



Ross hits ground running

BY MADELEINE KOO

Apart from St Patrick's Day, Easter holds a special place in predominantly Catholic Ireland. As he prepares to celebrate his first Easter on Irish soil, ECM's new short-term missionary in Waterford, Ross McGaughran, is discovering that mission is all about making connections in this new land.



Ross.

Canadian lady and myself.

Please pray for my relationship with every one of them as we seek to serve the community. Pray that God would give us all unity and that I would find a useful fit within the team. Also, please pray for wisdom and humility as I prepare talks for people I don't really know that well.



Nathan (not his real name) is a late 40s Irishman and owns the house I am living in. He is known by two of the other missionaries. When they found out Nathan was looking to rent a room they organised for us to meet. He is a nice guy and has been really welcoming. He even explains a lot of the quirks of Irish culture, which really helps. He has also invited me out to pub trivia on a Monday where I've gotten to meet a bunch of his mates and see more Irish culture in action. I've already been able to have some great chats with Nathan about his past involvement with churches, both Catholic and Protestant. Mission here is mostly focused on relationships, particularly the building of trust between yourself and those around you. Please pray that God will help Nathan to yearn for a relationship with Him that is more than just organised religion.

It's also been great to get to know the mission leadership team. At the moment there is an Australian couple, an Australian lady, a Northern Irish couple, an Irish lady, a

Ross's prayer points

- Pray that Easter will be a time for connection with non-Christians who attend Easter services.
- Pray for Nathan and his friends from trivia and that Ross would witness well as they get to know each other.
- Pray for clarity and resonance with the youth group despite the unfamiliarity of a new leader.
- Pray for continued opportunities for Ross to serve the team and church to lighten others' loads.



Your gift can transform someone's life



A gift in your Will is the greatest commitment that you can make to help Europeans come to know Jesus. To send new missionaries costs a great deal of money. Your gifts enable ongoing gospel work across Europe by a growing team of workers using various skills, spiritual gifts

and backgrounds to share the love and message of Christ Jesus.

So, whether large or small a gift in your Will is greatly valued because it ensures that someone's life will be transformed in Jesus.

Please contact ECM for further details.



Josh & Ali Reeve
In preparation for long term ministry, Albania

This Easter season will be a busy one for us as we travel to various churches and seek to build a team of ministry partners.

While we are busy and often tired, it really is such a joy for us to be able to talk to people about the great need for gospel work in Albania. It is an even greater joy to meet so many who share a passion for Albanians to find salvation in Jesus.

As a family we are also particularly thankful at the moment because God has blessed us with another baby, due in September. While this means our departure for Albania will be delayed by a few months, we know that God's timing is perfect as he works through these things to direct our path.

Please keep praying for us. Pray that we would bring honour to Jesus as we speak to people and churches, and that in the busyness of life we would prioritise our relationship with him.



Georg & Sandra Haemmerle
Serving in Dornbirn, Austria

After Christmas, Easter is the next big thing in Austria. For some people it means their second annual church visit. For others it is an event where family comes together, chocolate eggs are hunted and kids are getting presents from the Easter bunny.

The forty days leading up to Easter are significant for many people and they decide to fast from certain things (sweets, TV, Facebook etc). Even children are participating.

Our church has been running special events in those weeks, trusting and hoping that people are more open in that period of time. In past years the Gospel of Mark drama has been staged, people invited their friends to read a book together and discuss it. This year's event is a foundation course of the Christian faith. Please pray for that.

The Easter bunny has replaced Jesus as the main character of Easter in Austria, but we are nevertheless thankful that we celebrate Easter as a nation as it offers opportunities to bring Jesus into the picture. And surely his satisfaction lasts way longer than the best Swiss chocolate eggs!



Sashko Nezamutdinov
ECM Partner in Krakow, Poland

In Catholic Poland preparation for Easter starts with Fat Thursday – a "Pączki Day" – on a week prior to Ash Wednesday when everyone eats doughnuts (Polish doughnuts don't have a hole in them and are filled with jam). Palm Sunday is a special holiday too.

Some people may say that Easter is all about tradition, celebration, meeting with family, but deep down they know that it's also mainly (or all) about food.

