

RICHARD AND PINUCCIA WILSON

SERVING IN TRENTO, ITALY

With Stefania, Daniele, Luca and Mattia

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Once again, Covid dominates this newsletter, as the "second wave" took off in Italy in the period since the last one. This time around it had a bigger effect on the family, as we have just finished four weeks of quarantine because at least three of us caught the virus. But let's start at the beginning...

September

After the summer break, there was a lot of enthusiasm in the family, in the church, and in general in society, as we got back to normal. There were however still some restrictions and differences.

Luca and Mattia started school (1st class), which also meant they had to start wearing masks. The rules then were that when a child tested positive, all the children and teachers in their class went into quarantine for 2 weeks since the last contact. Pinuccia had the "privilege" of being in the first class in the province to be quarantined, and in mid-September had a week at home (as the child had not been to school for a week before the positive test result came). At the peak, 6% of all classes in the province were in quarantine.



In the church, it was good to see friends again, although the hall could only fit half the usual number of participants due to social distancing rules. We could also only do one class of Sunday School at a time, although we did experiment with some outdoor lessons as well. For me, the few lessons that were possible with the class of 10-13 year olds that Pinuccia and I teach was the highlight of the past few months. Since it was the first Sunday School (and for some children the first time we had seen them) after 6 months, it was a joy to

spend some time with them, obviously grown physically, but during the lessons it was clear that they had matured and grown spiritually as well. Also the teenagers' group, that Stefania is a part of and for some special events Daniele goes to, and for which I provide a taxi service, had some good and helpful meetings in this period. The other meetings of the church stayed on-line, which however is not as exciting and new as it was during the Spring lockdown, so they were not as well attended as before.

I also managed to get involved in society, and spend some time with friends outside of the church, going to a few band practices (with reduced numbers) and one chess tournament. Our three boys started their sporting activities. Life seemed to be back to normal, even though a bit different.

October

As October went on, there were gradually more restrictions. My social activities and all the children's sport were stopped. So was the Sunday School, whilst the teenagers went on-line. With a lot more testing than in the Spring, there were many more people registered as positive, and people realised just how widespread the virus is – it was much more "visible" than before. This seemed to create a lot more fear, and less desire to go out even when people were allowed to. So in the church the attendances kept dropping, getting down to less than 20 by the end of November.

In October there is usually one of my highlights of the year, a trip to Madrid for two days of meetings with other leaders of the mission, working on how to help the missionaries on the field and where the mission as a



whole should go in the future. With the bonus of being able to spend some time with the other missionaries present, whom I respect and admire knowing how they have served God in Europe for many years. Of course, this year it had to be replaced by 2.5 days of Zoom meetings, that on the level of relationships was not as good. It was anyway good to be involved in the ministries and lives of about 200 missionaries, reading about what they had done and their thoughts about the future, and talking about how the mission could help them.

November

Pinuccia started to feel a bit unwell at the end of October, and after a few days was tested, with the result of having caught Covid coming back on November 6. Almost certainly she caught it at school, where she has to wear a mask to protect the children, but the children she is in close contact with, of whom four had parents with Covid, do not. Her being positive meant the whole family went into quarantine. Pinuccia had a couple of days the following week in which she felt worse, but then got well again. I presume that we all caught the virus from her (with little or no symptoms), but if we did, we must have got over it by the time that we were all tested on the 23rd, because we tested negative. Except for Mattia and Luca, who were positive, so we all had to restart the quarantine time. Then on December 4th, exactly four weeks later, we all got negative test results and were free again.

The family coped well with the month of quarantine, having got used to it in the two month lockdown in Spring. Although this time we were even more restricted – I could not go out to do the shopping (friends bought and brought groceries and medicines for us), and we could not go out even for health reasons (so we have to catch up on 10 medical visits that we postponed while in quarantine). The only time that our quarantine was broken was when Mattia lost his first two teeth, and the tooth fairy managed to get in both times to leave a coin! The other difference was that Luca and Mattia had school work to do this time. So a lot of our quarantine time was

Y, one of the members of the church, was converted about 15 years ago during a spiritual searching trip to India. Her husband G has however always resisted. He tested positive to Covid at the beginning of November. The group in the Valsugana, where they live, is of course meeting on line, and he listened in to a meeting. After it, Y wrote, "Thanks again for last night, he was very excited to hear prayers for him. Immediately afterwards he felt a great weight slipping away. Thanks to all of you, continue to accompany him and entrust him to the Lord.

He says he has lowered his walls and has a desire to believe." However, the next day she wrote, "His health situation is getting a bit complicated. We prayed together tonight, he asked me to do it. He needs motivation, to see that he can do it. I try to transmit to him the care of our heavenly Father and the courage to face it with God who protects and guides us". The day he got his negative test result back, he was at the virtual church prayer meeting with his wife. Y was very thankful for the changes in his life, and especially that they had begun praying together as a couple for the first time. Others in the meeting, who had been praying for him for years, were touched as well. G definitely seems converted. Pray for them both, and for their two children K and I, who I know well through Sunday School and the church children's and teenagers' camps, but who at the moment have other interests.

spent with Pinuccia in the kitchen helping Mattia and Luca do different exercises (as they are in different classes), me in the living room helping Daniele, and Stefania doing distance learning in her room. My time for work was reduced, but I kept up with what I could do on-line for the church (weekly Bible study and fortnightly prayer meeting) and for the mission, even though bigger projects (like new material for my web site on the Bible) was more difficult to work on.

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