



NEWS FROM THE GIRARDS IN ARREZO, ITALY

September
2023

September missions update!

So many wonderful things are happening, we are so pleased you are reading this and covet your prayers.

We are developing a total Holy Spirit inspired project in Florence, 1 hour from our city of Arezzo. It came rather unexpectedly. In May, we left the local homeschool co-op that we helped start (there is only 1 in our town) and we felt the need to be a part of something with other Christians in Florence in particular. In Italy, we have only ever heard of ONE SINGLE Christian private elementary school, Christian schools simply don't exist! The Holy Spirit began speaking and guiding everything from the first day. We met with several serious and solid Christian families (some already homeschool, some don't) in Florence and we've had one-on-one and group meetings over the last 6 weeks to see who wants to help push this project forward. You see, there was a family in Florence who already created an Christian elementary school co-op and ran it the last 2 years, the first of its kind. Their names are Giacomo and Andrea Caturegli. So we are working with them to build a project together that could be recognized by the state as a private school. Did you know that the VERY FIRST schools for children in Italy (1800s) were actually developed by protestants inspired by Savonarola's martyrdom in Florence (1400s)?! It was through the Protestant Christian schools that the Good News spread throughout Italy! Our friends almost got all the bureaucracy finished to become a recognized private Christian school and we are going to continue to work until we get it. I believe God will do this! You see, the education system is failing families and is in crisis in more than just one way... Pharmaceutical companies are lobbying the schools and funding their gender/transgender inclusivity programs (kind of like in the USA!) and they are also lobbying politicians to change gender laws in the schools. A transgender child is worth around 1million\$ in surgeries, hormonal therapies, drugs, anti-depressants, and such. So why wouldn't they want more children wanting to change their gender and push it at a very young age?! What's happening is actually pretty terrifying. Did you know school counselors and psychologists have quadrupled on staff because there is such a mental health crisis in the schools (which also often leads to more medications being prescribed)? Besides that, we had a very interesting discussion with a minister recently whose daughter just got through public high school. They described their relief in how by God's miracle and grace they "survived" high school. And she survived the bullying and peer pressure. Why can't our children THRIVE in school and NOT just survive?! Christian children in the public school system here are not only bullied for their faith and their convictions (which is of course coming from a liberal "tolerance" movement!), but they are often the "black sheep" and find it hard to connect to their other friends who care mostly about partying in their spare time. God has given me a word that this school will be like a stream in the desert and He has spoken many other prophetic words. The problems are at an all-time high of bullying, vaping at school, porn/sex addiction at ages as young as 10. The bottom line is this: Christian families are desperate for an alternative to the public school system and are tired of the evil laws and indoctrination breaking down our God-given identity. **We no longer believe in reforming the current educational system. The apostasy is such that we need to pave a way for a Kingdom-minded alternative.**



*Honored to pioneer this project with
Giacomo and Andrea*

Most believing families just don't have a clue how to homeschool or even get started (or ever even heard of it!) so for many it's very overwhelming. *So a SIMPLE private Christian school recognized by the state would be an answer to prayer for many families.* And it's something that could multiply and bless the nation! The vision is BIG and moving forward, the workers are READY! We have a couple of really good Christian teachers already on board. We need to find an affordable building available to study together and donors to help and give to this project. We are starting small (as we work on the bureaucratic part) by studying with other Christian homeschooling families 1 day a week and hiring Christian teachers. We are asking God to guide our steps as we make plans, but we are not moving to Florence yet. We would move once a full-time project is established. Other things need to happen before we could move anyway, for example Nicolas needs to be able to have a job transfer or find a new job with a comparable income.

Now off the subject of the school – our Healing for the Nations retreat will be next month in Bari (southern Italy). Nicolas is traveling there in a couple of weeks to minister in 1-2 churches about our upcoming retreat. We have people interested in coming from different areas of Italy and we anticipate a good turnout. Former participants are now encouraging their spouses to come. Other people we have ministered to throughout the year are interested in coming. There is momentum, because believers are hungry to reach a level of freedom that only comes from the Holy Spirit. We have already mentioned it in the past, but Healing for the Nations is a revelation-based ministry. We counsel people and teach them how to identify lies in their own lives and hear the truth directly from the Lord.

Now to give a quick update on our daily lives/ministry and what and where our children are heading to. We are still very active in our local church, teaching, leading worship and seeing new people coming and a decent amount of time “making disciples”. Eva, our oldest, is about to leave for the USA to get a job, her driver's license, and start her online studies to further her education. She's not sure how long she'll stay, she's taking one day at a time (she's already got a job lined up there!) She'll be living with my aunt and uncle in Buena Vista, CO again. Elise got back just a couple of weeks ago after spending the whole summer in Phoenix, AZ. She had a great time, as always, but was happy to be back home with us and continue her homeschool studies (also involved in our project in Florence) as a Junior in High school. She is also studying to get her scooter/motorcycle license here in Italy. Sophie is an 8th grader, she plays volleyball, and her artistic skills are quite good! And she speaks perfect Italian. Isaiah is in 6th grade and he is quite a skillful soccer player. He also speaks like a little Tuscan boy, no American accent. Olivia of course is our “baby mascot” and is such a hoot and joy to our daily lives, she's 4. She is the best caretaker of our kittens. BTW we have another litter of Toygers coming soon!

As you know, all these activities require time, effort, and finances. The Christian school project requires a lot of driving back and forth to Florence, and with gas at \$8/gallon, you can imagine the amount that goes into this. We are certain God is in it and are very excited to pioneer this work with a team of great leaders. This could be a major step in bringing an alternative for hundreds, if not more, families, nationwide. This is why we are asking you to pray for us and for God's provision. We know He will come through, and please see if He wants you to be a part of it.



Meeting with homeschooling families in Florence - building relationship



Kittens. Making new friends, hosting old ones, and meeting with great artists in Florence.

Thank you all so much for all the support you have given us. In prayer, in giving great advice, and financially. We are so thankful and you are in our prayers!

God bless you all!

Nicolas, Leía, Eva, Elise, Sophie, Isaíah and Olívia

PRAYER REQUESTS

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

- The Christian School project in Florence
- HFN Retreat in Bari in October

