

# Mission to Serbia

By Deacon Zoltán Kunszabó

AT THE INVITATION of Diocesan Bishop László Németh, we continued our wonderful mission series in the Diocese of Nagybecskerek, Serbia. The plan was to visit all of Fr. Tamás Masa's four villages with mission programs focusing on the candidates for confirmation, their parents and confirmation sponsors.

We began our opening Mass for the whole mission in the parish church of Padé. I spoke about God's desire to communicate His life-giving love to each person, and our task as Catholic Christians to help fulfill His will. On our first Evening of Witness, the church was almost full. Laci Csizsér led the worship and Tomi Olaj gave his testimony. He had lost both of his parents when he was 17. He left school and began a criminal career as a burglar. By the time he was 25, he had been in prison four times. We met him in this situation in our homeless care center in Budapest and immediately recognized his intelligence and openness to the big questions of life. He was very happy to attend our Alpha Course and his heart was wonderful soil for the word of God. His life changed dramatically and after an additional year of preparation he received the sacraments of baptism, confirmation and first communion. I am his proud godfather. Now he works in a factory and lives in a rented room. In September he began high school through a correspondence course and he has the chance to continue in university. After his testimony I spoke about God who has power to change lives. Then we gave people the opportunity to receive the outpouring of the Holy Spirit through prayer ministry. The people were really thankful for it. Many were really touched by the love of God.

The next day we had a very busy program. In the morning we spent a long time in prayer. At noon we started a service in the gym of the elementary school for the upper grades and their teachers. Laci taught them Christian songs with hand motions and Tomi shared his testimony. After that I spoke about the biblical theme of two ways: one that leads to life and one to devastation. The youngsters were really attentive. At the end I led them in a common prayer to choose life. Most of them were really praying.

In the afternoon we formed two groups. Fr. Róbert led a team to Hódegyháza for a meeting with the youth who were going to receive confirmation. Then he celebrated Mass with a mission

speech and began an Evening of Witness. My team had a very similar program in Tiszaszentmiklós. Then we started an interactive meeting with the candidates for confirmation. The sharings and the encouragements from Laci, Tomi and myself found open hearts. At the end all of them (twelve boys and girls) came forward for personal prayer ministry. Afterwards, we had the same program with the parents and sponsors in the church. I emphasized that this moment also requires real repentance from them and prayed over many of them. After Mass we continued with worship and the testimony of Tomi and I preached on the meaning of real conversion and repentance. The prayer ministry was fiery and blessed. Many came to us with real decision to change.

Our program the following day was very similar to the previous day. We started with a very early school mission in Szaján, and then began another one in Padé. These secular elementary schools were extremely friendly to our mission. We then had an informal meeting with the confirmation candidates, with a prayer ministry at the end. On our last Evening of Witness the church was filled not only with local people but also with a lot of prayer group members. The worship was very blessed and the people received the fire of the Holy Spirit and didn't want to leave!

Saturday began with a youth sports and worship morning at the elementary school. We sang and I spoke about the real Champion of the World who triumphed over death!

After lunch Bishop Németh arrived to celebrate the sacrament of confirmation in four different cities, beginning on Saturday evening and ending the following afternoon. The churches were packed and you could see smiling faces everywhere. It was difficult to say goodbye to our brothers and sisters in faith. We were very happy to serve the local Church here, according to their real needs, building God's kingdom. +



**Zoli interviews Tomi, the former burglar, in front of the children.**



**Laci and the team lead the music ministry during a school mission.**