



Dear Friends and Family,
At this time last year, I was packing my suitcases and a couple of shipping boxes for my move to Montefiascone, Italy. I was trying to include the essential items that I knew I would need and a few "comfort items" that I knew were not available in Italy. One thing that I did not think to pack or even pray to find once I moved to Italy was an ITALIAN MOTHER!!!



My neighbor, the mother of my Landlord, has taken on this new role. She was concerned one weekend when I did not park my car in my normal spot. Several weeks ago she came over to be sure that I was ready for a few days of being snowed in. She explained that I needed an Italian Mother because my mom lives too far away and she was happy to take on the job. My good Italian mother often brings me food from the family garden and greets me as I come and go. She and her husband have also been willing to help and/or teach me how

things work as I adjust to this new culture, my new home. My Italian mom speaks no English so our conversation is sometimes a funny pantomime, but we communicate!

Learning to function, fit in and further the gospel in Italy is my goal. Here is a list of some of the practical and surprising lessons that I've learned this past year.

- ◇The Italian language is something like Romanian, only different!
I can and have now led the worship time, in Italian, at a small group Bible Study
- ◇Postage stamps are purchased at the tobacco shop
- ◇Utility bills are paid at the Post Office
- ◇An Italian driving "short-cut" will always be a longer drive, just less traffic
- ◇Exterior shutters, not just the windows, must be closed to keep rain out (yes, I learned this the hard way!)
- ◇I can now successfully build a wood fire in my fireplace to help heat my apartment
- ◇I can build furniture that comes in flat packages from IKEA
- ◇I now know how to harvest olives
- ◇After three tries I found a place to cut my hair; at one location where I had an appointment I was told I had too much hair to cut (I am not kidding! — they refused to cut my hair!)
- ◇Retail store hours are very different from the USA: most are closed on Sunday, at lunch and half day, one day a week. (More than once I have driven into an empty parking lot, not knowing it was the half-day for that store to be closed.)
- ◇A coffee shop is the best place to purchase food coloring (for Christmas cookie bake)
- ◇High school students stand when a teacher enters the room, but talk over each other throughout the class
- ◇Most of the students in the class I teach travel 30 to 60 minutes to attend this high school
- ◇Things take time...relationships build slowly.
There are many misconceptions regarding Jesus Christ.



I was able to help one of the families in the church with the harvest in their small olive grove. It was fun!



Baking Christmas Cookies at my place with youth

