

Mission to Serbia

By Deacon Zoltán Kunszabó

One of the best results of the previous mission year is the fundamental openness of parishes towards mission activities. We have received a lot of invitations from the pastors of the Nagybecskerek Diocese to visit their parishes and communicate a new breath of the living and joyful Spirit of God. We had the opportunity to serve at the parish of Törökkanizsa, where the Roman Catholic community (mostly Hungarians) live as a minority among the Serbian Orthodox majority.



Pastor József Bogdán, the well known priest-poet explained to us before the event that there was no possibility for a large visible mission in the small city because of the religious and ethnic tensions. So we planned a mission program in the church building in the framework of a Sunday morning Mass.

We arrived in Serbia in the afternoon and our first stop and accommodation for the night was the parish of Csóka, where Pastor József Mellár, the dean of the diocese very kindly hosted us. We left early the next morning to reach Törökkanizsa and were joined by Attila Bánhidi, one of the founder-members of the New Jerusalem Community in Budapest, Hungary and László Csiszér and his wife and helper Erika. There was also a group of the local charismatic leaders from the close cities who came to our assistance. The Holy Mass started at 9:00 am with a packed church of 300 people. It was the first Mass with guitars and lay testimony in the history of this local church!

During the Holy Mass Laci Csiszér served with worship music in his very touching way and Attila gave his testimony; it is a great story about a young man without any religious background who the Lord Jesus revealed Himself to step by step and grabbed his heart. I served as a deacon, read the Gospel of the Transfiguration and gave a mission speech. After Mass we sang more and offered the opportunity for people to dedicate their lives to Jesus in a deeper way and to come forward for prayer. We also called the sick for healing prayer. We prayed for more than an hour in three groups in the ice-cold church; there is no money in Serbia for the luxury of heating. The hunger for the Lord's healing and tender love was incredible. It was really touching to hear the stories of these simple, poor and wounded people from a country of continuing wars the last two decades. They have no help in life – especially not from the institutions of the society. It was great to see them drinking the waters of eternal life with tears in their eyes – in a community where prayer ministry was unknown until this day. It showed that this kind of service can be really natural in groups of believers because it responds to their real spiritual needs.



Afterwards, we were invited to lunch by Pastor József Bogdán. The warm chicken soup was like medicine after the cold church. Our ongoing mission in Serbia is to communicate love and encouragement to the parish priests fighting alone with the difficult spiritual and practical circumstances. We have a great hope that, as Fr. Bogdán said, some of the young people who came to see us for the service will join the community of the Church. Let's pray for for God's new plants in Törökkanizsa, Serbia!