



## NEWS FROM THE GIRARDS IN ARREZO, ITALY

April 2023

***HAPPY BEAUTIFUL SPRING to all of you wonderful people!***

The last we updated you was after our trip to Israel over Christmas. We have been busy discipling people. There is a core group of women that I (Leia) invest a lot of time and energy in who are hungry for truth, growth in their identity, or sometimes I'm just a person to process with. I meet with them in person, phone call and zoom calls. We are all called to keep 'oil in our lamps' until the return of Jesus, to STAY prepared. Discipling and being discipled is how we can do this. So not to lose sight of our prize! Growing in discipleship also means giving and receiving correction from one another so that we may grow in love. "He who listens to a life-giving rebuke will be at home among the wise. He who ignores discipline despises himself, but whoever heeds correction gains understanding." Prov.15. I'm also so very blessed to have some beautiful older women who are discipling me in the ways of being a better version of myself! The exchange is amazing and I would encourage you to "make disciples" in the many ways that you are gifted and as your talents permit.

Nicolas has had some incredible divine conversations at his workplace. One of his co-workers there confided and confessed her spiritual doubts to him over Easter and said this, "Why does the catholic church encourage people to whip and beat themselves over crucifixion/ resurrection weekend, but then never talk about the resurrection? What's the point of beating yourself to pain, suffering, what's the point of the cross if there is NO life returning afterwards." You can only imagine what a beautiful open door this was for him to minister to her. Recently, she also received a revelation coming to Nicolas saying "how brutal the cross was and He did this for us, it's unbelievable!" These are the conversations he has almost weekly now with many of his different co-workers. Sometimes, I joke and say he is their office priest/psychologist, someone is always coming to him about their problems or deep thoughts!!! I thank God he is there showing them the Way, the Truth, and the Life. In case you don't remember what he does, he is a key account manager for a luxury interior contractor (some well-known millionaires and billionaires are among his clients, which I cannot share here, PRAISE GOD HE IS A LIGHT IN THIS DARKNESS, YA'LL WE'VE GOT SOME STORIES!)

I would like to share a conversation I had with my neighbor about hope in this world (we chat a lot, he brings his granddaughter over to play with Olivia often). Many unbelievers are recognizing the evil happening around us, the war in Ukraine, the earthquake in Turkey that rocked all of Europe, rise in violence and immorality, corrupt politicians in ZERO faith in the Justice of this world. He confessed to me he always had hope humanity would save humanity. And now he doubts his entire way of thinking. I quoted him some things Jesus said about humanity and explained why He came in such a simple way, so the lights really went on for him. He said, "I will really think about what you said. For the first time in a long time I feel like going to church and talking to God." These are the really beautiful and hard conversations we are having lately with people all around us. And I want to be clear, Tuscans can be very hard to reach with the Truth. They are often indifferent to evil, godless, slanderous and blasphemous as a people group. Most Evangelical churches in Tuscany are full of internationals and Southern Italians who tend to be more humble and respond to the Gospel more sincerely. It's true, Tuscany is absolutely a breathtakingly beautiful land, with its monuments, art, history, landscaping, etc. But the deep things in the hearts of many Tuscans are dark and shameful, their reputation is known as being arrogant and very materialistic. But we see Him working on hearts here and to GOD be the glory! He turns the heart of stone into a heart of Flesh. HE KNOCKS !!!

I want to interrupt this newsletter and send a HUGE thanks to a special friend who will stay anonymous at New Life Covenant Church who has helped our oldest daughter get a wonderful computer that she needed for her online schooling. He also provided for other missionaries some much needed laptops, as well as a perfect mini desktop for our church!

**Update on the farm in Lagos, Nigeria:** thanks to your generous help Frank was able to buy more adult grown males, which he lost to poison. We sent him over \$2,500 thanks to your help to also pay his children's school fees, food, and fixing up the farm and feeding animals. Thanks to another unnamed person at new Life Covenant Church who sent most of this Donation! I know I say this a lot... but as much as you think the inflation is hard on you in America or us in Europe. Trust me, there are whole countries of people truly going hungry due to the corruption that happened during covid (due to shutdowns) and how it affects them today. Give to the poor, in any way you can, however you can, make a sacrifice for them! People are really struggling and they need our help to make it to the next day, to have food in their bodies. Frank sends his LOVE as always to you. His daughter could have been killed in a car accident last month, she was on a bus coming back from her first studies in a community college run by nuns. Their bus hit a van transporting beer bottles, she suffered severe cuts on her arm and hands, but she is back safe and sound and is pursuing her college courses in medicine! Nigeria is still in political crisis (they believe the election was stolen with their new electronic voting machines and there is major civil unrest) and they are facing some of the worst flooding Nigeria has ever seen. But the farm is OK! By God's grace. What the farm needs is PREGNANT GRASSCUTTERS. This feels like the struggle of a lifetime for them to get the females to conceive. We trust with the new, mature males it will happen. We want all of you to know, the grasscutters are treated very humanely at the farm. They are petted, fed, and have free space each day.

