



Coliseum, Rome

Buon Natale Felice Anno Nuovo

Christmas 2014

*“Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.
The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Psalm 46:10-11*

Dear Friends,

A remedy for life's frenzied activities which seem to accelerate during the holidays is simply to "be still". On recent occasions the Lord has helped me relax, take a deep breath and at times even do some relaxing breathing exercises to simply "be still" as I waited for events to unfold. Whether I was seeking a friend's apartment in Rome and getting stuck on a bus not knowing where to get off, or unable to get new flights after being cancelled by the airline and facing the possibility of losing my international connections and paying an additional \$1,000, or rolling down the runway in Croatia and being notified by the pilot we had engine problems (great to hear of the engine problem on the ground and not in the air), or just simply meeting with some of my young leaders and being handed a very "hot" issue and having "NO" magical answer to save the day, I am learning that God is a trustworthy refuge! Christmas reminds us that God truly does care for our welfare notwithstanding what might befall us as innocent bystanders or active participants in the confusion of life. God's mercies and goodness have no end.

As we look back at this year's ministry activities and initiatives, we remain in awe of the many blessings God has bestowed on our ministry and our family as well. Let us highlight a few.



Evangelism

The biggest ministry undertaking this past year has come from our youth center ministry team. Our young leaders have been very creative in leading our youth center boys in a variety of sports initiatives – the biggest one being, the formation and league play of our boys in provincial play. The weekly team preparations gave us many opportunities to get to know our boys as we focused on their soccer skills and spiritual disciplines. Though our boys didn't win many games they were by far the most spirited. I was delighted to be their life coach!



Discipleship

The sports initiative has given us access not only to our boy's lives but their moms and dads as well. We have organized structured and informal teaching times both in the youth center as well as in friend's homes and neighboring parks. Pray as we continue to minister to these boys as they grow and get involved in a variety of activities outside the center now that the soccer season has ended. One of our boys is presently in a youth facility awaiting sentencing for robbery. Thank God we can be by their side at times of need – the boys' families are thankful we continue to support them and look out for their boys.



Baptisms

In September we had the joy of baptizing one of our young people who made a profession of faith at one of our youth camps. We were to baptize 3 other friends but for a variety of issues (health and family concerns) they will be waiting for the next baptism. Baptism in the Italian mindset is a formidable hurdle!



Cathy, McKinley, Christie & Catie

Body Life Ministry

We will be celebrating our 5th anniversary this coming spring since we launched our 5th ministry project which is centered on our small group ministry. The house church model, which we have adopted to facilitate our ministry initiatives helps us to train our folks with the least amount of structure and financial need. It is also a wonderful model for leadership formation, spiritual gifts understanding and application in the real world, body life ministry, and living out the Matthew 28 mandate of the Christian life.

Networking: Malta - Cypress

Our spring initiative of proactively seeking ministry partnerships with folks with similar philosophy on ministry approaches that initially brought us to Malta is having us consider even other possible ministries partnerships. We will seek to return to Malta this coming October as we look into the possibility of ministering in Cypress as well.

Rome - Pescara

In September, Fabrizio, my young ministry assistant of many years, and I teamed up in Rome to visit some of our (Cathy and mine) Centurioni friends with whom we ministered many years ago in our first ministry project with our Cornelius Corps team. We were able to visit Roberto Cardelli and his wife Tiziana in Pescara on the Adriatic and on separate occasions visit with Stefania and Bruno Molinari. Though many years have passed the bonds we formed many years ago remain firm and solid. Our dear friends appealed to us to come back and stay longer on our next visit with the intention of ministering alongside them once again.

Rome

Bruno and Flavia treated me royally as I travelled through Rome in November – folks with whom we have much in common. Along with one of their dear friends Christina from Rome (an Italian psychotherapist) we are exploring a ministry initiative using our counseling experience to assist local churches in this much needed area of ministry.

Formigine (Northern Italy)

In November I had the delight to meet with GianFranco and Auwell as well as Ettore, dear friends who are presently ministering in a local assembly in Modena, but a few years ago were working with “Back to the Bible” ministries which served many evangelical radio stations around Italy with programming and technical assistance. To my surprise and delight I was made aware in talking with them that they were instrumental in assisting our radio team in Catania and helping us evangelize our Sicilian friends – incredible! Our desire is to return to this area this coming spring and work on new ministry initiatives. Three of our members from Catania (Melania, Giulio & Fabrizio) who left the island for work are now attending their church.

Proclaim International Gathering in Croatia

In late November I was able to attend the annual mission gathering which took place in Croatia this year – an area of Croatia that was formerly an Italian territory prior to WWI. John and Bob, co-vice-presidents wonderfully led our mission body as we gave reports of our ministries that virtually spanned the globe. John and his wife Diana are pictured on the photo on the left – wonderful folks!

Dear Friends,

As we approach this Christmas season, let us be mindful of God’s love in coming to us and making His peace available to all. The great news announced to the shepherds and to us is - do not fear! And I would say do not fear and “be still”. Let us watch our Lord triumph over His enemies and ours as His name is exalted among the nations and in our very hearts. His refuge is available in times of need. And the need is defined by when we need Him – no matter how trivial or foolish it might seem to others.

Have a blessed Christmas Season,

Vince and Cathy Costa

