

Bucharest, Lent 2026

Dear friends,

Two wide eyes stare through our kitchen window with a pleading look. We open the door and a small group of wild boys storm in and sit down at the breakfast table hungrily. They were abroad all night; they had absconded because they desperately wanted to see the Rapid football match. They know where to get into the stadium through a hole in the fence. Today, they will all fall asleep over their school lessons.

That is what our arrival among the street children in Bucharest looked like thirty years ago. Most of the kids settled quite well into community life. Sometimes, however, it took several attempts before they could let go of the tempting freedom of the street. Some of them never made it, they ran off from the children's homes and later from the shared accommodation. They remained eternal street children, no one cares for them, they have missed all their chances. Life on the streets with drugs and alcohol has made them ill. The conditions in emergency shelters, with many beds to a room, where things are stolen and lice and fleas spread, overwhelms them. Too near proximity to others is hard to cope with and leads to conflicts, so they had rather return to the streets. To some hiding place where they must survive nights in the cold with the help of a few blankets and drugs.

Some months ago, we opened a drop-in centre near Bucharest Main Station. Fabian visits the street people daily, bringing them tea, medicine and above all friendship. In the afternoon they can come to the centre, the Casa Luisa, to wash, warm up, rest – and to pray. Dinner gives them strength. The second home, Casa Robert, has been freshly renovated. Now twenty "street children" can also stay the night. Those who have gotten hold of a bed are happy and no longer think of going to watch football matches at night. A joyful community has developed.

Father Georg visited our friends from the street in Bucharest this winter. They love the new house and help out wherever they can. As a child, Victor accompanied songs on the keyboard; now a toothless male choir sings the old-time melodies. They all still know them by heart. Costi used to enjoy helping in the kitchen and now he wants to show that he still knows good recipes. Nicusor sweeps the yard and hurries to lend a hand wherever he can. Alex is more of a philosopher and comments on the world; here he is welcome to preach.

Can people still find a home after so many years on the streets? That is our question at Easter, as we celebrate the Resurrection from the tomb and liberation from the deadly embrace of the street. With you, dear friends, we share our hope. Thank you for all your help!

Patru Reubert

Celebrating the Resurrection

