

Marpod, in der Fastenzeit 2025

Liebe Freundinnen und Freunde!

„Hold my hand, Tati“, the little girl says, and pulls the big man onwards. She wants to get home. Together, the two of them have been fetching water from the village well in Țichindeal. The water in the trough is frozen hard and only a thin trickle flows from the tap. It was a long wait in the cold until the five-litre container was full. As always, her little black dog is with them.

When the girl sees us, she greets us and tells us who should hold whose hand. Her name is Sofia. She looks at me, at Ruth, then at her grandfather Luca, whom she calls Tati. „Now we'll run home quickly“, she commands us. We walk up the hill, the dog trotting behind us. The house we built years ago has been repainted a bright blue. Luca brings in the water. Sofia leads me to the shed behind the house. She shows me the two piglets and the mare with her foal. Then she pulls the gate shut with both hands and brings us into the house to her grandfather. Luca has lit a fire in the wood-burning stove. I am amazed: never has it been so tidy and clean. A large Roma family used to live here, but now only Luca and Sofia remain.

Luca is proud of his horses, with which he used to provide services for the village farmers and earn a little money. But he often left it all at the pub, came home drunk, there were quarrels and beatings. The morning after, he was sorry. It was hell on earth for his wife and children. Their daughters started hanging around with all sorts of men early on. One is in prison, another one drinks, another one came to Luca one evening and wanted to beat up the whole family. Only one of the six daughters has a good family and a job. The son Ionuz died of cancer at the age of fourteen. Mum Lucica cleaned for the Colonel and held everything together. During the coronavirus period I had to bury her.

Their unruly daughter Andreia got involved with a boy from the village when she was sixteen. She became pregnant but then he wanted no more to do with her. One day she disappeared with another fellow and left her child behind. Sofia stayed with her

grandfather. Luca has been looking after the little girl ever since. He never heard from Andreia again. But now that he has lost everything else, his wife, his children, his job, he still has a treasure, cheeky little Sofia. She decides what Tati should do. He feeds the animals and cooks the meals. And Sofia has even managed to stop Luca drinking. I ask Sofia: „Where is the good Lord? “The child points to Luca and says „Tati!“

Full of hope, we leave the tragic home in Țichindeal, which the Saxons called Ziegental („Goat Valley “). How well the two of them cope! The small one is the strongest and turns the tide. The Resurrection turns everything upside down.

Dear friends, you support the ELIJAH community, you turn the world upside down. Easter is coming about.

In grateful connectedness,

P. Georg Sporschill SJ



**Țichindeal. Ruth with Luca and Sofia,
the little ruler who gives us hope.**