As our church plant approaches Easter, we would like to focus on the Holy Week when everything around you in Krakow reminds you of what happened on the cross over 2,000 years ago.

Our plan is to hold a Good Friday service and walk through all the specific events of Jesus' last day on Earth as a man.

Pray that in this deeper contemplative service, hearts would be touched by the Holy Spirit and Christ would be glorified.



Ray & Cathy Busuttil
Serving in ECM office, Sydney

Since the start of this year, my (Ray) ministry role has had a major shift. I have moved from directing ECM to a focus on mobilisation: raising up and preparing new missionaries. It has been refreshing being released to meet Bible college students on campus. This has been a passion for Cathy and me for a number of years – to send out a new generation of harvest workers to Europe.

What I hadn't anticipated was the grief I would experience in letting go of the relationships developed with our ECM workers over the past decade. We're still connected but leadership gives access and responsibility closer to the heart of our people. However, knowing the directorship is in Matt George's capable hands is reassuring.

With Easter drawing close, we are seeking to grasp opportunities to explain Jesus's life, death and resurrection through our local church ministry. Yet we think of so many Europeans who have yet to encounter the call of Jesus Christ to repent and turn to Him. And so we're encouraged to work hard and faithfully to raise up more gospel workers while doors remain open.



Murray & Féy Cotter
Serving in Tirana, Albania

What does Easter for the Cotters look like? This year Murray will be celebrating Easter in a church on the Coromandel in New Zealand just before he flies back to Albania. Féy will be celebrating Easter with our Albanian church family in Tirana.

Easter in our church is an opportunity to share the gospel more freely with family and friends, because invitations to come to church are more readily accepted at Christmas and Easter time.

The main focus over the Easter weekend is the Sunday service, where we will be reminded of the sacrifice that Jesus made for us all through His death on the cross and what that means for us today. Afterwards we usually share a meal together with everyone who has come to church. The meal will be prepared by some of the women, and will be a bit like a pot luck meal, but always with some tasty traditional Albanian dishes.

Please pray that we will be encouraged by fellowship during this time and seek opportunities to share our hope in Jesus' death and resurrection with many with whom we come into contact.



Ian & Vivian Dennis
Serving in Port of Melbourne

Easter – what a wonderful opportunity to challenge merchant seafarers and all who are connected with the maritime industry with the gospel! Shipping does not stop for Easter. The dollar dictates, but we will remind them that Good Friday and Easter Sunday are still shown on the many calendars that hang on the walls of ships. In printed or oral form we will impress on them the eternal hope given by the death and resurrection of the Saviour of the world. For Muslim seamen, this will challenge their fundamental beliefs. For the many Catholic, Orthodox and other nominal Christians, we pray they will seek beyond their formal traditions. For the many Chinese, it may be the first time they hear of the Saviour. For Christian seafarers we will encourage them to faithfully proclaim and demonstrate their faith in their Redeemer.

Proclamation of the death and resurrection of Christ was said to have "turned the world upside down." Our witness may not parallel that but we are thankful that the whole world may pass through the port this Easter, and we pray some will be turned to Christ, to believe and follow our risen and coming King!

Blinded to the truth of Jesus' resurrection, Europe needs the real Easter story



Having lived in Portugal for 12 years, I observed first hand the European perspective on Easter. For the religious, it is a highlight of the year; a time to celebrate the Christian tradition and only rivalled by Christmas. The devout participate in street processions, attend mass and perhaps even receive a special blessing from the local priest. For the nominal Christian majority, less likely to go to church, Easter represents a family gathering. It is time off from work and an opportunity to indulge your sweet tooth. For the business community, Easter is a season for tourist

dollars. People the world over flock to see Europe at a time of religious and cultural significance (in slightly warmer weather after winter).

