



# NEWS FROM ITALY

**"FOR UNTO YOU IS BORN  
THIS DAY IN THE CITY OF  
DAVID A SAVIOUR, WHICH  
IS CHRIST THE LORD."  
LUKE 2:11**

---

## **Greetings!**

We wish you, your family, and those nearest and dearest to you, a happy holiday during this special time of year. May this New Year ahead bring you exciting new plans for the future, happiness, and great blessings from the Lord.

When we are thinking of the real meaning of Christmas, we think of the fact that Jesus was born to be the only way, the truth and the Life. Jesus, the wonderful Savior, who paid for our sins and through His resurrection, accomplished victory over death. This Christmas may God be glorified through our lives. May the Lord bless you abundantly and thank you for been such an important part of our lives and ministry.

## **Bible Conference in Peschiera del Garda**

From October 26-29, we were involved in a Bible Conference in Peschiera del Garda. The theme of the event was "encouragement" and we had four preachers from overseas. My main ministry was translation, counseling, and to help in the organization. The Lord blessed the Bible conference in an incredible way. The people were touched by the Word of God. We had 150 people participate and we saw the hand of the Lord touching lives over the 10 churches that participated.



The following Sunday we were invited to a Church that is starting the first steps to plant a new Church in Pizzoleto (Verona), located about four hours north of our home. I was invited by a man whose name is Andrea and it was my first time there. He told me that they needed help so I went to visit them on a Sunday.

They got together on a basketball course with a great desire to see the Lord at work. As we were preparing to have a meeting, a lady whose name is Patrizia came up to me and asked if I recognized her. I didn't remember her. She told me, "You led me to the Lord about twenty years ago. I will never forget that summer camp where I dedicated my life in the camp. I have finished college, have married, and I have two children. Andrea, the man who called you to come, is my husband and we want you to help us to plant a church with the same enthusiasm that I saw you had in your camp. That's what we need!"



The Lord gave us a wonderful Sunday service. There are only six people in their group, but for the special occasion they had thirty people and one person came to know the Lord. It will be great to help these people with a great desire to serve the Lord in a place that I've never been before.

### **Island of Sardinia**

From November 15-21, we were on the Island of Sardinia. We had about a 16-hour trip to travel there. Six hours by car and ten hours by ship. Both ways we faced very bad weather. The sea was wild, but we have to say that God protected us. For our time in Sardinia we were planning to visit people that are going through difficult times or have problems. Well, the Lord allowed us to counsel many people that are really discouraged.

I would like to share with you the following testimonies:

#### **Giuseppa**

Giuseppa is 64 years old. I led Giuseppa's sister, Rosa, to the Lord more than 20 years ago in a summer camp. Rosa was demon-possessed, but by the grace of God she was saved and her life was transformed. Rosa died of cancer last year. Giuseppa was the first person that Rosa led to the Lord. Giuseppa was really struggling because of Rosa's death.

---

Giuseppa's husband left her more than thirty years ago with four little children, and Giuseppa never forgave her husband. For many years Rosa tried to work in Giuseppa's life in this area, but we hadn't witnessed any kind of result. On this visit she really began to understand why she should forgive and how to forgive. It was amazing that she made the decision to meet her ex-husband, they got together and talked, and she forgave him. A couple days after that Giuseppa invited her ex-husband for a dinner where the ex-husband met the married children with their families. Giuseppa presented him the Gospel. He hasn't accepted the Gospel yet, but it is amazing what the Lord is able to do. One week after that Giuseppa was diagnosed with lung cancer and a brain tumor. Only a miracle from God can resolve her situation. Please pray for her.



### **Claudia**

Claudia is a girl that came to our camp, accepted the Lord, but never followed the Lord. We went to visit her. She is married now and I invited the couple to eat together with us on Sunday after the service. They came to the service and we were able to talk. The husband made his decision of eternal assurance and Claudia recognized the wrong choices she had made. We had a very fruitful conversation and I encouraged them to go to Church. They left our conversation very happy and ready to start a new chapter in their lives.



Shortly after our visit, while they were travelling, they got involved in a very bad car accident. The car was destroyed, but they were not hurt. After the accident, Alessio, Claudia's husband, recalled when I was trying to encourage him through Romans 8:28. He said, "Praise God we are fine. This time is not the best time in our lives, but I believe that all of this is happening for a purpose. I feel fine and now I trust in God. I am sure that He will help us in this bad experience. Now I have a very special relationship with God and a destroyed car will not make me doubt who is God."

### **Strong Men Conference**

On the December 2nd, I had a Men's conference in the North. Fifty-five great men participated and we had four Bible studies. The theme for the event was, "Strong men in difficult times". The Lord touched the lives of those men and many decided to become the husband, the father, the worker, and Church member that God wants them to be.



---

## **Sundays in Treviso & Padova**

On Sundays, I have been preaching in two different churches. In Treviso, many people have been touched by the Word of God and about fifty people dedicated their lives to the Lord. In Padova, a very old Church that lost focus and enthusiasm, was thrilled to ask us to help them to start to do the Lord's work with them. They are very few in number now, so please pray for them and for us, to find the way to impact the Lord in Padova.

## **Blessings through Technology**

As I mentioned in other letters, we also develop a ministry of counselling, teaching and encouragement through the internet, a tool that could be a blessing to many people. I would like to share the following experiences:

**Antonella** is a lady from one of the Islands of Italy. One day she received one of the Bible studies that she receives once a week through the internet. The title of the message was, "When You Don't Know What Else To do, Let God Do It". After she read the Bible, she was meditating on it on her way into to her job. While getting into her job, she saw a girl that was weeping a lot on the cell phone. She got into her job but remembered the title of the message she received that day. She got a gospel track, waited for the girl to finish the phone call, gave her the gospel track, and explained the plan of salvation to her. She didn't receive the Lord as her personal Savior at that moment, but that girl was touched by Antonella's love and care. She shared what she learned from the message that morning: "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." John 13:34-35

**Vincente** is an Argentinian man who is the son of an Italian immigrant. He has a passion to present the Gospel and He has a burden for the Italian people in Argentina. He contacted me from Argentina because he once heard me on a radio program. He doesn't know much about the Italian language, but wants to present the Gospel to the Italian people that are in Argentina. Through the internet I wrote a course of twelve lessons in Italian to go step-by-step to present the message of the gospel in a very clear way. A few days ago, he was really enthusiastic because Enriqueta, a lady that followed the course with him, came to know the Lord as her personal Savior after three months of lessons. Isn't God wonderful?

---

## Prayer Requests

We ask that you pray for us. Lord willing, we will be in the USA from the 9th of January to the 18th of February. The main reason is to share about our ministry in Italy and we ask you to pray that God will provide new supporters that would like to join us with the ministry here in Italy.

Please pray for Gabriel. He is doing fine at school and he was doing very good in basketball, but He was injured in a game. He suffered a Grade 2 ATFL sprain with a grade 1 CFL sprain (i.e., lateral ankle sprain). The worst case scenario is he cannot play for 2-4 weeks.

Norma and Rebecca are doing well, during this time of the year please pray as they cook muffins and give them away with the 2018 evangelistic calendar.



We are thinking of you during this festive season and we send you our warmest regards. Love and best wishes!

Your servants in Christ,

**Mario and Norma Portillo**

**Psalm 145**