

**• NOVEMBER 2011 NEWSLETTER OF THE CHURCH
OF THE RESURRECTION, BUCHAREST**



Greetings at the beginning of a new Church Year! We have now begun the Advent journey to Christmas, and there are various seasonal delights to attract you to the Church of the Resurrection:

- On Sunday 4th December at 10 a.m. we will celebrate the Feast of St Nicholas. We expect to receive a visit from the saint. He has a very busy schedule at this time of year but has agreed to visit us on Sunday morning. Children are encouraged to bring with them an extra shoe! After the service there will be a sandwich lunch available for 10 RON and also a small bazaar.
- On Tuesday 13th December at 7 p.m. the Diplomatic Choir will give a Christmas concert in church. The choir includes singers from many different countries, and they will perform a varied international selection of seasonal music. Entrance is free. There will be a retiring collection for church funds.
- On Wednesday 14th December at 7 p.n. we will hold our Christmas Carol Service, a traditional sequence of Lessons and Carols which remind us of the true meaning of Christmas. Afterwards there will be seasonal refreshments available.
- On Christmas Eve at 11.30 p.m. there will be a celebration of Midnight Mass.
- On Christmas Day at 10 a.m. there will be a celebration of Holy Communion.

In addition to these special occasions our regular pattern of worship continues at 10 a.m. on Sundays. During the four weeks of Advent there will also be services of Holy Communion at 1 p.m. on Wednesdays. The first such service, on 30th November, will celebrate the feast of St Andrew, patron saint of Romania and Scotland.

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During November I attended the meeting of the Romanian Liaison Group at Lambeth Palace. It was interesting to meet other clergy interested in links with Romania. Among those present were former Chaplains Chris Newlands and James Ramsay, who send their greetings to members of the Church of the Resurrection.

On Armistice Day (11th November) we held a short Service of Remembrance in church. On Remembrance Sunday there was a Service of Remembrance at Tancabesti Commonwealth War Graves Commission Cemetery north of Bucharest, in which a Chaplain from the R.A.F. and a Romanian military Chaplain participated. Wreaths were laid by Ambassadors and other dignitaries. Of the 89 graves in the cemetery 83 belong to World War Two: 81 airmen from the R.A.F., the R.A.A.F., the R.C.A.F., the R.N.Z.A.F., and the S.A.A.F., and 2 British soldiers. From World War One there are six naval graves and a memorial to a Ghurkha soldier.

In Sofia the Commonwealth War Graves Commission Cemetery contains 160 graves from the First World War and 28 graves from the Second World War. The Commonwealth Cemetery is next to the German, Italian and French Military Cemeteries. On Remembrance Sunday there is a sequence of four ceremonies in these cemeteries. Participants move from one cemetery to the next, and many nations lay wreaths at all four memorials. This year I conducted the Commonwealth ceremony in English and the Italian ceremony in Italian, there being no Italian priest available. In the afternoon the Anglican community in Sofia enjoyed an excellent American Thanksgiving Dinner. The following day I travelled to Plovdiv to conduct a service in the World War One British Military Cemetery. This cemetery contains 55 graves. Wreaths were laid by the British Charge d'Affaires and the Irish Ambassador (there being 9 Irish graves from all four provinces of Ireland) as well as by local dignitaries.

The end of November is marked both by the beginning of Advent and the celebration on Wednesday of the feast of St Andrew, patron saint of Romania and Scotland. In the Orthodox tradition St Andrew is known as "the first called" because he was the first person called to be a disciple of Christ. (Matthew and Mark record how Andrew was called together with his brother Simon Peter, but in John's Gospel Andrew meets Jesus and then goes to tell Simon Peter, saying "We have found the Messiah." St Andrew is believed to have preached the Gospel in Dobrogea, on Romania's Black Sea coast. According to tradition he was martyred in the Greek city of Patras by being crucified on an X-shaped cross.

St Andrew's skull became a well-travelled relic. It made its way from Patras to Constantinople and on to Rome. In 1964 Pope Paul VI returned it to the Greek Orthodox Church. Since then the skull has resided in Patras, but this autumn it was brought to Bucharest to attend the celebrations of the city's patron saint, St Dimitrie the New. According to tradition other relics of St Andrew were taken by St Regulus to the east coast of Scotland (after an angel told him to travel "towards the ends of the earth") where the city now known as St Andrews sprang up around them. Scottish churchmen and patriots alike have rejoiced that their patron saint is an Apostle whereas the English have in St George a mere oriental warrior!

In the Gospels Andrew appears as a sympathetic and approachable character. It was to him that the small boy came with five loaves and two small fishes at the feeding of

the five thousand. It was to Andrew that Philip turned when some Greeks approached him and asked to see Jesus. So we may well think not only of St Andrew's bones travelling around Europe but of the friendly Galilean fisherman, ready to bring his own brother and others to Christ and in due course to give his life for his faith, who had the ability to welcome with equal grace a small boy prepared to share his lunch and foreigners interested in Jesus. Welcoming is an important part of Christian ministry and of welcoming St Andrew is surely the patron saint.

Best wishes from Father Patrick