timisoara, Szeged, Linz, Frankfurt, Leige, Dunkirk, Dover, Dartford, Brentwood, Colchester & Frinton on Sea. If anyone needs items delivered on route or anywhere in the UK he is offering to take them in exchange for a contribution towards the journey costs. If you are interested please call Stan Plat on 0744 541774.

A tale of two cities

After our service on Sunday I walked over to the Orthodox church of Fr. Mihai, and his guest happened to be my Orthodox opposite number in London. Fr. Silviu is the Orthodox priest for the Romanian Diaspora in London and the South East and his church is based, with typical Anglican openness, in a Church of England church in Fleet street. The difference in scale was illuminating. Fr. Silviu has a congregation of 500 on a Sunday, does 100 weddings a year and does 400 - 500 baptisms, and has a team of assistant priests to share the workload. He has no need to charge for anything, not even weddings, because of the generosity in the collection plate. The priest has been there for about 25 years and has no desire to return to Romania (can't say I blame him)

Looking ahead.....

The 27th July will be **John Barker's last service** in the Church of the Resurrection - not *ever* - but at least as a resident of Bucharest. John officially takes up his new position in Skopje in Macedonia on the 1st August and will be galvanising the Anglican Church there. The work and influence of John in the life of the COR over the years should not be underestimated. This weekly email itself was his initiative. John held the church together during the year long interregnum before I arrived and has been the best of help and support to me and my family that we could have asked for. After the service, which I trust will be celebratory; John invites everyone to a farewell BBQ, details of which will be made clear over the next couple of weeks. Come along to give John the send off he deserves.

Thought for the day.

I wasn't present for the exchanges but I heard later that after the service there were some fairly heated exchanges after some racist views were expressed in a conversation initially centred on Democrat presidential hopeful, Barack Obama. I would have thought that it goes without saying (though obviously not) that in a Christian church we show no partiality in our dealings with people on the basis

of race. Our congregation is multi national and multi racial and it makes a mockery of the Eucharistic "one bread, one body" symbolism if after proclaiming this truth we then disparage people of another race that we have just broken bread with.

That we can even think of doing so is the state we have reached when God is completely divorced from real life, our actions and their consequences. Theologically this is called dualism. People talk of "making" their communion as if it is a purely private affair between them and some God who lives somewhere else (and not in them or their neighbours) and the other people lining up to make "their" communion are distinct and separate from them - in fact nothing to do with them at all!

In my opinion this can only happen when the Eucharist has been so spiritualised that the fact that you are in reality sharing a common meal with all those other people in the church has been lost. The Eucharist is a communal meal - a highly stylised and symbolic meal perhaps but a meal nonetheless, based on the "last supper" of Jesus. Once the sense of communion with others is lost, and all the emphasis is laid solely on a private communion with an abstract idea of a far away God, the very basis of Christianity as a truly sacramental religion falls apart. The twin poles of the Golden rule of Christianity "Love God and love your neighbour as yourself" cannot be separated. They are two sides of the same coin. They inform each other. You cannot love God and hate your neighbour.

Note: One religion that epitomises the divine "practical love" aspect of communal eating much better than us is the Sikh religion. The biggest and best example is at the Golden temple in Amritsar. They have one huge simple communal meal which is prepared by different people on a rota who see it as their religious duty to serve others. Anyone, you included, as a visitor, is free to turn up and eat with the Sikhs at any of their communal meals. You will be made welcome. Such simple down to earth practical hospitality can teach Christians an awful lot about our own thanksgiving meal.

The **prayer for today** is rather a famous one attributed to St. Francis of Assisi.

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.

Where there is hatred, let me sow love.

Where there is injury, pardon.

Where there is discord, vision.

Where there is doubt, faith.

Where there is despair, hope.

Where there is darkness, light.

Where there is sadness, joy.

O divine master,

grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console;

to be understood as to understand;

to be loved as to love;

for it is in giving that we receive,

it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,

and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

Love and Peace

Martin