



The Gravino Family

Aurora Mission
P.O. Box 1549
Bradenton, FL 34206
(941)748-4100 Tel
(941)748-2625 Fax
(661)644-6355 Cell
www.auroramission.org
jagravino@gmail.com



The things which you have heard in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. 2 Tim. 2:2

December 2008

Dear Friends,

A Special Thank You

Let me begin by expressing what a great privilege it is for me to write and share with you our recent news. I want to personally **thank each of you** for your faithful support. I thank you for regularly bringing us before the Lord's throne especially throughout this more critical period as we look to take the next step in our walk of faith that for which the Lord called us and placed upon our hearts, serving Him in Italy. I also want to thank those of you who have sacrificially given and continue to give financially to assist us in our more material needs. Whether it is through prayer or giving or both, please know that we do not take for granted your labor and investment on our behalf. Rather we rejoice in the greater spiritual endeavor that together we have embarked upon, you on the support side we on the frontlines. All merit naturally goes to our sovereign God who is perfectly guiding the entire effort for His glory and the furtherance of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ in Italy.

Good News!



Since we last wrote to you in September the Lord has blessed us well beyond our expectations. With much joy and excitement we are delighted to announce our expected arrival in Rome on January 15th of the New Year. We have our plane tickets! The Lord has also provided a suitable home for us there. The only other major element to complete our move is a vehicle once in Italy. We are presently placing this item before the Lord knowing his faithful provision. What a thought. Had the timing of these events even been hinted at earlier this summer, I would have had trouble believing it! The Lord, however, is faithfully providing for our financial needs even amidst difficult economic times. For our part, we have labored diligently (visiting nine US states, and some repeatedly, Italy, Austria, and soon to be Canada) to share our story; how the Lord providentially brought together in Rome an Italian-Canadian and an Austrian and gave them a passion to dedicate their lives to serving His church in Italy. We are also humbled by the reality of being the first family from the Master's Seminary to serve in Italy though certainly not the last (several other dear TMS families are on their way). We praise Him for His awesome power and unfathomable ways. We also delight in viewing these most recent events as a strong confirmation of the Lord's approval upon our ministry and His desire to hurry us back to begin the work.

The ministry plans that await us once in Italy comprise an initial period of six months that we will spend serving in our home church in Rome. We are thankful for this opportunity. Having never served in full-time ministry particularly in the Italian context, our home church in Rome represents a necessary first step allowing me to acquire vital ministry experience in Italy before being sent off to begin our ministry at the ITA (Italian Theological Academy) and church in Acireale, Sicily. Speaking of the ITA, I am scheduled to teach my first course this up coming summer 2009!

Focus

One final note deserves mention on the ministry side of things. This year's FOCUS conference organized by Aurora Mission was another "success." There were approximately two hundred people in attendance representing churches and ministries from all over Italy. I had the joy of translating the morning's devotional sessions along with leading worship during the afternoon sessions throughout the conference. My profound thanks goes out to those of you who made my participation possible through your generous giving.



Our Family



On the family side of things, baby Maddalena has two protruding front teeth and more on the way. She is shy and quiet on the road, but loud and active in the home.

Samuele is nearing three years of age. He is now accustomed to speaking three languages: Italian, German, and English, each at different times of the day depending on whom he is with.

Sometimes all three languages emerge at the same time confusing and scaring neighbors! Alexandra excels ever so more in her roles as wife, best friend, ministry partner, encourager and mother. She demonstrates the exceptional quality of adapting to all kinds of different circumstances and places (the ideal missionary and wife).

Please Pray

We ask for your continued prayers for us in the months ahead. As I mentioned earlier, we will be traveling to Canada in December and visiting with my immediate family in Montreal. We thank a generous family for having provided for the funds to our trip to Canada. Our time in Canada will also include some ministry. A local church in the city that we worship at when visiting has asked me to preach for them on the 14th of the month. I will attempt my first sermon in the French language (hold on to your seats!) I will also be meeting with certain ministry and church leaders once there to seek out additional support opportunities for our ministry. Our prayer is that more like-minded churches and Christian ministries can partner with the ITA. The training facility has numerous financial needs. We ask for your prayers specifically for our first six months in Rome. As things now stand, we are expected to move twice, from the US to Rome and then in July '09 from Rome to Sicily. This will not be easy on the family nor on our budget.

"Therefore we also have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him." 2 Cor 5:9

Compelled by the Master's Love,

*Johnny and Alexandra Gravino
Samuele & Maddalena*