

Dear all,

### **Last Saturday**

**Cagri and Oana** had their wedding blessed in church. Thank you to **Andrea Hedesan** who played the organ for us while Florin is on his summer break. Wedding blessings have really taken off in this church and we currently have one every week until I leave to settle Claire into University. We pray for them all and their future lives together.

### **Last Sunday**

I didn't know that our Sunday School teacher, Frans, was back with us today but the bush telegraph must be working extremely well because all of a sudden we went from just one or two children to **fourteen** children in church at a stroke!! Welcome back. Our numbers are now climbing back to where they should be after the summer holiday season, but of course it is not just about numbers. It is how the people who come, no matter how few or many, love, care and serve each other that really counts. St. Paul was telling us in Romans this morning that a strong community is one where all the various gifts that each of us possesses is offered and put at the disposal of the whole body. A large congregation can be fundamentally weaker than a small one if it doesn't learn that important lesson.

### **Next Sunday**

Holy Communion at 10am with **Sunday school**. (it feels good to be able to announce that again!!). We welcome back **Florin**, our regular organist, back from his hols in Brasov.

### **Thought for the day**

I saw a Buddhist monk on TV the other day and he was asked about his non-violence. The interviewer wanted to know how he dealt with his anger, especially when he might be personally attacked. He answered that this kind of anger is at root a result of love. He said that we get angry in these situations because our sense of order, fair play, harmony and righteousness is affronted when people do bad and irrational things. These things hurt the natural order, so out of our love for all things including the person who is hurting that harmonious fabric, we get angry.

This made me think because I had always seen "anger" as just a negative thing, with no redeeming qualities so that when I did get very angry (and we all do) it also left me feeling guilty because I wasn't *supposed* to be feeling those kinds of emotions as a Christian. This Buddhist monk opened my eyes to the fact that actually anger is closely allied to love - love of order, justice, fairness, decency, peace, etc. so that when these sensibilities are offended our hackles are raised. What we do with that anger is another matter!

We can then either contribute to the chaos, or try to mend the tears in life's fabric - and here enters the central Christian theme of forgiveness as an essential tool in putting things back together.

Seeing anger in this light helped me in other aspects of my Christian faith and understanding. Because I had always seen anger as totally negative, I had always struggled with Jesus turning over the tables in the temple and other instances in the

Bible where Jesus is, how we shall say "short and direct" to put it politely, with people.

It also helps me with understanding the notion of God's "wrath". The wrath of God, is a notion I have always had trouble with because I always saw it as being different from, if not the opposite of, love.....but actually if we see God's wrath as the flipside of God's love, as a necessary corollary it starts to make more sense to me. God is angered when his love and goodness are overturned. But as with us, what God does with his wrath (anger) is important. In the Christian revelation, Jesus as the icon of God, willingly submits to and absorbs the cruelty of the world, takes it and in his hands, forgives and transforms it.

When we wilfully flout God's love and justice, I suppose we should expect some tables to be turned over in our life, but knowing that any anger or "wrath" has its source in a love for you and all creation that hates to see evil flourish makes it understandable. Inspiration comes from many different sources, and God speaks in many and various ways and through different people of all faiths and none and I would like to record my thanks to a Buddhist for enabling to see my Christianity more clearly.

My **prayer for today** is another burst of the often painful honesty of Fr. Harry Williams. Complete honesty before God is something we rarely achieve. We use stock phrases, start using thees and thous, talk in a stilted way that we think God expects, hide the awful truth about ourselves because we think God wouldn't want to know, or would be too embarrassed to hear it (God as a maiden aunt, in an English country house concerned about manners and outward appearances). Who are we trying to fool - ourselves or God?

***O God, I am hellishly angry;  
I think so-and-so is a swine;  
I am tortured by worry about this and that;  
I am pretty certain that I have missed my chances in life;  
this and that has left me feeling very depressed.  
But nonetheless here I am like this,  
feeling both bloody and bloody minded,  
and I am going to stay here for ten minutes.  
You are most unlikely to give me anything. I know that.  
But I am going to stay for ten minutes nonetheless.***

Love and peace

Martin