

# MARIA TERESA'S PROMOTION DAY MAY BE COMING SOON



Bill and Maria Teresa Standridge Rome, Italy  
(photo Sunday, Feb. 24, 2013)

In our January email prayer letter we wrote a paragraph on Maria Teresa's need to go into the hospital for care on her blood-count, and asked for your prayers. Thanks for so many of you who have written that you were praying and asking for more information.

## **THE MONTH OF FEBRUARY HAS BEEN FILLED WITH**

doctor's visits, blood tests, transfusions and bone marrow tests as her diagnosis and prognosis were formulated and reviewed. Finally, our daughter Debbie, who had come down from Switzerland to help us, and our son Dan, who had come from Milan, Italy, and I were gathered in the doctor's office in the hospital to hear his conclusion.

## **HE TOLD US THAT MARIA TERESA HAD A SERIOUS FORM**

of leukemia, and that life expectation was from two to four months.

You can imagine our surprise, consternation and tears at this totally unexpected news. He said that the great danger at this point would be some form of infection passed on to her by family, friends, or crowds. When we returned home, our practice of total truth was put to the test, and we all cried some more, as we prayed together for the Lord's will to be done. Since that time, we have called the elders of the church to pray with us for healing, if that is God's will, and received many, many letters from those who are praying.

**DO WE EXPECT MIRACULOUS HEALING? YES, WHEN SHE** gets to heaven, or sooner, if it is the Lord's will. But we are living day by day in gratefulness to the Lord for his gift to both of us of long life (she is 88 and I was 86 last week), and of 57 years of united ministry. Our ministry of teaching, writing and publishing has been one of totally shared gifts and blessings, as every sermon outline, article or book I have written has been checked for its Italian by Maria Teresa and every article, book or teaching note she has written has been checked by me for clarity. It is an unusual story of more than half a century of shared burdens and blessings, and of the great joy we have shared in seeing God work. We have seen a growing church firmly planted in Rome, our own sons serving the Lord in Italy, young people and couples going out to serve the Lord from our church in Rome, books, tracts, Bible correspondence courses flowing from our Mission Center, and so much more.

**LAST SUNDAY WE HAD A FORETASTE OF HEAVEN** as we spent almost the entire day praising God with hymns, Scripture passages and memories of His blessings in our family, together with our four children and their spouses (two of the couples and one grandson who is in seminary, came from the states), and with 4 grandchildren living in Italy (7 other grandchildren and 2 great-grandchildren are in the US and were not able to come). Truly it was an unforgettable and unrepeatable day of the Lord's presence.

**YOUR PRAYERS FOR US ARE SO PRECIOUS AS WE FACE** these next weeks and months and the Lord leads us through this valley of the shadow of death. Pray for Maria Teresa (so far she has no pain and really has a hard time believing she is not as well as ever) and for me as we try to finish up some of our writing. Pray for me, as I plan to continue my ministry to Italy and to Italians as long as He allows, and however He guides. I will keep you informed as the Lord leads.

**TODAY MARIA TERESA IS WRITING A TRACT** that will allow her to witness to her peace and joy in facing the passage (on which I preached in December, not imagining how meaningful it would soon be for us) in which Paul sums up his certainty: "absent from the body...present with the Lord". She is perhaps the best-known woman Christian author in Italy and her books have blessed thousands of women, as well as her articles in the Christian paper we published for fifty years. We hope that we can have the tract published and distributed in the next few weeks.

**DEAR FRIENDS, SO MANY OF YOU HAVE STOOD WITH US** faithfully for so many years. God has blessed us through you, and, we trust that He has blessed you through us. God alone has kept us going and kept us busy into old age and it was inevitable that He would soon call us home to rest from our labors. We do not believe that He has commissioned doctors to tell us when our work is done, and so we trust Him and continue working as we await His call. It appears that He may still have some work for me to do alone and I will appreciate your prayers about this. When people have remarked on the many years the Lord has permitted us to serve Him, I have often replied, "Yes, He has taught us so much. And, since He has not called us yet, I am convinced that He still thinks there are other things we need to learn." I certainly have not yet learned all that He can teach me.

In loving, grateful thanks to you and to our Lord,

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