

# *Avanti Italia!*

## *Onward Italy!*

Let's Stay Connected!

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“There is a right time for everything,” the author of Ecclesiastes writes (3:1). That is the best way to describe the month of May. It was a month in which classes ended, a new summer schedule started, vacation came and went, and significant life events occurred. May was a full month, and each ending and beginning took place at the right time. What faithfulness this builds when we know that in good or bad times, hopeful or uncertain futures, all things begin and end at the right time under the Lord who is over all things!

### ***The End of a School Term***

Our consistent teaching schedule officially finished near the end of May. However, many of us hope to meet with our students throughout the summer. I have enjoyed thinking back over the school term. Every week, I met with 8-10 students individually and taught two group classes with anywhere from 2-8 students at a time. Some might think that the unpredictability of class attendance would be frustrating or cause some anxiety. I have learned to be prepared for whatever or whomever and to be alright with it. I am encouraged that many of my students want to continue meeting despite busy summer schedules.



Florence in bloom

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Before class finished, I was able to enjoy two days with my readers outside of the classroom: one with Lorena at an orchestra concert, and the other with Clara at a garden exhibition. I am very thankful for the friendships the Lord has provided in the readers I met with this last school year.

### *An Intern and Finished Projects*

We officially closed the school term with an end-of-year cookout. A few days before then, we welcomed our summer intern, Matt Erwin, to the Bible School. Matt actually arrived the day I left for a short trip back to the States, so our meeting was delayed until I returned. Matt will be starting his senior year at Harding University in the fall, but before then he will spend the summer here at the school helping us with our various projects and responsibilities. It is nice having a new face around to liven things up with fresh energy. We're grateful for the extra help.

One last thing about the first half of May— we finished remodeling and repairing the two bedrooms and four bathrooms completely! It was a long and drawn out project, but we now feel so good as they are no longer a burden weighing on our minds.

### *A Vacation Home*

With the end of classes looming, I was just as aware of my nearing trip back to the States. For three weeks I visited friends and family and caught up with life back home. The reason for planning my trip mid-May was to attend my boyfriend's grad-school graduation. Not long after arriving, Zach proposed, and this boyfriend is now my fiancé! We enjoyed spending the following weeks telling our friends and family and sharing in the excitement. We are incredibly blessed to have each other, and we are overjoyed about spending our lives together.



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### *Meanwhile at the School...*

Life at the school and in the lives of the housemates continued without me for a few weeks. Giacomo, Melissa, and I all had birthdays, though none of us celebrated together. Also, the school transitioned to a type of bed and breakfast while I was gone. The school has an agreement with Harding University to house their summer sports study abroad group every year, so for three weeks we have spent a lot time cooking and cleaning.

### *Decisions for the Future*

Every good vacation must come to an end. The last half of May was relaxing, very enjoyable, and forever memorable. Because Zach and I will be getting married, I have decided to move back to Oklahoma in August so that we may pursue the beginning of a life together. I am overwhelmed and thankful for the excitement and blessings our family and friends have made known to us in regards to this important life event. Zach and I are incredibly grateful to you.



Our fun-loving intern, Matt



Eric and Rosa working to feed the American students



Eric talking to the study abroad students

**As a team we've committed to praying for specific things to build our anticipation in seeing how the Lord will answer. Each prayer has a story, and though there is not enough space to share the details of each request, we all came to agree that these are pressing matters that we need to advocate. I ask that you add these to your prayers.**

*\* That Rosa, a woman who has been working at the Bible school for more than 20 years cooking and acting as a surrogate mother, may come to know the Lord.*

*\* That plans for outreach in Scandicci may blossom as we consider offering Italian worship services in the city we live in.*

*\* That our team may be united in all ways.*

*\* That the Lord would raise up leaders in the churches in Italy.*

*\* That Allesandro, a reader who has been studying at the Bible school for many years, would be relieved of doubt and come to know the Lord.*

### ***About Avanti Italia***

The missions program I am a part of is called Avanti Italia (A.I.). This mission program has three primary goals: 1. to use our individual talents in sharing the Good News of Jesus the Christ with those who are seeking to have a more perfect relationship with Him, 2. to learn to share Christ with others more effectively, and 3. to participate in mutual encouragement and edification with the Italian churches of Christ. Their method for achieving these goals is mainly through outreach in teaching private Bible lessons in English. As a part of A.I., I would be expected to teach an average of 10-15 Bible lessons a week. Much of the work A.I. encourages would be described as friendship evangelism, making relationships with people and sharing God's saving message with them. Each team member is not only expected to fulfill their obligations, but also to find ways of using his or her individual talents to make more contacts with people. Most of the work is centered at the Florence Bible School in Scandicci, a suburb on the southwest side of Florence. A.I. has had an extensive outreach since its beginning in 1986. Every year, A.I. forms teams of 3-7 members to send to work at the school for a two-year commitment. Team members are required to fundraise, acquire a student visa, and go through intensive training before leaving the United States. Once arriving in Florence, team members live together at the Florence Bible School and immediately begin Italian language studies while teaching English using the Bible. Teachers generally work in one-to-one or small group sessions.