

COR Newsletter – 29 April 2009

Dear all

### **Last Saturday in Bucharest.**

Brixton came to Bucharest!! The COR was bursting at the seams this afternoon for the wedding blessing of **Colenzo and Irina**. Irina is Romanian and Colenzo is black British. They married in a civil ceremony in London last year and live in Brixton in South London but wanted a religious ceremony in Romania, for themselves mainly, but also for Irina's family and relatives. The Orthodox would not sanction it of course unless Colenzo converted to Orthodoxy. I have written copiously over the last three years on the untold hurt inflicted on decent people by organised religion and won't go over old ground now - but suffice to say that both have returned to church through Anglicanism in the UK and a hugely joyous and colourful service ensued with most of the people in the church actually from the UK especially in Romania for just this occasion.

### **and later that evening, did the earth move for you?**

No-one was hurt apparently so we can afford to be light-hearted but the **earthquake** this evening was a timely reminder that we do live in an earthquake zone. 5.3 on the Richter scale, the epicentre was about 100 KM from Bucharest so we only felt it as between 3 or 4 here, but it was quite frightening for those of us not used to such things, especially bearing in mind what has just occurred in Italy. I was sitting watching TV when I heard a low rumbling noise and then the floor and my chair started to shake. One of Claire's friends (Claire keeps in touch with her Romanian friends on facebook) had a wall crack in her living room. Because Romania was firmly behind the iron curtain in 1977, not many people in the west even know that there was a large earthquake here then that killed thousands. So a timely reminder then. If and when a large one strikes, do you know what to do?

### **Last Sunday in Bucharest**

A big **Thank you** to everyone who turned up on Sunday - hopefully not just to make sure that I was really going!!

Good to see so many people in the church and thank you for all the messages from people who would have been there but couldn't for various reasons. The atmosphere was really good and special thanks to Nick, Alison, Frans, John and Su Yen for all the kind words at the end of the service.

Two moments that will stick in my mind is when two of our young confirmation candidates, Alexandra and Alissa, were in floods of tears at the end as we said goodbye and when Su Yen made her impromptu emotional goodbye at the end of the service.

As I said at the time my last sermon in the COR might have been titled as "Jesus be my centre". Not tradition, not religious forms, not Mary, not spiritual gifts, not the cult of saints, not the bible, but God as revealed in Jesus Christ. All those other things can point to Jesus but the greatest danger is in letting any one of them (or a combination) push Jesus aside. Putting something or someone in place of God as revealed in Jesus is simply idolatry.

**Thank you** also for the cards and the voucher and the unexpected buffet meal at "Chez Marie" which was lovely. Some photos of the occasion together with some

from my last ever service in Sofia are now posted on our "picture gallery" on our website. You can reach that by clicking here; <http://churchofthesurrection.eu>

### **Next Sunday**

The Eucharist will be celebrated by **Rev. Steve Hughes** with **Sunday school** and **produce sale** at 10am as usual.

### **After that.....**

**Bishop James Johnson** will be arriving to take up the reins for a while in late June. Until then, the wardens will keep you informed, and there will be lay led worship for a few weeks. Please, please, please, this is **not** the time to desert the church. In fact, in the absence of a full time priest, this will actually be a time when the people leading the worship **will need your support and encouragement more than ever!!** There is in our wardens, treasurer, dedicated Sunday school team, and new church council a strong centre to carry the church forward but they need your support and a kind word and help. Help in welcoming people, getting the service sheets out, serving coffee, clearing up after the service and putting the books back where they belong. Also in offering yourself for reading and anything else that is needed in the church.

### **Floodlighting**

Marie told me at the lunch that floodlighting covering the restaurant, church, graffiti wall area is going to be in place within a couple of weeks. This is great news. We had always discussed doing this ourselves but now it is happening anyway. I hope it looks great and will expect to be sent some pictures of it in due course.

### **My own future**

I will be licensed in Gainford Parish church on Thursday 7th May as priest in charge of St. Mary's Gainford and St. Andrew's Winston and as Deanery missionary for Barnard castle deanery.

I have been asked on countless occasions to keep up my email communications and thoughts for the day to people. If you currently receive the COR newsletter and would like to receive future updates, prayers and thoughts for the day **you will need to inform me** - I won't just assume. As I said in a previous email this will be best served initially I think by a web log that is already set up but not in use yet. The address of that is as follows; <http://revmartinjacques.blogspot.com> and I think you can log in to it actually on the page - Followers - if you want to, in order to receive it automatically. This will be inactive for a couple or more weeks until I find my feet.

Or you could let me know on my new personal email which is [revmartinjacques@gmail.com](mailto:revmartinjacques@gmail.com) from 2nd May onwards. My new address in Gainford will be available via the wardens.

### **Signing off.**

It has been a challenge and a privilege to serve in Bucharest and Sofia these past three years. I will end this last communication from Bucharest with what I sometimes introduce as being the most beautiful prayer in the English language, known as the collect for purity.

*Almighty God,  
to whom all hearts are open,  
all desires known,*

*and from whom no secrets are hidden,  
cleanse the thoughts of our hearts  
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,  
that we may more perfectly love you  
and worthily magnify your holy name,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
Amen.*

Love and peace

Martin