**My trip to the USA was great (in March).** I only went to Phoenix, Arizona where my sister and brother-in-law live. It was great to also visit with my brother and sister-in-law and their son, whom I hadn't seen in 5 years. I was only there for 2 weeks. Sophie came with me, she hadn't been in the USA in 5 years and she really loved it. She had plenty of time bonding with her cousins, and loved all the junk food available in the USA (teens!!!) I just needed that time to be 'slower' and more restful, another reason I didn't travel to KS this time. But if the cat business keeps going well, I plan to come back yearly with 1-2 kids. As soon as I was back I led our middle schoolers in our homeschool co-op in a field trip around Naples, Italy. That was SO MUCH FUN! And left us LOTS of time to reflect religion too! There is so much history in Naples its amazing as it's one of the oldest cities in Italy.



Frank and his family serving in Nigeria



## EXCITING THINGS COMING UP !!

- June 8-18 I will be traveling up to Bobbio Pellice (near Turin and by the border of France where the Waldensian Movement started) to serve at a Christian English-sports camp (they have been doing these camps for years and it's a huge outreach for local kids). Also, Isaiah and Sophie will attend as campers, and it was there that last year Sophie met her FIRST Christian friend at age 12 here in Italy. We are taking 2 of Sophie's friends who are just now learning who God is and this will be their first Christian group experience.
- Elise leaves on Wednesday to stay the entire summer at my sister and brother-in-law's house in Phoenix. She will watch her cousins while they are on their summer break. Being a large family in a very small house, it's good for our kids to get their own spaces when they can as teenagers and it's a huge help to my sister!
- Our Toyger female Mona Lisa will give birth any day now. She has 8/9 kittens! WOWZERS! We breed pedigree (TICA registered) Toygers to help pay our kids' education and use for extra needs. Eva is doing college courses now, Isaiah and Sophie do private homeschool co-op. The extra we make with the cats is a real help. As a matter of fact, my trip to Phoenix last month was financed with the cats sale!
- Nicolas and I are celebrating 20 years of marriage and bought some super discount tickets for Santorini, Greece for May 27th-June 3rd: hard to believe we are a short 2 hour flight away from Greece and we haven't been all these years! We have never left our kids behind like this and go to another country. Not going to lie, feeling nervous about it. Eva will watch Olivia, while Sophie and Isaiah will be staying at friends' houses. This will be a good break for us! Eva is 18 now and I told her she owes us!! I birthed her and we raised her so now she gets to do us a favor. LOL ! (lessons on how to coax or threaten a teenager!)
- As soon as May/June hit, we are VERY busy hosting and touring people around. The world comes alive and we like to spoil people who come over to see us by taking them touring. (hint hint). One of our favorite things to do is host dinner parties as well, because we love to reach people around the table.

I will end on this note. The local church is growing and we are leading worship, preaching, leading services, and participating in as many special events as we can! There are some future conferences coming up that Nicolas might serve as the main translator and/or attend.

We would love to welcome you for a visit, so start booking flights and let us know when to expect you!!!!

God bless you all!

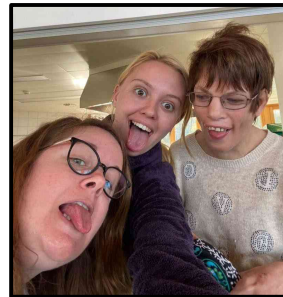
*Nicolas, Leïa, Eva, Elise, Sophie, Isaiah and Olivia*



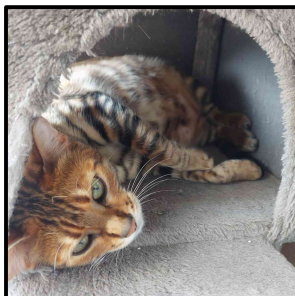
*Bobbio Pellice, the location of the camp Leïa and kids will attend in June*



*Leïa leading worship in our local church*



*Eva working at a camp in Switzerland with mentally challenged people*



*A very pregnant cat...*



*Olivia planting onions in Leïa's garden*

### PRAYER REQUESTS

We covet your prayers!  
This month please agree with us on:

- Elise's upcoming trip to the USA
- Frank, his family, the farm
- Revival in Italy