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"TT - EXTRA" - Prayer - 'Fire Brigade'

Dear Friends,

End of April 2020

It's such a privilege knowing we can always count on you for support in prayer!

We have a (Broadcast-) '**WhatsApp-Group**' that we use to pass on urgent prayer requests (**English & German**) – this group has now become our **Prayer 'Fire Brigade'**.

It's making a big difference, as we experienced on Weds. 22nd April...



"You still available?" – That's always the first question when the funeral director phones us to request our help. We are called in when someone asks them for a "Christian burial service"; in most cases, it means that the deceased has left the State Church. This was the case here... It was to take place at a small local cemetery in a nearby Croat-speaking village. This was the first time we were to hold a funeral under the **Coronavirus restrictions**: no reception to be held afterwards in the cemetery chapel, no more than ten people to attend, everyone to be 'socially distanced' at the graveside – wearing facemasks!

The deceased was a 93-yr old man, a former school head teacher known across Burgenland. He had **died in hospital, alone and lonely**. Many years ago, he had left the Church. It was never talked about in his family. When his son heard that his father had no church affiliation, he was astounded.

Relationships within the family appeared to be really difficult...

The meeting with the widow to plan the funeral was held the Sunday before at a private covered swimming pool.

The widow surprised us by saying, **"You know what? The first time we spoke on the phone that was really therapeutic!"**

At the end of it, we read **Psalms 121** with her and we were able to give her a small **New Testament**.

The next day we got an email from her niece who specifically wanted to thank us for this.

The **funeral** has now taken place... A video recording was made for the many who couldn't attend. In spite of the restrictions, a surprisingly large crowd gathered at the cemetery, all well-spaced out. It was the request of the family to include a sung version of **Dietrich Bonhoeffer's** poem **"By Loving Forces Silently Surrounded"** following the eulogy. Hans-Georg was then able to briefly draw attention to Bonhoeffer's unshakeable courage of his convictions (the 75th anniversary of Bonhoeffer's execution is currently being commemorated https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dietrich_Bonhoeffer).

Hans-Georg's **address** was about the Lord Jesus's final words: **"It is finished"** – the resurrection as an after-Easter message and one of the best-witnessed facts in human history! He also included an invitation to everyone present to accept the gift of forgiveness and eternal life... there and then!

It wasn't just the family and mourners who could hear the message, but also the funeral director, the pallbearers and the cemetery staff... A lady came up to us afterwards and said, **"I really must get to know you!"**

The widow called us that evening, **"When everything's calmed down, I'd love to meet up with you and go for a walk..."**

Now it is our heartfelt wish that the Good News will continue to have an effect on all who attended and those who will watch the video recording. **Please will you pray with us?**

Also: If anyone would like to join our WhatsApp Prayer 'Fire Brigade', please let us know!

Our hearts are filled with gratitude for your prayers and support – especially in the challenging time that we all face! God bless you all abundantly, stay safe!



Hans-Georg & Margret

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