

Parakletos News Letter April 2022

Parakletos Ministry

We exist to facilitate the church to be a safe, honest, and intimate place to meet, know, and grow in Christ and His Body. Parakletos creates a safe place through means of individual and marital counselling, teaching, and mentoring. parakletos@volny.cz

Dear Friends,

We started this year still with high covid restrictions. Gradually these were withdrawn. But then broke Ukrainian crisis. All that for us opened opportunities, not only problems. Many people, especially pastors and Christian leaders, faced challenges and we have chance to walk alongside them. Many Ukrainian refugees come to the Czech Republic and many churches are involved with them. And churches are consolidating after last two years. In fact, we sense that needs are greater than ever.

Apart of work with individuals and marriages, we continued with speaking and teaching. Bigger conferences could not take place at the beginning of this year but now it is fully opened.

Singles Online Seminar

At the beginning of the year there were still quite severe restrictions in the Czech Republic. Meetings could have only limited number of people and it was easier to organise seminars online.

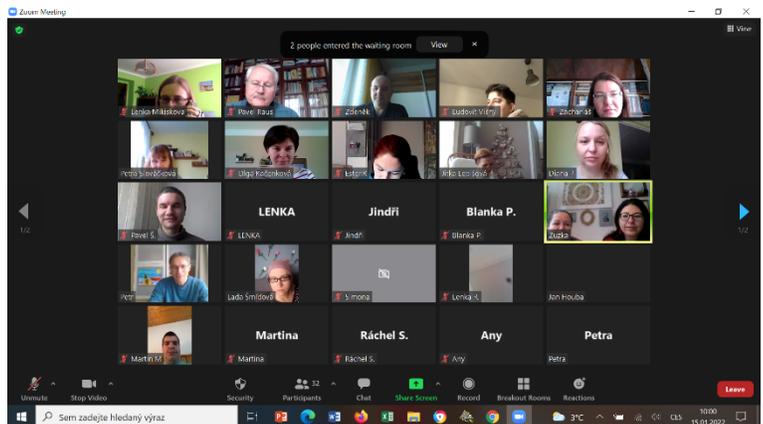
One of those seminars was specifically for single people. It is one denomination's initiative which reaches to a growing number of men and women. They form one group that had been affected significantly by pandemic.

We spoke about loneliness and specifically about practical ways to reach to others. Overall it was an encouragement for participants to be active and take initiative to renew their relationships and seek new relationships.

It was interesting that for singles it seems more difficult to get back to pre-covid lifestyle and rebuild their personal relational world. The barrier to the outside world seems to be higher for them than for those with families and children.

Seminar for High School Students

Students of one of the high schools in our town expressed desire to get some help for situations which they were facing and which were often confusing for them. We had an opportunity to speak to them. It was more a discussion because they were excellent in formulating the issues and sources of confusion they were facing. It was good to see how those



young people shape their opinions and values. As it was at school we could not speak openly about Gospel. But after the class several young people approached us personally and we heard their stories and could share ours.

One thing was unexpected for us and it was what a great problem for those students were their parents. It is a small town culture in which especially parent's generation tends to have a rather narrow world. Being locked in with parents in their homes, many problems intensified. When I spoke about prevention of mental problems, one man responded by saying that this is exactly what his parents do not recognise. For them if he had food and shelter he should be happy.

This encounter was greatly enriching for us as well. We still learn about the effect of the last two years on people. It seems that it opens new and old themes.

Men's Conference

In January we were part of a men's conference. It was one of the first live conferences after a long time with the limit of 100 men, the maximum number of people that could meet at that time.



Pavel was speaking at the conference. Jokingly, men were so excited that they could be together that it did not matter much what the speaker may say. It was very exciting to have face to face contact.

The topic was *The Man In The Mirror*. It was meant as an encouragement for honesty, willingness to see the truth about ourselves and face uneasy and unpleasant facts. The theme grew out of comments which several ladies made about their husbands and children about their fathers; they stated that it would be great relief if the men faced truth about themselves. And, of course, it is also a great spiritual barrier to God not to be able to recognise truth. One man before the conference told me that he did not plan to come this year but after he saw the theme, he decided to enrol. Somehow men need and desire that confrontation with truth.

We had good time of laughter and tears. Surprisingly in that 100 male group there was at times lively discussion. That does not happen often. It was a sign that men were touched.

Family

We need to get more involved in care for Julka's mom in Slovakia. During covid we could not travel there and that was difficult for Julka. We will try to relieve Julka's sister and take grandma to a cottage for two weeks in May.

We had Kristýna and her husband Rasmus with us for Easter. We totally enjoyed it!

Thank you for standing with us through this time which is full of unexpected challenges but also opportunities. Thank you for your prayers and support!

Pavel and Julka Raus

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