



## NEWS FROM THE GIRARDS IN AREZZO, ITALY



Dear Believers and friends of God!

February 2021

***We apologize for our silence, there is a lot to catch you up on.  
Welcome to all of our new friends who are reading our newsletter for the first time.***

God has been doing such incredible things here in Italy, and we are excited to share some good news with you. I know the last 6 months have been an incredibly difficult time for many of us. Let us rejoice in the Lord and the TESTIMONY of His works!

Last Sunday, we hosted a couple for dinner with 4 young kids we had just met. As we were all sharing our hearts about what God was speaking to each of us in this difficult time of lock downs, the wife broke down crying confessing she had attempted suicide twice the last 2 months. She tightened a belt around her neck, and waited to pass out and die, her mind full of how much a failure she was, how she was not worthy of love. Then she said that after 90 minutes “God kept saving me from dying.” The Holy Spirit guided us, we were able to reach her heart using the tools we use in our retreats, and she experienced an incredible break through. Her whole countenance changed. She had been crying out to God to lead her to Christians who were equipped to understand how to help her out of her depression. She had no idea programs like ours existed. (read more at [www.healingforthenations.org](http://www.healingforthenations.org)) Often, the churches here act as if depression is only chemical or a demon spirit. Not realizing depression is often also linked to our strongholds and trauma from the past. We walked her through some of her deep-seated stronghold messages right there at the table. It was such a holy moment where she began to connect the dots, see truth, and experience emotional healing and transformation of the mind. We will begin intensive work with her, starting this Sunday. To understand more of the work we do, check out the book, *The Search For Significance* by Robert McGee, which addresses the performance trap, approval trap, blame game and shame trap.

Stories like this have been happening for many weeks. It is as if we just start loving on someone and have them over for coffee, or talk on the phone with them, and seconds later, they are in tears, sharing about their painful life cycles. People are hurting and do not know where to find help. We are working simultaneously with more than 15 people, walking them through our healing retreats in person and via zoom, seeing them have incredible breakthroughs. Our Father is ready. He has been working on the hearts of His children, He desires us to be free from the bondage of our own sin and fleshy systems. He is knocking at our heart’s door ready to convince us of His love for us and show us the truth. Hallelujah! Yes Lord, we receive Your love, forgiveness and healing!

We are back to the streets. A brother in the church was driving up a mountain road right by our house and just happened on some Nigerian girls on the road. He contacted me, and we had our first outing today to meet some girls! While getting back to the streets makes me feel “alive” inside, as I know this is my calling, it is often heart breaking. There were 2 very young girls. For sure, one was about 15 years old. She was trafficked by boat only 6 months ago. There was so much fear, pain, and trauma in her eyes, I will never forget her face. She had about 1 inch long fake eyelashes, scars and burns on her body and hands. As I was speaking to her, a police car was patrolling the road to fine men soliciting sex. She got scared and ran away in the forest. Unfortunately, this is often the case: they are so afraid and told to lie, and do not know whom to trust. I will go visit her again on Friday so I can finish speaking with her.

I also spoke with “Angelica.” She is also very young, maybe 19. I told her I know what happened to her and explained human trafficking. I told her there is a place she can go to get help. She has about 2nd grade reading level. But she accepted my phone number and the numbers of the safe house. She spoke up, “yes, my parents are always asking me for money, and my madam too”. It is hard to hold back the tears when they share their life stories. She knows there is a price on her life, and many of these girls are told since they are very young by their parents their sole purpose in life was to provide for the entire family, especially the first-born daughter.

**We have given up on our trip to the USA this year.** It has been 3 years since we last visited for a furlough. With the uncertainties of covid and the daunting task of fund raising/saving up for a trip, we do not have peace about coming this year. We feel the responsible thing to do is to continue to invest in God’s kingdom financially into our Grasscutter Breeding Farm in Nigeria. People there have nothing, like really very little. They eat bread and rice for days and days on end. We know God is asking us to make the sacrifice on our end for one more year to pour in more donations to get this farm fully self-sufficient. Some of you have given, and we just cannot thank you enough. Frank was recently at our house. He came back to Italy shortly to renew his documents, sell his used car and his things, to just make enough to put his kids in school (we were not able pay his kids’ school after all). For the Farm, we currently need to pay the contractor his other half for the work he did restoring the place, making it livable and suitable for the animals (\$2,000). And we still need \$800 for the certificate of ownership (we raised \$1200 doing a raffle give-away). Once we have the certificate of ownership, Frank will be able to ask for a loan from the bank in order to buy the grasscutters, and build the cement cages. This is all so they will be fully self-sufficient in their ministry to the poor, the vulnerable women who could be trafficked, and victims of boko-haram’s violence.

Frank now deals with serious pains in his body, because for 2 years he slept in his car, just to be able to send his children to school in Nigeria. He sold things from his car like towels, hats, clothes, socks etc. Instead of renting a place, he just slept in his car, and took showers in gas stations. For TWO YEARS. That was about the time we met him. We are praying for a full recovery for the damage that was done in his back those years.



**What our life looks like on a weekly basis is pretty intense this season.** We pray for laborers to help us in our ministry and with the children: I homeschool all the children in the morning. Nicolas works as a project manager for a luxury furniture store from 8:30-5:30. I (Leia) work a side hustle for about 2 hours a day. We often spend the afternoons doing one on one counseling, and now getting back to the streets. On the weekends, we take Saturdays off to be just with the kids. I lead worship most Sundays with either one of our girls or the pastor’s wife singing with me. Nicolas preaches about once a month and often leads the services. We long for the day to have visitors again, people to labor with us, break bread with us, go to the streets with us, or even for the visit of a family member! Burn out can happen to missionaries, and we do our best to ask for help when we need it. We have been in a “soft lockdown” for a long time now, and the Italian government rarely lets us leave our city limits. Nicolas has been wearing a mask in the office 8 hours a day since last summer, and he grows weary of this. Please pray for an experiment side hustle Nicolas is doing so that he can quit his full-time day job, and we can be back in full-time ministry. Even now, the government is saying they might issue another stay-at-home order like last March, because of the British strand of the virus spreading throughout Italy (though there is NO PROOF it is more deadly). The government collapsed last month and the economy is in shambles (our economy runs on tourism, which has been closed for the last 12 months!, and on small businesses that really need the economy to go back up). **BUT GOD....** There is hope for a nation as lost as Italy! We have been sharing the Gospel and a few people came to salvation in the midst of all this turmoil!

There is no fancy way can say it....**Thank you.** Thank you for your love for our family. Thank you for your generous donations coming from your hard-earned money. Thank you for your words of kindness and encouragement. Marantha Farms would not exist if it were not for you. We would not have endured if not for you. We would not be able to pay our bills if not for your help. When you read our news, rejoice and be glad for you are as much a part of this work as we are!

Just know you are loved,

Love you all!

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

### **PRAYER REQUESTS**

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

- The Maranatha Farm
- Girls on the streets
- The people we counsel