

Dear all,

Last Sunday in Bucharest

When I left for the UK it was 34 degrees, and when I returned it was cold. So I tried to put the church heating on for the service, but it didn't work (though it made plenty of noise) - so the nearly 50 of us in the service had to sing heartily to warm up! It was gratifying to see so many visitors, and I especially want to thank the couple from Bucks - just passing through on business - who both read so beautifully and Avril, the wife who administered the chalice during communion. When welcoming them before the service it transpired that Avril was a pastoral assistant and chalice bearer at her home church. **Nine** children gathered in the re-vamped Sunday school room today and the children are now decorating the room with their work - take a look in there next week and do also take a look at the brand new "Sunday school" web page on our web site <http://www.churchoftheresurrection.eu> . Finally, Our prayers are with Oana. You may have heard her Father - **Paul Alexander Focsa** - being prayed for during the intercessions. Oana received a call at the end of the service to tell her that her father had died in hospital. May he rest in peace and rise in glory.

Next Sunday in Bucharest

Holy Communion at 10am with **Sunday School**. As this is the first service of the month this is also **Produce sale** Sunday. Get baking!! This service will be tinged with sadness because this Sunday is the last one for **Noldy** and his son **Solafide**. These two people are certainly the most faithful members of the congregation I have known since I have been here. Almost every Sunday, come rain or shine, for nearly two and a half years they have been there. In light-hearted mode, John Barker bestowed on them the prize for the "Best dressed people in church on Easter Sunday" two years running. Noldy has completed his PhD at Bucharest University and they are both now returning to Indonesia, where Lafi's mum "Mrs. Noldy" is a pastor in a free church congregation in this largest Muslim nation in the world.. Do come along to say farewell and god speed to these faithful people this Sunday. It will feel quite odd in future not to see them both sitting there in front of me.

Another sad farewell

I received an email from **Andreea Hedesan** to tell me that she has received a fantastic job offer in London and she flies there, perhaps for good this week. Andreea asked me to convey her goodbyes and good wishes to the rest of the congregation. Another fixture in the life of the COR going on to bigger and better things - great for Andreea but sad for us of course. For those that don't know, Andreea was an accomplished organist and when Florin was not available Andrea played at weddings for me in the church.

Website news

Jo Kinberger emailed me to say that our website now achieves a 4 rating in terms of "importance" with Google. This is amazing news for those who know about these things. Jo tells me that the website for Methodists in the whole of Austria is likewise a 4 so we now match them. This means that our site now moves further up the list when people "Google" for a church in either Bucharest or Sofia.

Open house in aid of Casa Sperantei

Assorted clothes and accessories donated by NEXT will be on sale between noon and 3pm on Friday 3rd October at 43G Iancu Nicolae Str. Pipera. Light refreshments will be available.

Thought for the day

Huge changes are happening in the western capitalist system that are quite earth shattering. In the USA, the champion of free market capitalism, giant firms are being nationalised as it becomes clear that left to their own devices, greed is definitely not always good. Central government controls, greater regulation, nationalisation, government bail outs for greedy manipulators, the rich bailed out by American workers (currently stalled by congress).....wherever Karl Marx is now, I suspect a wry smile beneath that huge beard. Though nearly twenty years ago things looked very different when the centrally controlled soviet system collapsed and everyone thought that the triumph of free market capitalism was complete. As ever, extremism in anything, even in economics proves to be a false God. The two extremes of a completely unfettered market and a completely controlled one are both proving to be fatally flawed. Is anyone really surprised?

The Chinese markets will undoubtedly feel some of the effects, but I understand that analysts believe that China will escape the biggest effects because the state never relinquished control. A free market within a socialist system, which appears to be China's model is usually derided by both capitalist and socialist purists as a sell out - it pleases neither side (a bit like the church of England), but in the long term perhaps it may yet prove to be the very best model for delivering wealth in as fair and just a way as possible. In fact, through necessity the Americans, and other countries are now being forced to emulate it.

Extremism in anything is the scourge of our age - and surely no-one needs reminding of all the outrages perpetrated in the name of God - just switch on the news on any day you care to choose - and watch in disgust the car bombs, hatred, and religious perversion that pollute our world. Killing in the name of God! Can you think of anything more disfiguring? It doesn't matter if it is Al Quaida bombing a market, or an American fundamentalist bombing an abortion clinic, or a Hindu mob killing Christians in India, the disfiguring effect that extremist religious beliefs can have on people can be truly devastating. When ordinary decent people are turned into unfeeling, unthinking monsters by a religion, I feel myself instinctively lining up with the secularists when they conclude that all religion is a malign force in the world today.

It doesn't have to be this way of course, but the fight against this perversion of Islam, Christianity, Hinduism etc. has to come from within. We are called to fight the nonsense that is said and done in our name. I squirm when I see extreme "Christian" groups railing against this that or the other and saying things like "Christians believe....." because by using that word they claim to be talking for me and usually they most certainly don't. How dare they?

One great weapon is laughter and ridicule. For example, the creationists who deny that evolution takes place need to be laughed at - they are given far too much respect (in the US at least). As I heard a British comedian say recently about the creationist beliefs of republican running mate Sarah Palin. "If you are going to deny reality and pretend that something doesn't exist, why not pretend that pre menstrual tension or taxes don't exist - don't pick on poor old dinosaurs".

The **prayer for today** is written by Anthony Bloom.

Help me, O God, to put off all pretences and to find my true self.

Help me, O God, to discard all false pictures of you, whatever the cost to my comfort.

Help me, O God, to let go of all my problems, and fix my mind on you.

Help me, O God, to see my own sins, never to judge my neighbour, and may the glory be all yours.

Into your hands I commend my spirit.

Your will, not mine be done.

Amen.

Love and Peace

Martin