

In the church

The church year has began well, with all the normal activities restarted. Pinuccia and I have also run a few beginning-of-the-year meetings for the welcomers, for the Sunday School teachers and for the small group leaders. At the beginning of September I was also at a bookstall at Rovereto all day. These bookstalls should be monthly witnesses, although there are provincial elections coming up soon so we are taking a break for a while, whilst the town will be full of politicians handing out literature.

There is however a problem with the Bible study groups at Trento, where two of the three groups are larger than the usual maximum (about 12 people). Sooner or later we will have to create some new groups there, although it is a bit hard to find a good time for another group, and we are a bit behind in our training of new leaders.

Although the Sunday School has restarted, I have not had to teach yet as there are three teachers for the class, and we take turns doing two weeks at a time. So my first lesson will be on the 26th. I ended up with the 7-10 age range, which has five children in it. I am sure that it will be an interesting experience both for me and for them. Even Pinuccia found it a bit strange teaching them, after a three year break leading the youth group instead of the Sunday School. She was a bit out of practice.

Pinuccia has also had to take over responsibility for the ladies' ministry (together with another lady). She probably does not have enough time for this, but it should only be a temporary measure. They will be teaching another lady in the church what to do, so she should be able to take over in the middle of next year.

With the beginning of the academic year, there has also been the annual influx of new people in the church. We will be having a special meeting towards the end of the month, to welcome them to the church and explain a bit about it. Pray that they will become an active part of the church. Some of the new people are non Italian speaking, which has meant some simultaneous translation for me. This is a bit more difficult now as Pinuccia goes out to teach the Sunday School, and Daniele does not sit still any more. At least Stefania goes unofficially to the Sunday School now, which makes it a bit easier. I have also taken myself of the service leading roster, and there are some other people that can help with the translation, so we manage.

In the meantime we are continuing our church growth policy. With another birth a couple of days ago, it was looking like that would be no pregnant ladies in the church for the first time in over two years (in which time about a fifth of the ladies in the church have given birth). But just in time, another pregnancy has been announced.

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In the family

On the last working day before the school year, at the end of August, Pinuccia was offered a job for the whole school year as a relief teacher at a pre-school. So she is working two and half hours a day in the afternoon in a small town on the other side of Trento. It could have been a bit longer, but it is pretty close to what she was hoping to receive.

September also meant that Stefania started her three years of pre-school. After a gradual insertion for three weeks, she is now there full time, which means from 9am to 3.15pm, including lunch and a nap. She enjoys going there (an enjoyment that will hopefully continue for the next 15 years!) and fits in well into the activities. In fact, for two years she has never had an afternoon sleep (despite my encouragement so that I could get some work done), but from the first day she has had long rests at school. She is a bit shy and so does not talk much (or at all) at school,

something we have noticed with her friends at church as well. But she absorbs everything, and her vocabulary and speaking skills at home have improved greatly since she started school. She even distinguishes languages now, saying the same thing to me in English and to Pinuccia in Italian.

All this has meant some changes to my day. One of us takes Stefania to school in the morning (a 12 minute walk each way), and then the ideal is that I have the whole morning for work. Pinuccia leaves by 2.15, so I look after the children in the afternoon. Daniele and I pick up Stefania up 3.15, often doing some shopping on the way. Then



Stefania dressed for school.

Pinuccia returns around 6.30, and most nights I go out for a Bible study, band practice or other meeting. Sometimes we do experience the "empty nest" syndrome a bit, as it is so quiet at lunch now that Stefania is not

there. And occasionally, when Daniele sleeps at lunch time, it feels very strange with just the two of us.

You may remember that Daniele had three health problems when he was born. Two of them fixed themselves up, but in the last couple of weeks he has had a few check-ups to confirm that the third did not - his undescended testicle has still not descended (although it is there). So he has been put on the waiting list for an operation, which will probably be in a couple of months' time.

Upcoming events

8 November: Craft day for the Sunday School, producing material which will then be sold with the proceeds going to a school in India that the children support .

15 November: Get together for missionaries in north Italy.

22 November: A day trip to London with Jury to speak about the Trentino church planting project at a meeting for ECM supporters.

30 November: Bookstall at the annual fair at Rovereto.