

The ITALIAN BATTALION

On the Front Lines of World Evangelism

FIELD ADDRESS

Via Sovana 4
58100, Grosseto (GR), Italy
Phone 011+39+ (0564) 179-0060
Google Voice: (708) 497-9327
fmaietta@baptistworldmission.org
Facebook: Chiesa Biblica Battista di Grosseto



PO Box 2149
Decatur, AL 35602
(256) 353-2221
office@baptistworldmission.org



Dear Praying Friends,

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As a child in the 70's I remember mop buckets being equipped with wringers for squeezing the water out of the mop. It really feels like we went through a "wringer" during these past months. The Lord truly sustained us hourly as we went to Him for wisdom, strength and protection. We rejoice truly in His presence and goodness that was very evident even through the darkest moments of the Coronavirus pandemic in Italy.

Updated situation - The atmosphere has drastically changed in our city over the past two weeks. Until May 1st, we had not been able to leave our homes except for one family member to go shopping or to walk our dog within 200 yards of our home. Local and state authorities set up roadblocks checking for unauthorized people away from their homes. There was definitely a sense of fear and anxiety that prevailed during those days.

What a relief it was to be granted permission to leave our home on walks or bike rides including with family members who live in the same household. It is hard to express the joy we sensed that first day.

Since May 18th, the government has allowed for the opening of our church facilities. We have been able to have regular services but with limited number of people in our building and with the use of masks. We are prohibited from passing an offering plat and our seating must ensure a "safe" distance between each person of at least one meter.

Though there still are many restrictions in place, it seems as though there is a sense of hope going forward.

Ministry during lockdown – At the onset of the restrictions, we began to think about how we can minister. Our minds turned to James, who wrote to the twelve tribes who were scattered. We thought of the Apostle Paul who had been in house arrest for at least two years only 100 miles south of our town. Of course, there he wrote four New Testament epistles that still minister to us today. In his final imprisonment, Paul assured Timothy, from another prison in Rome, that though he was in bonds, that the Word of God is not bound. Though he was alone, the Lord stood with Him.

We realized that with God's help, we could minister. As most churches around the world had to do, we began using Facebook, Zoom, YouTube and WhatsApp to stay in contact with our people and attempt to minister the Word during these difficult times. We specifically sought to be in personal contact with our church people daily but trying also not to overwhelm them with messages.

A new name written down in glory – Matteo is a young man who had been seeking for spiritual answers on the internet and came across a Gospel presentation. He not only accepted Christ but had also been following each of our services during the quarantine time. As soon as we began having services, he came to our church, introduced himself and gave us his testimony. What an incredible joy it was to see the Lord work so amazingly despite the restrictions we were experiencing.

Family - As a family, we focused on school together and spending countless ours shooting baskets in our yard. Through all of the difficult moments, we never lacked for health, food or any need. We also recognize that that the whole world is facing the same challenge we have faced. Please know that we do appreciate all your concern and prayers and we pray for our churches and friends in the States as well.

Your fellow servants,
Frank, Jennie, Frankie, Arianna and Katiana Maietta