

2013 Europassion Conference



2013 Europassion Conference proved to be great fun. What a memorable weekend!

Every year from all over Europe director's producers & actors gather to meet at the Euro Passion Conference. <http://www.europassion.biz/home/>

Via the UK organisation the Passion Trust, Europassion invited delegates in March to attend the conference to be held in a little Austrian village of Erl, about an hour's drive from Munich. It was really in the Tyrolean sound of music area.



I had signed up in April, after the Abingdon Passion Play was over and having sorted out that my husband would look after our son. I did not hear back for a while but trusted that all the arrangements would work out. In the end, after someone had dropped out and a family from Birmingham had joined in there were six of us from England:
Alex Stewart-Clark, Dorina Almer, Sally Mears, Roxanne & Harold & Mylea Lollar.

From all over East & West Europe they came. Delegates that were from Spain said they were really from "Catalan"! Maybe we should have said one of us was from Scotland. We all have identity complexes.

The hotel in Erl, called "Erlerwirt" was very reasonable at £130 and we had a beautiful set of rooms with panoramic views of the mountains - or would have had, but the weather was appalling. I was very grateful for being picked up at Munich airport as I had been ill with a stomach upset since Tuesday and very nearly did not come. It was worth it though as everyone was so friendly and charming. Dorina has a real gift for languages and could include the Hungarians, Catalans and Italians in her conversation as well as translating for us from the German as she is native to Vienna. This was a real blessing.

Next year 2014 Europassion is being held in France in Brittany so all you Francophiles will have to assist us! <http://passion.bretagne.pagesperso-orange.fr/index.html>



The whole point of Europassion conference was to meet other people who were making the journey of creating passion plays for their communities. All of them have an unspoken agreement that when they have their plays on fellow Passion Players are given free tickets & are hosted in each other homes.

Most of the delegates were Catholic and had long traditions going back centuries. Erl's was 400 years!! Some were doing it for God's glory but others, had unfortunately, got the idea that the theatrical effects were more important than the message from the Gospel.

This was indeed the case of the Passion play we saw on Saturday night in the purpose-built Passion Play Theatre. It only received luke-warm applause and was apparently about the politics of the European Union! The 12 year old girl with us enjoyed it tremendously as a spectacle though. It was attended by the former EU Commissioner and the current president of the European Forum, Dr. Franz Fischler as well as about 200 delegates including a very smiley nun.

I also heard that the sermon on the Sunday morning worship session in the Passion play theatre was also on the subject of European Union. Rather a missed opportunity. I really hope that raising one arm to praise God in the Hallelujah song was not misinterpreted as a Nazi

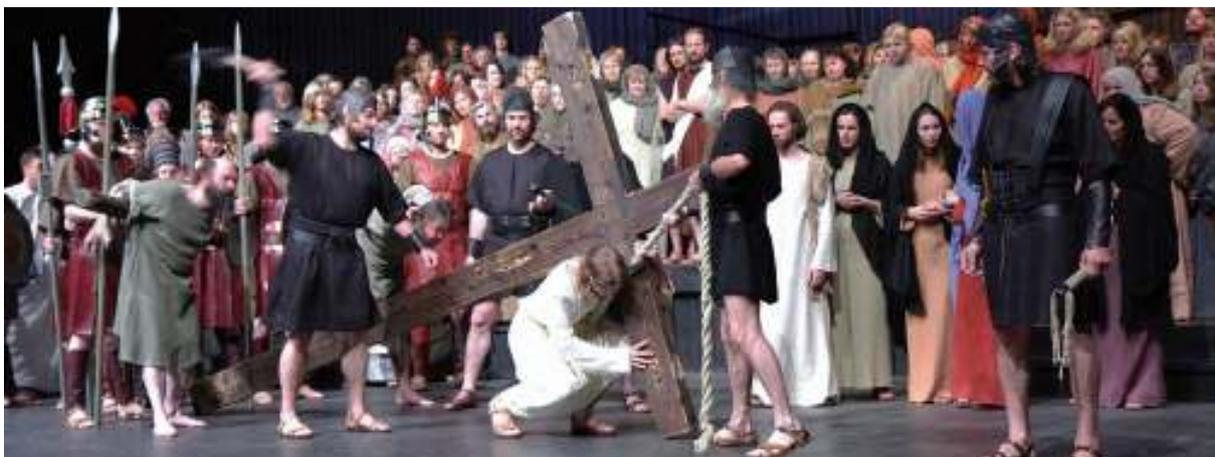
salute. Luckily everyone was not paying attention to me on the front row sitting next to the organiser!



However, the whole outing was tremendous fun and a great learning experience. I would thoroughly recommend the third conference (particularly as it is to be held in a quarry and the organisers told us that they had found an old stone with an inscription dating back to the 15th century saying that there was a passion play held there - God obviously has his hand on it!).

We had time off for a champagne reception at the start. All meals were beautifully presented and provided chances to mingle with other delegates. We were entertained by brilliant dancers in lederhosen and joined in the antics by banging our glasses with spoons. Up on the mountains in the snow we had snowball fights and visited a chapel and a cave. There was no view to be had on the Wendelstein Mountains unfortunately and getting home proved interesting because of the unusual floods. However, I was not to worry and everything worked out by taking a local train with one minute to spare having driven an hour away from Erl using local roads because the motorway was closed.

God calls us to turn from fear and a desire to be in control and to live by faith, trusting in a God who loves and gives of himself. A lot of these passion players had wonderful stories how God helped them putting on these passion plays.



Sally E. Mears Abingdon Oxfordshire OX14 IEJ 01235 534018