

August 2018 Sicily, Mayotte

The *Bible Companion* readings for this Sunday include 15,16 and there is an MP3 file about this at <http://www.christadelphia.net/audio/rom1516.mp3>

You can see the archives of our MP3 files at <http://christadelphia.net/audio.htm> and on iTunes at <https://itunes.apple.com/ca/podcast/christadelphian-bible-talks/id987163468>

Download the *NEV Bible* with commentary and *Bible Companion* bookmarks at <http://n-e-v.info/NEVBIBLE.pdf>

Helps for the *Bible Companion* readings this week:

Jeremiah: <http://n-e-v.info/JeremiahNEVCommentary.pdf>

Mark: <http://n-e-v.info/NEVMarkCommentary.pdf>

SICILY

As mentioned in last week's Carelink email, we've continued working with our existing brothers and sisters in Sicily. The new Government wish to deport most of the 1 million or more African refugees in Italy, and there is racism now at every corner. Many camps have been closed and the Africans are on the streets, begging for help or casual work. The situation is particularly acute in Sicily, where many of the Africans first land. The region is very poor, and oppressively hot throughout the Summer. Many of these people arrive having been beaten and tortured in Libya and saw so many drowning all around them during the Mediterranean sea crossing. The sisters we baptized here last time are under the deep impression of God moving in their lives since their baptisms, and are preaching to other women.

Do pray for them and our witness to them, and we hope to report more on our outreach to them next week Lord willing. Many of these women were repeatedly raped by the traffickers in Libya, some are pregnant as a result. And yet there is very little help for them in Sicily and many are just fending for themselves in really great hardship. We're doing what we can to give appropriate support. But please pray for our wisdom. How ever do you pray with and try to counsel, comfort and guide women who were raped multiple times, have lost, aborted or given birth to the babies conceived as a result... and who are now far from their African support networks, stranded in the 40 C heat of Sicily in a hostile, racist environment with no work or support. Of course, such people are going to want to turn to God and His Son. The standard churches here [mainly Catholic] are unwelcoming to them. What we have to say about grace, repentance and absolute forgiveness for whatever [including abortion], about there being no "Satan" figure out there, the love of God, His plan expressed through His promises, through His Son who had our nature and knows our every feeling, coming to a climax in the soon return of Jesus to establish His Kingdom on earth when all the injustice and sin shall be swept away... this is very, very attractive to them. We are offering no great "carrot" for conversion, just the meeting room we help rent, provision of water, some medicines and other help as we can, etc. These people are genuinely interested in the true Gospel for its own sake.

Earlier this week we focused upon a group of women known to our existing sisters, living in a small town in central Sicily. We taught them, prayed with them, gave them Bibles and appropriate assistance. But they are very, very vulnerable to sexual and economic exploitation by the Mafias of central Sicily. These are truly the badlands of Europe. They hang out on the ground floor in an abandoned building, and local people have brought them things like clothes, a pram for babies [although they tend to carry their babies on their backs], and even a fan. There is actually a working electrical socket there:



It's hard to take facial photos of women who've been raped and just shared their stories, especially when living in such a pathetic situation. And the extremely bright sunlight and poor camera didn't help:



And so they sit there, reading their Bibles, begging, singing Christian songs, praying, looking around for odd cleaning jobs. It's an awful situation. They keep themselves spotlessly clean, and manage to wash their clothes:



It was unsurprising really that having been exposed to our sisters teaching them the Gospel some months ago, that several decided for baptism. We transported them to the coast and were so happy to baptize ESTHER, UCHI, BEAUTY, BELLA and BRIDGET. Their confessions of faith were so clearly from the heart:



Please do pray for them. There is huge potential to work with these women and other such groups, so many needs, so much comfort, wisdom and counseling needed. We feel so inadequate for the work. Our resources are so small compared to the work, but God clearly intended us to meet with them. We have to follow where He leads, and He seems to like working through the inadequate and unqualified.

One practical thing that is very useful for them is providing bicycles, for about 150 Euro each. This enables them to cycle around and find work, and also gives them some mobility if threatened.

ITALY

We're delighted to say that brother Joseph has visited the new ecclesia in Cesenatico and given them the bi-lingual English-Italian leaflets for the new brethren to distribute, which they are eager to do. Sister Liz Hemingray is sending them Bible studies regularly and it really seems that out of all the work done in the area, a regularly meeting ecclesia is developing. But the new right wing Government in Italy mean business with their plans to deport Africans and gypsies, with echoes of Fascism resurging. A recent BBC article confirms what we are seeing and hearing reported from our brethren; that there is a growing "climate of violence" against black folks in Italy:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-45017843>

MAYOTTE

The planned trip to Mayotte is now happening as you receive this. The intention is to visit,

baptize and support the group of Congolese refugees who fled Congo after losing their families to Tanzania, attended an ecclesia in a refugee camp there, where they received French Bible Basics, but were then not allowed to remain, and took shipping to the remote island of Mayotte. Here they appear to be stranded, although very much in love with the Truth and wanting to follow the Lord in spirit and truth.



PRAYER POINTS

- For wisdom as to how to counsel and appropriately help those who are traumatized
- For those recently baptized
- For the work on Mayotte

With love from your brothers and sisters of Carelinks