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Dear Friends,

TT - Travelling Together' (31)

December 2011

During the last week of November the east of Austria lay under a thick blanket of persistent fog. Only a few times did the sun manage to peek through this 'pea-souper'. We rejoiced all the more in these few beams of sunshine which let us see the world around us in a different light!

Like 'sunbeams'...

Some dear friends joined us at the funeral of our Mother Hoprich in Gerlingen. This came as a surprise for us and at the same time it was very comforting. Some of them we hadn't seen for many years and every unexpected meeting was a warm ray of sunshine for our family during this solemn day. We are so grateful to them!

Bright and cheerful singing!

On the evening of 15th November it was icy cold and the fog was very thick, the sort of night when you wouldn't turn anyone away from your door! Margret was on her way to a meeting in a neighbouring village... "I crept along slowly and carefully in the car, hoping I would reach the Croat-speaking women's group in one piece! I wondered if anyone would bother turning up at all to sing in such dreadful weather... I left these concerns with the Lord Jesus and was doubly glad to find twelve excited ladies waiting for me! How much joy they had as they sang! Some of them told me they found the words of certain songs uplifting in difficult times. In between the songs my friend Sonja read from the Bible. She has been meeting regularly with this colourful group of women for seven years. She read Acts chapter 16... Paul and Silas in prison... they sang and praised God in the most difficult of circumstances - and the doors opened! Through His Word and through singing God shines HIS bright beams into our needy souls! They are such a loveable group and I will see them again at their Christmas party on Dec 14th.

Prayer brings light!

The best way to counteract the gloom of early winter is still to begin each day with prayer and thanksgiving. Then we will see light shining into the often persistent spiritual 'foggy conditions' in and around us. How often we have given thanks for small, seemingly insignificant things and then seen great things happen!

A special THANK YOU to you for supporting us faith- fully throughout 2011 with your prayers and gifts!

Light in a crisis!

Recently we were asked to attend a visit in preparation for a funeral in a village by Lake Neusiedl. The widower, who is still relatively young, had gone to a lot of trouble by the usual means to find someone to support him in his extreme grief and who would carry out a dignified ceremony to put the urn containing his late wife's ashes in its final resting place, but he couldn't find anybody! The local funeral director then put him in touch with us. We met a man who was in the depths of despair, but who quickly came to trust us and opened up to us about his situation and his late wife. We weren't surprised that he didn't have a Bible, but we always have a small pocket Bible to give away at these visits. He was glad to receive this unexpected gift. Margret read Psalm 121 from it and he accepted Hans-Georg's offer to pray with him at the end of the visit. He later told us over the telephone that the conversation with us and the funeral have given him a lot of comfort and encouragement - in spite of being very anxious. May be he will accept our invitation to the **FORUM Christmas celebration on Dec. 10th**.

Things are brighter now...

...for our Annika. This means it is easier for her to get on the bus early on Monday mornings to take her back to the college in Oberwart. Homesickness reoccurs from time to time, but a mobile phone call is often enough to reassure her. She knows that people are praying for her and is very GRATEFUL!

Jesus the Light of the World

...which is something to be shared! This is why there are many special events and meetings during Advent. This is certainly the case with us here in Eisenstadt: • **10th Dec.: Our FORUM is having a Christmas celebration.** We have been busy giving out invitations and hope that we will see many new faces. • **15th-22nd Dec.:** Quite unexpectedly Hans-Georg will drive again with Erich, the co-ordinator of our Austrian BEG Christmas Parcel Appeal "Hope and Joy" to Lutsk, West Ukraine. **Please pray for protection for the long journey in perhaps wintry conditions, and also for wisdom and for God's guidance as they meet various people.** • **18th Dec.:** The city of Eisenstadt has let us have a large stand at the **Christmas street market.** As well as having good Christian books, CDs, calendars and other useful gifts for sale, we are also offering fruit punch, coffee and tea and we would like to have many good conversations. • **25th Dec.:** **There will be a Christmas service in our FORUM.** We are praying for hearts that are open to the 'glad tidings'. **We are spending Christmas with our children and grandchildren and are looking forward to that very much.** • **28th Dec. 2011-2nd Jan. 2012:** Hans-Georg is taking part in a Europe-wide youth missionary conference 'mission-net' in Erfurt (central Germany). Together with other colleagues he is looking after the information stand of one of our partner missions.

It's lovely that we can pray for each other! That way in spite of the 'fog' in our daily lives we won't forget what a great God we serve and **one day "the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father."** (Mt 13:43)

We wish you sincerely a bright Advent season and a Happy Christmas we look back with thanks over the past year and look forward with confidence to the New Year (2012).



With love

Hans-Georg, Margret & Annika Hoprich

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