

Marpod, Lent 2023

*Dear friends,*

„Attempted murder in Ziegental! Victim hospitalized with serious injuries!“

The news headlines startled us. Rumours spread like wildfire; no-one knew the exact details. So, we drove directly to Ziegental (Țichindeal) in order to talk to people. First of all, I visited Cristina. She cares for families and gets around a lot in the village. She herself grew up with many siblings in a hut more like a stable, but fought her way out of neglect and miserable surroundings. Now she works with us, has a good husband and four children. Just last autumn, they were finally able to move into their own little house.

When I entered the living room, Cristina was just feeding her twins. One of the boys was suckling, the other was wailing hungrily. She couldn't tell me much about the „murder“ story. But I should go to the weaving mill: Anca would know more about it, it was her husband Toma who had been knifed in the altercation.

Large sacks of wool filled the weaving mill yard – a sign that there were many new orders. But today the looms were silent. Anca was absent, she had gone to the hospital to be with her injured husband. All was clamour and commotion, everyone talked at once. Toma was constantly asking for trouble, he was drunk so often. He always got into fights. Last night he had burst in on the young people's party and that was how the disaster had occurred. The perpetrator was Bogdan, 19-year-old son of Piki.

My breath caught. Bogdan, such a good fellow! As a child he had already cared for his own two goats and earned a little money. Then he remained with his father when his mother left the family. But now the police had taken him away.

Through the ankle-deep mud, I reached the house in which Bogdan lives with his father, down the valley at the end of the village. Who would even answer the door? The boy gone; his father badly disabled. He used to work for garbage collection in Sibiu but was caught in the shredding machine. One foot had to be amputated; the wound on the other one doesn't heal.

Adriana opened the door: Bogdan's married sister. She had come to help their father and to look after their two younger siblings whom Bogdan usually cares for. Piki lamented that the police had arrested Bogdan. Even though he was his father's only support and such a good son. That drunkard Toma had often threatened his son. He had broken Bogdan's arm, and Bogdan had pressed charges against him. „Yesterday, at the birthday party, Toma was suddenly standing in the doorway and attacked my boy,” Piki told me, „and then Bogdan drew his knife. The others ran away and fetched the police. Bogdan was thrown in jail, Toma taken to hospital. And what shall we do now?”

„I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore, choose life, that both you and your descendants may live.” (Deut 30:19) – May this word of God take root in our hearts.

For Toma and all the injured, we hope that they will find healing for their bodies and their souls. For the unfortunate culprit and all the burdened, we hope they will again be free and can again care for others. All educators, caretakers and parents should see the young ones and rejoice that they choose life. The Resurrection gives us hope and strength in our Social Centres, which provide a refuge for children.

Dear friends, we thank you for your loyal companionship in difficult and joyful times, at Easter, the celebration of life. We wish you happy days!

*Ruth Zenkert*

Ruth Zenkert and the ELIJAH-community



Bogdan as a small boy



In Ziegental.



Resurrection. Icon in our chapel.