

COR Newsletter – 05 November 2008

Dear all,

Last Sunday

It was a pleasure to hear once again the **Venerable Granville Gibson** - who from henceforth will be known as "His happiness" - those who were in church and heard Granville's sermon will know what I am talking about! It was great to see the children back in church after their half term break and the produce sale was almost as successful as the last one - **thank you** to all who contributed in any way.

Next Sunday

Because this is **remembrance Sunday** and some will want to also go to the ceremony at Tancabesti - the service will start at **9am** this morning. Please would people offer lifts to anyone wishing to travel on to Tancabesti so that no-one is left behind. The service will be **Morning Prayer** because I am officiating at the Remembrance Day service in Sofia, and our service in church in Sofia also starts at **9am** this morning.

Fireworks night fun.

Stan Platt is pleased to announce that this years Guy Fawkes Night party will be held on Friday, the 7th of November at 19.00 hrs in the garden of the "Crowne Plaza Hotel". A function room adjacent to the garden has been reserved in case of inclement weather. It promises to be a wonderful night of Food, Fireworks and Fun.

Tickets, 50 RON each, are available in advance by email bonfirenight@lightintoeurope.org or telephone 0744 322238.

"Children under 14 years are free."

Dress code: Warm clothes and Ladies "flat shoes" please!

The website

Our website <http://www.churchoftheresurrection.eu> is still doing nicely with over 800 hits every month. Ideas please though about starting a Weblog for Bucharest, just as John used to do for us. Having something local and relevant helps keep up the interest! Would anyone feel inclined to keep one up to date and record all the things we do here in Bucharest? Also, although Jo Kinberger is doing her wonderful (as usual) job of keeping things up to date, long term we need to be thinking of someone who is "on the spot". Again if anyone is interested, please let me and Jo know about you.

Thanks to Claire

Who came forward and **donated her electric piano** to John to use in the services in Skopje. Claire will be back in Bucharest this Christmas for the long Scottish university break.

Britannia Ball

As previously advertised, this event is on **Friday 20th February**. The cost is now set at 95 Euros per person and the format will be the same as last February. Please put the date in your diary and start spreading the word!!

The chaplain will **not** be available next week **until Thursday** in church. Sorry for any inconvenience!

Thought for the day

By the time I send this out the USA will have a new president. As I am writing this it has been announced that it is Barack Obama, and congratulations to him!! I heard Obama's passionate speech this morning - and I gauge that the American public has voted for HOPE. But *both* candidates I noticed were making a virtue out of "change" and were promising to change things. This can only work of course if there is a *shared* acceptance that what went before was not very good - otherwise why change anything? What is remarkable is that there is a consensus in America that change is necessary. Even the Republican camp (representing the current administration) were tacitly admitting that their own party presided over something less than electric when even they were also campaigning for "change" and they physically shrank from endorsements from the likes of Dick Cheney - one of the old guard of this current administration. Also, the fact that Barack Obama has been elected as US President is in itself a testimony to the seismic proportions of the changes the USA has gone through since the 1960's. In some parts of the USA just forty years ago, a black person could not sit next to a white person on a bus, a black child could not attend the same school as a white child, and yet just forty years later.....

Change can be a double edged sword of course. Everyone of a certain age will testify to the huge changes that have happened during their lifetimes and we can all attest that while a lot of it is good there has also been a fair amount of good that has been lost as well - perhaps never to return. Romania and Bulgaria together are suffering the birth pangs of enormous changes that have been, and are, happening to their countries. While the young will no doubt take it all in their stride, I do wonder what the pensioners of this country think about it all - if they are lucky enough to have a pension that is worth anything at all that is.

I suppose what I am saying is that "change" can be bad as well as good. Fear of change takes root when the new is ushered in when a lot of people still feel that the old is still quite serviceable thank you very much (consensus has not been reached), which leads me to the church....

Change is a funny thing in the church and very controversial. That level of consensus that has been reached in US politics is seldom reached in the church. Some churches see any change at all an admission that what went before was lacking or somehow not "true" any more. Religion is often the only firm anchor people have in a changing and sometimes threatening world - so the more the world outside changes the more they want the church to remain the same. I have a certain sympathy for that state of mind, but as I must also remind myself - while an unchanging church has for many, come to represent an unchanging and constant God we must not confuse the two things. Surely our anchor should be *the unchanging and eternal love of God for each of us*, rather than the man-made trappings of religion. The trappings are there to lead us further into that love, to help us to experience that love and grow in that love. The test of change (and whether it is necessary) for the church should be whether those trappings are still fit for purpose. Do they still do what they are meant to do or do they now hold us (or others) back? So while they may still work for us, do they work for the man on the street who has just wandered in?

The changes needed in the church are those that work better at leading more people into God's arms. Not just change for change sake. I am also aware that when I say that, everyone from an ultra conservative to the ultra liberals can say "Yes" that is what we are doing/defending. Discernment, and close attention to the life and teachings of Jesus are the order of the day here - open discussions and prayer - the

sort of thing that the Anglican church has always done. Change is often very slow in the church, but just because it is slow doesn't mean it isn't sorely needed. And lack of change can be attractive. Some people enjoy being a part of a small close knit club with its own semi secret signs and special ways of speaking -people often do - the trouble is, Jesus died for the whole world not just a small club of people. The recent attendance figures for the church of England published for 2007 show an increase in the numbers training for ordained ministry but yet another decline in the number of people they will be ministering to. I suppose the question is - how small and marginalised do we have to become before we reach a consensus that "change" is desirable. And once we reach *that* point, the fight really begins, as to *what* changes and how far?

The **prayer for today** is by Bishop Ridding

*In times of doubt and questions,
when our belief is perplexed by new teaching, new thought,
when our faith is strained by creeds, by doctrines,
by mysteries beyond our understanding,
give us the faithfulness of learners,
and the courage of believers in thee;
Give us boldness to examine and faith to trust all truth,
stability to hold fast our tradition with enlightened interpretation,
to grasp new knowledge and combine it loyally and honestly with old;
alike from stubborn rejection of new revelation,
and from hasty assurance that we are wiser than our Fathers,
save us and help us O Lord.
Amen.*

Love and peace

Martin