

Australia

Just a few days to go now until our departure for Australia on May 31. Naturally our thoughts are mostly on that at the moment. There have been and are however still quite a few things to do and to finish in the church and in the family, which I will mention later in this newsletter.

In the *Upcoming events* I have listed some of our major deputation appointments. So if you would like to hear us, you will know where we are. It also means that you can pray for the various trips and visits. There is still room for other meetings, so if you would like us to visit your group or church let me know.

Please pray for the whole time in Australia as well. Our situation is different from that of other missionaries. For the majority of the family, it is not "going home" nor catching up with family and friends (except those "acquired" through me). It is instead a time of culture shock, unfamiliar situations, language difficulties, and separation from family and friends. Like a missionary feels *going* to the field, not coming back. I thank God that Pinuccia does this willingly, not just because she is my wife but also because she has a missionary outlook, and also that the children are good travellers. But I know that there are difficulties for them.

In the church

After the rush of major events in the church that I described in the last few newsletters, church life has been a bit quieter later. There was recently however the annual Sunday School presentation, which was a time for telling the church what God has been doing in the lives of the children this year. This kept our family busy, because Pinuccia and I were both heavily involved in the organisation and preparation. It was also the first Sunday School presentation for Daniele,

and he and Stefania had a small part (which they did well) dancing away in the choreography of the song that the older children sang. It was also a time to say goodbye to quite a few children: some who are going to be the Sunday School at Rovereto, some who are moving away, and some who will be "graduating" to the Youth Group (and which made one of the parents a bit emotional, realising her little girl was not so little any more). So there will be a noticeably smaller Sunday School next year.

Points for prayer

- For our time in Australia, for the family and for the meetings we will have
- For Daniela as she leads the Youth Group
- For the changes in the churches at Trento and Rovereto, for new leaders for the doubling of activities, and for my new role in helping them
- For the physical and spiritual growth of Stefania and Daniele

I have also been wrapping up my involvement in the church ministries that I am involved in. Most will continue on for a few more weeks until the summer break, although the Youth Group has finished its year's activities as the school holidays start soon, and the other leader is going on a mission trip to Israel now. For me it was not only the end of the year's activities, but also the end of my involvement in the Youth Group. Presumably for good - I am getting a bit old to hang around teenagers now. After having started the group again in September, I have been helping the other leader Daniela learn how to look after the group, and she has done a very good job. So she is ready to take over now, and another young adult will be helping her. Once again, I am thankful for the opportunity to start something new in the church, train someone to take over, and then leave for other

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ministries, which is what my primary role in the church is. I thank God also for the 13 years of youth ministry I have led, spread out over the past 28 years.

Last week I had my annual meeting with the church elders, to talk a bit about the church in the past year and in the next year, and more specifically my role in it. So we talked especially about the various groups I lead or have general oversight of. With the changes in the church due to the church plant at Rovereto, and the people who will be serving there instead of at Trento, my role in the church will be a bit different when we come back from Australia. I will not be leading anything new to replace the Youth Group, so will have less regular commitments. I will instead be more involved in the help I give to the other groups, regularly visiting them and talking more often with the leaders. Especially the new generation of leaders that are coming up in the church. So I will not in fact be completely leaving the Youth Group ministry. But I will be helping the leaders there rather than being directly involved in the lives of the

teenagers. I'm looking forward to this change as a new challenge, something different to do rather than continuing to do what I have done for the past few years.

In the family

A highlight for us recently was the visit of some of Pinuccia's family from Sicily. Her parents have come often, but we have tried often to get more of her family to come with little success. So it was great that a quite a few did finally come. They came and left in a few groups, but at Easter we reached the peak with Pinuccia's parents, her sister and brother-in-law, their three children and a fiancé all with us. We will be able to spend a lot of time with them and show them the tourist sites around the area. And the Sicilian delicacies that they brought with them were great too!



The end of the school year this month has also seen us entering into the usual activities of a growing family. We went to our first recital, that of the dancing school that Stefania has been going to this year. Stefania wanted to pull out, because she was scared of dancing in front of an audience, so it was a good teaching opportunity about depending on God. We also participated at our first family rite of passage, as Stefania received her "diploma" for having completed pre-school, in preparation for her starting infants' school in September.

Upcoming events

June 2: Arrival in Australia

June 12: North Rocks Anglican

June 19-26: Canberra (Crossroads and Dickson Baptist)

July 11-14: ECM Prayer Days

July 16: ECM thanksgiving meeting

July 19: SMBC

July 25-30: Queensland

July 31: Carlingford Anglican

August 7: Lalor Park Anglican

August 13-14: Reachout

August 18: Departure from Australia