

Marpod, in Lent 2022

Dear friends,

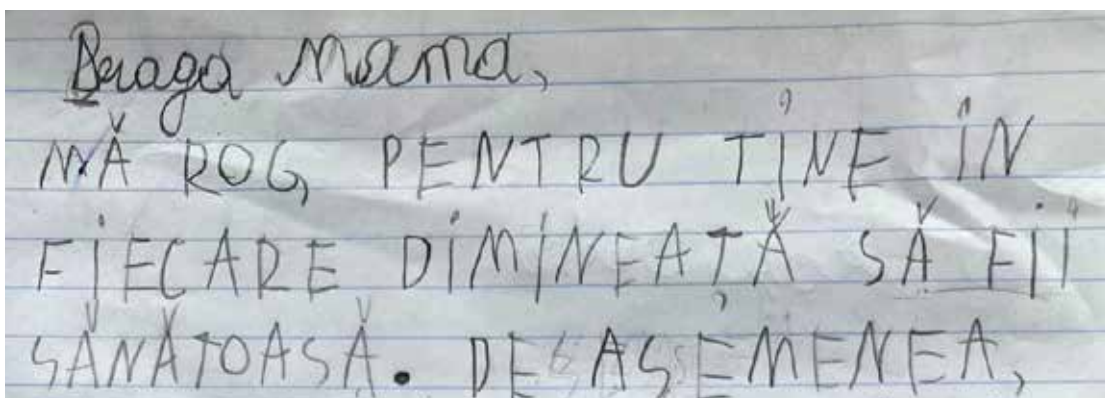
„Dear Mama“, Ovidiu starts his letter to his mother. The first letter of his life. Ovidiu is fourteen, but still rather small and stockily built. He never went to school, instead he roamed the village and had a reputation as a „rocker“. Last autumn he forced himself on us. We would have to accept him into our house, because two of his sisters were already here with us. If we didn't, he threatened, he would kidnap them. He wished to learn to write just like his sister Paula, he professed at length. We expected him to last at most three days – he wouldn't endure any longer in an orderly house, we thought. Far wrong! He took a shower – that was a new experience – was given warm clothing and came to table with an enormous appetite. He even managed to rise early and took part in the communal morning prayers. While the other children attended school, Fridolin, a young assistant from Vienna, taught him his first block letters.

Three months later Ovidiu proudly showed me the letter to his mother and especially pointed out the cursive writing at the beginning and the end – he was now learning that too!

„Dear Mama,

I PRAY FOR YOU EVERY MORNING SO THAT YOU STAY HEALTHY. I ALSO PRAY FOR MY BROTHERS AND MY SISTERS AND FOR PAPA. I HOPE THE PIG AND THE OTHER ANIMALS IN THE YARD ARE DOING WELL. I HAVE STARTED TO READ AND TO WRITE – WITH FRIDOLIN, A FRIEND. THIS LETTER WILL SHOW YOU HOW FAR I HAVE GOTTEN. I LOVE YOU ALL AND HUG YOU.

With love, Ovidiu“



Draga mama,
MĂ ROG, PENTRU TINE ÎN
FIECARE DIMINEAȚĂ SĂ FII
SĂNĂTOASĂ. DE ASEMENEA,

Now we are nearing Easter and Ovidiu is still with us. For how long?

He can lead morning prayers just like his younger sister. To each member of the community, he assigns a task for the prayers. He explains the daily Gospel, the letters of which he studied with Fridolin for two hours. Here he stands before us, a self-confident young man who has lost the „rocker’s” brutal manner. He speaks without shyness and greets us all with a „Good morning” in all the volunteers’ separate languages. Even before breakfast he hurries to the chicken coop and greets his charges, scatters their feed and retrieves the eggs from the nests. Day by day the number of eggs was diminishing. Recently, Ovidiu crept into the doghouse just beside the chicken coop – and found twenty-one eggs which the chickens had hidden there to brood. Obviously by mutual agreement with the dog.

So that’s how our Easter eggs look! We have the chickens to thank for them, and also a young person who has emerged into the light from the darkness of neglect. Ovidiu radiates warmth. He can show love for his mother, a mother who has borne twelve children and only suffers beatings and deception from her husband. He prays for his siblings and for the poor who are not as well off as he is. Nor does he forget his beloved pig. The resurrection of a child, brought about by the friendship of an eighteen-year-old volunteer.

Dear friends, who support us in our work, thank you. We can take in children; we can teach young people to help. We care for animals and have enough to eat. Our Easter joy here has its roots in you. May our gratitude light up your hearts and homes with joyousness.

With love from all the ELIJAH community,

Fr. Georg Sporschill SJ

