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TT – ‘Travelling Together’ (58)

“AS FOR ME, IT IS GOOD TO BE NEAR GOD.” (Psalm 73 v 28)

Dear Friends,

May 2014

We rejoice when we look back to our celebration of **Easter at the FORUM**...

It was ushered in by the ‘**Day of Quiet and Reflection**’ held on “Palm Saturday” when we met as a small group to seek the LORD in a personal way. Afterwards as we shared we were astonished at how much love and insight that God had given us as we met with Him individually. We can **warmly recommend** this kind of special time! The plain and simple worship with communion on the evening of Good Friday was the next high point. We sang passion hymns and listened again to the Bible passages from St Matthew’s Gospel describing the story of the Lord Jesus’ suffering. It was a remembrance with thanksgiving! The family service on Easter Sunday was well attended and was full of joy: “**But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead!**” (1 Cor. 15:20) – We have just come back from a BEG workers’ weekend away in Wagrain in the Salzburg region: “**Family and Fellowship on the same track**”. It was a very enriching time.

Not a one–way street!

Many THANKS for the great number of questions that you sent us in response to our appeal in our last TT. Among them was an e–mail from a faithful prayer supporter who over the last few years has written down the names of all the people for whom we had asked for your prayers! She really wanted to know how these people were now doing. As we stopped to think about them, it turned into a collection of answers to prayer which has amazed us! **THANK YOU again that we can pass on to you various matters for prayer.** It makes it clear to us how much we depend on prayer, or rather on God’s intervention – in our work, in our everyday lives and in our meetings with various people.

Another question we received was: “**How do you cope with distressing experiences?**” As far as our emergency counselling ministry is concerned, we talk to each other a lot as a couple; even when Hans–Georg comes home late after a dramatic incident, Margret stays up so that we can start to digest our initial reactions to it by talking and praying together. The leaders also call us immediately after each incident for debriefing. Honestly we must admit that on the next day we go about our work in a more thoughtful and therefore slower way. A lot of things are gradually balanced out by our gratitude for our fulfilling life and the wonderful hope and future that we have in the Lord Jesus. After speaking to the bereaved we are often very aware of how apparently senselessly a life can be wasted and how suddenly it can all end. It makes us angry and sad at the same time when we think of what God could have done in that person’s life if it had been given to Him...! Often it is enough to remind ourselves of the verse: “**LORD, teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.**” (Ps 90 v 12) Sometimes after a funeral we go to our favourite ‘**Heurigen**’ (*). They know us there and when we arrive dressed in black we are greeted appropriately by the staff, we are served considerately and we quickly find ourselves talking about the important things in life. (* ‘**Heurigen**’ is a place to eat out, linked to a local vineyard, serving simple local food and wine.) **In the next TT we will try to answer some more of your questions... Any other Questions??**

What is an ‘Agape’?

On Sunday 4th May we had another special service at the FORUM, namely the induction of our fellow worker John Doss as the Pastoral Assistant. We had even invited representatives from the political community as well as from other churches in the area. After the service we were having an ‘**Agape**’. Here in Austria we use this to describe a reception following a church celebration with a stand–up buffet and the opportunity to meet and talk to other people. **And what a day this was!** It turned out to be a great Get–Together of Brothers and Sisters from a variety of churches from Burgenland and Lower Austria, from the immediate and wider region... It has been immensely uplifting to us to worship together with them, to exchange words of greeting and encouragement, to listen to the sermon, to sing and pray, to bless John together and to meet people whom we hadn’t seen for years... Though we are still a small flock, the one hundred or so people showed us that we’re definitely not alone on the way seeking to reach our heavenly destination... Praise the LORD! We are delighted that our FORUM co–workers have agreed to take on John Doss part–time and they are prepared to support him and his family financially.

What have we got coming up in May?

11th and 18th May: Hans–Georg is **preaching** at the FORUM and in Gmuend, Waldviertel (Lower Austria)

12th May: **Funeral service** in a place near Eisenstadt, **15th May:** Funeral service for our good friend **Thirza** in Vienna

21st–26th May: **Deputation work in S. Germany: Aldingen, Metzingen, Freudental**, also Visiting friends and relatives

31st May: **Workshop on ‘Funerals and Supporting the Bereaved’ in Graz**, **1st Jun.:** Hans–Georg **preaching** at Leibnitz

THANK YOU for all your interest in our work, your understanding and your faithful support.

On the outside we may appear strong, but in our hearts, emotionally and also physically we are as weak and vulnerable as anyone else! We need you!



Warmly, Hans-Georg, Margret & Annika

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