

COR Newsletter – 15 April 2009

Dear all,

Easter Sunday in Bucharest

Just like last year our church was **full** this morning! There were also many faces that I didn't recognise so thank God, the COR is renewing itself as ever, which is especially reassuring as I have now been told more than once that ex-pats are leaving Bucharest in droves as the economic crisis deepens. Our profile is subtly shifting with this morning a large contingent of Filipinos, and it was also good to see our Nigerian members back after a short break.

I gave a "back to basics" sermon on the meaning of the resurrection for our lives and our usual fare was wonderfully supplemented by Suzanne, the sister of our treasurer, Christian Dickson, playing some modern choruses on guitar after my sermon and during the distribution. A spontaneous round of applause met the first song - "Jesus be my centre".

Frans and Marian dealt manfully with 14 children in the Sunday school and - *as I usually say as this point* - rather them than me!! But seriously, Frans, Marian, Hankie and Dagmar deserve our fulsome thanks for all the hard work they put in to the Sunday school, week after week. Thank you to Ian who brought in all the cakes to have with coffee. *Note: Cake provision is an oft neglected ministry sadly overlooked by the NT.*

Easter Eve in Skopje

John Barker decided to hold an Easter Eve service as the timings (fitting around the RC services) for Sunday were not conducive. This new and growing congregation attracted over 20 people to the service of light and renewal. Let us pray for John and Ela and this young congregation as they find their feet. John has posted some lovely photos of the service and some others of the beautiful Macedonian countryside. You can see them by following this link. <http://aresurrectionearyou.blogspot.com>

Next Sunday in Bucharest

I am officially on holiday this week so there will be **Morning Prayer** at 10am with **Sunday school**.

And looking ahead to the 26th April

I have already celebrated the Eucharist for the last time in Sofia and this Sunday will be my last celebration in Bucharest before departing for pastures new. Holy Communion at 10am with Sunday school

I think this is beautiful...

If you remember, last week I wrote about the corollary between love and grief. This touched a member of our Sofia congregation, Karen Harrison who remembered a poem she had written. This is what Karen said;

As ever, thank you for your thought for the day (more accurately "thoughts"). I was reminded of a poem I wrote 15 years ago when I left Jakarta after my first 3 year posting there. In retrospect it has been something of a manifesto for my subsequent journeyings. I think it will strike a chord:

Jakarta Departure Day, 14th December 1994

It is the pain that shocks me.
I have never before known
a parting that aches
behind my eyes and in my flanks,
forcing me to pant to push off tears.
I am sore and winded
with a leaving like striking hard ground.
But I will not be voiceless.
I will set this day in words
Like a charm to ward off loneliness.
Such days are the price of loving
and throughout my life I will pay again:
often, and gladly.

Karen Harrison

As I said, just beautiful. Sofia really is brimming with intelligent, gifted and spiritual people.

The lighter side.....

- * A preacher, whose sermon had gone down badly asked a friend afterwards: "How would you have delivered that sermon?".
"Under an assumed name," he replied.
- * "How many people work in the Vatican city, Holy Father?" "about half." (story told by Pope John XXIII)
- * Questioning the children before confirmation, the catholic Bishop asked one nervous little girl "What is matrimony?" She answered: "A place where souls suffer for a time on account of their sins". "No, no, said the parish priest, that's purgatory".
"Let her alone," said the Bishop. "She may be right. What do you or I know about it?"

Thought for the day

Are you looking for inspiration? For some cheering up? Something to fill your heart with joy, that represents renewal, life from death, hope for the future, the natural cycle of death and rebirth? Take a look at the photo attached to this email. It is a view of part of the village Green in Gainford, a bank festooned with daffodils and was sent to me by Sue, the wife of one of the church wardens there.

The divine paradigm of life out of death is written into the fabric of our universe. It was always so for those who could see it. The resurrection of Jesus is not an aberration, but a revelation of the mind and purpose of God for all creation. Jesus is the revelation of the truth of our existence, something that was always true but until Jesus had lain hidden. The writer that best expresses this in the Bible is the author of Ephesians (if not Paul then someone in his theological tradition). I have always found these words inspirational. I reproduce some of them here (Eph. 1: 3-10, 22-23) in tandem with the photo to enhance and interpret each other.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places,⁴ just as he chose us in Christ^{*} before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love.⁵ He

destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will, ⁶to the praise of his glorious grace that he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. ⁷In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace ⁸that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and insight ⁹he has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ, ¹⁰as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. ²²And he has put all things under his feet and has made him the head over all things for the church, ²³which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

The **prayer for today** is based on 2 Cor. 4-6

*O God, who in the work of creation
commanded the light to shine out of darkness:
we pray that the glorious gospel of Christ
may shine into the hearts of people everywhere,
dispelling the darkness of their ignorance and unbelief
and revealing to them the knowledge of your glory
in the face of Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.*

Love and peace

Martin