In all these responses, matters of "first importance" for Easter, Christianity and Europe's lost millions are easily obscured and indeed forgotten. What were these vitally important matters for Paul the apostle? That Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures (1 Cor.15:3-40). Europeans,

steeped in a naturalistic worldview, say increasingly that there is no resurrection from the dead (see 1 Cor.15:12). They deny the Easter story that is at the heart of Christianity. Just like those in Corinth who held to the prevailing Greek wisdom of Paul's day, Europe is blinded to the truth that Jesus did indeed rise from the dead and that His resurrection guarantees all those who belong to Him will also be raised when He returns (1 Cor.15:20-23).

I give thanks for the work of our ECM missionaries who will have opportunity

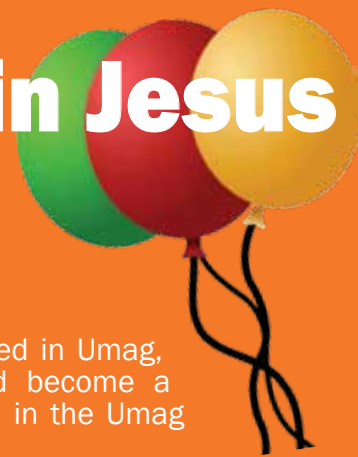
to share their hope over Easter time. More than ever they need your support and encouragement to keep proclaiming the good news that brings victory over the grave for spiritually dead Europe (1 Cor.15:55). My prayer is that God would release yet more Europeans from bondage to sin, death and judgement this Easter (1 Cor.15:54-56). Thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!

Matthew George, Director



“Balloon man” puts trust in Jesus

“He spent much of his life in the local bars and now he was witnessing to everyone.”



Maurizio.

Each August for more than 10 years, ECM workers David and Linda James and Jacqueline Stolk have been taking teams of young people on mission trips to the seaside resort of Umag in Croatia. They help the local church share the love of Christ with locals and holidaymakers. Over the past two years they have had contact with Maurizio, “the balloon man”.

On the first evening in 2015, team members got into discussion with Maurizio, who was selling balloons along the promenade.

On the surface seeming larger than life, at times a little drunk, the “Balloon man” appeared on the promenade during the next two evenings, but on the fourth evening he was nowhere to be seen.

Maurizio was at home, contemplating suicide. At one point he even had a noose around his neck. Maurizio, an alcoholic, suffered from various other health issues and had had enough. Yet something in him told him not to end his life, but to go to talk to the mission workers once again. Pastor Josip Cukic had a long discussion with him and invited both Maurizio and his wife Ruza to meet with him and his wife Sofija regularly – to read the Bible and to pray. A number of weeks later Maurizio trusted Jesus with his life.

One year later as they arrived on the promenade in Umag again, Maurizio came straight over to David and said, “Thanks to you and your team coming to Umag with this bus last year I have received new life.” Maurizio had spent much of his life in the local bars and now he was witnessing to everyone who knew him. In fact he was the first local person, born

and raised in Umag, who had become a Christian in the Umag church.

A month after the mission trip last year, the Umag church held another evangelistic event. Ruza also gave her life to the Lord. Maurizio’s heart simply overflowed with joy. One week later Maurizio, aged just 42, died suddenly. Everyone was in shock. Pastor Cukic especially so as he had hoped that this was the start of a breakthrough for the church. The locally born natural evangelist was gone.

Pastor Cukic continues: “To our surprise Ruza decided she wanted our church to conduct the funeral, even though her conversion was only a week earlier and Maurizio’s family were all Roman Catholic. So we took on this responsibility. Umag had never seen an event like it. I was able to preach to hundreds of local people. Sofija and I could speak to his mother and many others about the hope that Maurizio had.

Despite the sadness we are encouraged. Pray for Ruza and Maurizio’s friends and relatives – who now know where to find hope.”



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ECM Australia National Conference 2017

New beginnings

This year all supporters and friends of ECM will have the opportunity to attend during the day, our annual conference at Naamaroo, Lane Cove, NSW. Join us for any or all of the three days, 4 - 6th of July, from 9am.

The daily program will include a talk from Matt George from John’s gospel under the theme of “New Beginnings.” We will also hear from ECM–Australia’s newest missionaries, Mark and Gina Borg (Malta). There will be a kids’ program that will be running 9.30am -12.30pm. Day rate: \$50 per adult (13 and above) and \$30 per child, including morning tea and lunch.