



I left my village, Sabaoani, Moldova, on the 30th May 1994. I travelled all night by train with my father. We arrived in Campulung on the 31st May in the afternoon. I remember my father saying that if the place wasn't suitable to go back home with him. During our meal Sr. Agnes came and welcomed us. At that moment I felt that I was in the right place. My father left that evening and I was taken to a room upstairs. Somebody was painting the corridors and there were tins of paints and ladders everywhere. I was left on my own to get ready for Mass at 6 o'clock.

In the evening we had our supper and strange to say that I went to bed that night happy and thanking God for bringing me safely to Campulung. On the 1st June we had a busy day. The children in the Pre-school had a concert for their parents. Fr. Petru, the Parish Priest, and the volunteers had taught them a few hymns and nursery rhymes. It was very funny seeing him in front of the children conducting them as if they were a big choir. The parents were very happy and it was then that I realised that we were staying in the building that was the Pre-school.

Sr. Agnes was organizing us in the house doing different jobs while Father was trying to teach us how to sing in the choir and how to pray the Prayer of the Church (Breviary). Between the two of them they made up a programme for us but it wasn't easy to follow! We said all our prayers in Church, morning, noon and evening. With all the people around us doing different activities one couldn't say that we were in a convent but we were very happy and we never thought for a moment that things should be any different. When school started in September we were asked to go and help the teachers in the classes. I was very happy to work with the children and I learned a lot from the different teachers.

After Christmas we began to get ready for the Novitiate. We heard that Sr. Juliana O'Sullivan was coming from Africa to be with us. On the eve of the feast of St. Patrick we started our retreat as preparation for our entering into the Novitiate. It was my first retreat and I liked it very much. The priest was very good and I felt I was ready for the next step. Our families came the evening before the ceremony and in the morning we got up early to get ready. I was very excited - I felt it was my wedding day. The Bishop arrived and also some priests from different parishes. Our friends, families, the parishioners were all there waiting for us. It was a wonderful experience and after Mass we had a real celebration with a lovely meal, singing and dancing.

Our families left early the next morning and four of us started our life as novices. I remember the first breakfast in the Novitiate. We were all sitting around the table and we didn't have much to eat because almost all the food was eaten the day before. We were very quiet because we were trying to make conversation and were looking for words in English because Sr. Juliana had no Romanian at all. Our Novitiate programme consisted of study of the Bible, the Letters of St. Paul, personal development, English, visiting the Hospital, the orphanage and helping in the Soup Kitchen. As time went by we could understand each other!



After the Novitiate I made First Profession and then was asked to go to Bucharest to study. After four years I obtained a degree in Religious Studies and English and I was then sent to our Pre-school in Targoviste. I made Perpetual Vows in 2003.

In 2005 I was asked to move back to Campulung. I teach English in the Secondary and Primary school and Catechetics in the Parish. I sing in the Parish choir, help in the Soup Kitchen and generally when and where the need arises. Being "young" in religious life I have a long way to go but I know the Lord is faithful and I have been blessed in many ways.

Sister Tereza Ciuchin