

COUNTDOWN TO ITALY

APRIL 2023

John & Cristina Inglese

50

Days

18

Hours

45

Minutes

0

Seconds

Sulmona, Italy

*The count-down is on!
As of Sunday, April 2, 10 am,
our arrival in Italy is
50 days, 18 hours and
45 minutes away!*

Step of Faith

—by John Inglese

One thing we have learned is that whenever you set your mind to do whatever the Lord has instructed you to do, the enemy is there to distract you. I remember before we went to Ghana, we encountered all kinds of distractions, obstacles, and attacks from the enemy. As mentioned in a previous newsletter, the Lord has put on upon our hearts to become missionaries for Italy now. One year from that date that the Lord confirmed for us to go, so we set a date to leave for the mission field about one year later: March 2023. As the time drew near, there was still an obstacle, so we had to postpone. The last obstacle was that we still had our youngest son in our home who did not want to go to Italy. We had to assist him in getting situated into his own place, because obviously we could not abandon him, that would not be a very good witness! The Lord made the way. By the end of March, he found a job that he could live off of and he was able to relocate. We thank the Lord for that! We still had some other obstacles come up, and we were praying to the Lord, seeking Him and waiting on him to open the doors and to make a way so we can leave for Italy. One night my wife was checking airfare pricing to Italy, she is really good at that. When we went to Ghana she found such a deal that saved us thousands of dollars. So, this one evening she said, "John,

I found these tickets that are available at an incredible price, but we would have to book it right away, it departs on May 22nd!" The agent who found us the tickets said that they could only hold the seats for that price until the next morning. I told my wife we really don't have the money for tickets and that we should pray. So, we prayed that night, and the next morning we prayed again. We really felt like the Lord was saying buy the tickets (even though we didn't have the cash to buy them). We really felt in our hearts and in our spirits that this was what He wanted us to do. So that morning, though we did not have the cash, we bought the tickets on our credit card. Two things happened right after we made the purchase. First, we knew we were going to Italy on May 22nd, and come what may, we were leaving, no matter what happened, no matter what obstacles would come before us, we would still leave on May 22nd, because there was no refunding these tickets. My wife and I we're really excited, but also really concerned, because we did not have the money for those tickets.

Shortly after that, Pastor Steve from Calvary Chapel Fluvanna in Virginia (mentioned in a previous newsletter who also has a burden for Sulmona from the Lord) called me and said that their church wanted to pay for our tickets to Italy. We broke down, and praised and thanked the Lord for what he was doing. We thank Him for the faith he put upon our hearts to take that step of faith, and we thank him for the confirmation of the tickets. Now with all this excitement, the enemy has not stopped, and the battle is getting stronger, but we know that that's where the Lord wants us. One night not too long ago, my wife, our son, Matthew, and I were driving home on the 14 freeway when all of a sudden, we see head-

lights heading straight on towards us in our lane! A car was driving in the wrong direction on the freeway! As the headlights got closer, I managed to swerve to my left, avoiding the car on my left side, in order not to get hit head on. As it passed us by, my wife and Matthew commented that we almost got hit head on, we could have been killed! I said, "No we couldn't have died in a car accident **because we are going to Italy**, the Lord already told us so!

Taking the Train

—An Uplifting Story

Recently, Pastor Steve's wife, Helga, from Calvary Chapel Fluvanna, shared that she had taken a train from Rome to Sulmona. As it was en route to Sulmona, about one



and one-half hours still from Sulmona, the train experienced some mechanical problems and had to stop. Everyone had to get off. The train company had made arrangements and had buses waiting for the train passengers to take them the rest of the way. When she had taken a seat on the bus, a lady

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she had not seen on the train, came and sat next to her. She was from Congo and did not speak English, but she did speak Italian. It turns out, she was a Christian and her father was a Pastor in Congo. Helga asked her if she knew any other Christians in Sulmona. She replied, "No," that the nearest Christian she knew about lived 45 minutes away. Helga shared with her how we were coming to Sulmona to share the Good News. She got so excited and praised the Lord for about 15 minutes! God is answering her prayers! He is using us to answer those prayers! We are so blessed and humbled by how the Lord works!

locals against aggressive regional animals. Pilgrims still faithfully flock to honor him in hopes of receiving his miraculous powers of protection against the dangerous animals of their territory. But the festival also has ancient pagan roots in honor of the Oscan healer and snake goddess, Angizia. Also known as Angitia to the ancient Romans, she was revered by the Marsi, a warlike tribe of people who lived to the east of Rome in the Apennine Mountains.

It was believed that Angizia possessed an ability to heal those who had been poisoned--especially by snakes--and had the power to kill serpents by casting verbal spells. It was known by first century Romans that the Marsi region contained many healers, magicians, and snake-charmers. It was infamous as a hotbed of witchcraft.

In preparation for the Festival, during the last half of March, the separi, also known as snake-hunters, spread out across the countryside in their hunt for snakes. Once captured, they are carefully stored in wooden boxes, or as in ancient times, inside terracotta containers for 15-20 days. The snakes are fed a healthy diet of live mice and hard-boiled eggs.

On the day of the festival, pilgrims gather in the church of San Domenico to be healed. After Mass, the statue of the Saint is draped with live snakes and carried into the piazza where believers gather to touch both the Saint and the snakes for their healing powers. The local separi also drape themselves with snakes and follow the procession. Pilgrims follow the procession through the town and throw soil onto the streets and gardens. The soil is dug from Saint Domenico's shrine. It symbolizes the supernatural powers manifested through the saint who protected the town throughout the Middle Ages from evil snakes and wolves. Hence, the event reminds all of God's protection over his land.

In years past, the snakes were killed afterwards and eaten in a feast, but now the bread is substituted, formed into various snake shapes... interlocking rings of snakes, biting their tails, or as serpents with sliced almond scales and coffee bean eyes. The snakes are no longer killed, but released back into the wild

when the festival is over. *—cited from GrandVoyageItaly.com and TheItalyEdit.com*

"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them"

Festival of SNAKES

PAGANISM LIVES ON

The Festa dei Serpari or "festival of snakes" takes place every year on May 1st to honor the town's patron, Saint Domenico. St Domenico was born in Cocullo in 951 AD. He was a Benedictine monk who dedicated his life to creating hermitages and protecting the



Photo credit: Wayne Purcell

PRAYER REQUESTS

Answered Prayer!!!

- Airline tickets *—purchased !!*
- Travel expenses from Rome to Sulmona
- Our son, Nathanael, who lives with us needs a job and a place to stay (i.e., an apt., a room, someplace) so we can depart for Italy *—he found both !!*
- Apartment in Sulmona (furnished, good location) *—we have a place to stay*

Prayer Requests:

- Ongoing Monthly Support
- Our Italian language learning
- Car

Italian People:

- That we would meet people interested in getting together to read the Bible
- Pray for nominal Christians throughout Italy, that they would gain a true understanding of the gospel.
- Pray for Italians enslaved by tradition or disillusioned with church structures to encounter the living Christ.
- Pray for the power of God to be revealed and to set free those lost in the darkness of occult, pagan, and New Age practices.



Pizza! Pizza!
Remember to pray for us whenever you have pizza!

"And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people.

Pray also for me, that whenever I speak, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel . . ."

—Ephesians 6:18

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