

# NOVEMBER 2019



Dear friends,

We write to you with the incarnation, births and generations on our mind.

***'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God.'*** Luke 1:35

Our afterschool club youngsters have been hearing from Luke's Gospel of the wonder of the incarnation. Just as the Holy Spirit *overshadowed* the waters at creation, as he covered the tabernacle and mount of transfiguration with his presence in the cloud, so the Spirit overshadowed Mary. This is a breathtaking miracle because Jesus, son of Mary has a different ancestry. He is a man with a mother like us, yet conceived by the Spirit he is also different. Only as the holy and perfect One can he be our Saviour. Living a perfect life in the Spirit's power, Jesus is the man we can never be; the perfect One able to save. If we belong to him, the chains to Adam are wonderfully broken. Instead of remaining in a family of disobedience and death, we belong to a new family of which Jesus is the head. PRAISE to the Trinity for the incarnation!

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## Immaculate conception

How very different is the Roman Catholic doctrine of Immaculate Conception, which teaches that *'Mary the mother of Christ was conceived without sin and HER conception was immaculate. Mary received God's grace from the first moment of her existence and was totally and completely redeemed by this grace. Because she was redeemed, Mary spent her whole existence in a perfect relationship with God. God did this so that Mary would be worthy to be the mother of God.'* Sadly, the Immaculate Conception celebrated in Bologna next month strips Jesus of his saving power, for we need a Saviour conceived by a normal descendent of Adam, otherwise he cannot save flesh completely. Mary was conceived of ordinary parents in an ordinary way. How subtle are the lies of the evil one!



**PRAY** for our proclamation of the truth, in a setting where Christ is often 'stripped of his power'.

**PRAY** for the incarnation truth proclaimed, as we write, at our second evening of Perché Gesù.

**PRAISE** the Lord that EVERY time we hold these six evenings, there has always been at least one guest. It is a super course, as guests enjoy supper in the library visible to the town. Pray for regularity and for the new birth miracle, in guests C, L, A and K.

## Newborns

New babies are a gift to our church community and Forte Torre has been blessed with three of our younger couples having newborns. These families have also bought or rented new homes - a positive step for the church's future!

**PRAY** for new contacts and ministries to reach more Bolognese families from this stage of life.

**PRAY** for the second birth of these little ones in our midst, that the church community would love and invest in them.

**PRAY** for a greater vision of parenthood; mums ready to stop or do part-time work (rare in northern Italy), in order to have more time raising their children in fear of the Lord.

**PRAISE** for a new mums' bible study that mirrors what the three Thursday evening groups study (Numbers), where all were taking notes and praying in response to what was taught!

## One year old (via Castiglione 65)

In early October, we participated in a street party in our road. Via Castiglione closes to traffic, whilst shops were open till 11pm with stalls, refreshments and music. Last year we were scrubbing down cement and plaster during the event but this year, one year on, offered a simple opportunity to do crafts, face painting, balloons, whilst conversing with our neighbours and passers-by.

**PRAISE** for conversations had, and trust-building with those who stopped by.

**PRAISE** that although we had no new sign-ups to our clubs, there is one new dad coming on Sundays bringing his four-year old daughter to Torricine Domenica. Alleluia!

**PRAY** on that we can slowly make real in-roads into this new neighbourhood.

**PRAISE and THANKS** that one year on in our building, settling in has been relatively straight forward; but do pray on for freedom to meet. In the Milan region, only 200km from here, Christians have had church buildings closed down by police. With Lombardia having a strong presence of Islam, regional laws are now blocking freedom to worship for all religious groups (with evangelicals grouped together with sects and other religions).

## Next generation

With real joy, GP has finally reached the point where his Hebrew class is reading Deuteronomy. Fortnightly these six men labour to understand what the Holy Spirit intended when breathing out the Scriptures that testify to Christ!



**PRAY** for bursaries to arrive to fund some of these potential interns, tempted to work with churches abroad in UK/US, where associate programmes offer a small income. In Italy pastors are very rarely funded so finding funds for interns is a real challenge! At Forte Torre we would long to fund some of our own to study and serve with us!

**PRAY** ambitiously that the church will continue to invest in the ministry of word and prayer, and in training able younger men. We are very thankful that Forte Torre's giving is slowly increasing, and the church is committed to slowly increasing contributions to GP's salary. This really is rare in the Italian church scene and is real fruit of obedience that comes from faith.

**PRAY** for wisdom on how to formalize responsibilities and internships at Forte Torre; that growing, able brothers and sisters would not be 'lost' to a life of training and serving long-term in Italy.

With thanks for your partnership with us! Please do send us news of your families and local churches.

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