

Martin and Fran Russell working with



9th March 2021

Dear friends at BH

Consider it nothing but joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you fall into various trials. Be assured that the testing of your faith [through experience] produces endurance [leading to spiritual maturity, and inner peace]. James 1:2-3 AMP

We collected Gioia, our Jack Russell puppy, from Stefano, her breeder on 20th February. It was lovely to get her home and begin to get to know her. Then on Monday 22nd Martin started feeling unwell. We both thought this wouldn't last long, but here we are two weeks later, he still is unwell.



These verses from James are an encouragement to both of us. Martin's ill health is a challenge but the bible's tells us to face trials with joy which will lead to spiritual maturity and inner peace. So as I, Fran, take Gioia out for a walk at 8.30, me walking, her looking around, I am, mostly, enjoying this opportunity to be outside noticing the buds on the trees and appreciating the magnolia blooms and other signs of spring.

Left, Fran is about to take Gioia out. Fran walking Gioia looking around. She has to have her second vaccination before we can take her out on the lead.

Seek the LORD and His strength; Seek His face continually [longing to be in His presence].

1 Chronicles 16:11 AMP

Martin explains how he is feeling.

" For a couple of weeks, I haven't been feeling great. I am tired with little energy, have no appetite, have abdominal pain, muscular pain and generally feel terrible. After talking with my rheumatologist, Carlotta, we decided to stop my medication and see if these symptoms were caused by the treatment. But after almost two weeks I am no better. So, I'm now waiting to talk to Carlotta later today (Tuesday 9th) and see what's next



For those of you with good memories, it is a year since Martin's second eye op March 5th 2020, and 3 years since the first op in March 2018. We have so many things to give thanks for despite this current situation. A lovely apartment, big enough for both of us to work in and have space to relax too, the river nearby to walk to, family, friends and neighbours to contact by phone or WhatsApp or Zoom and chat to. Fran has gone back to Italian school, on Zoom, and is having fun with her teacher Simonetta - they are working on pronouns at the moment so we are not sunk in despair but wanted to involve you in our challenging times too.

Please can you pray :

- * for Martin as he feels so terrible, for the best thing to happen soon, and for patience as he waits
- * for Fran, for energy to help with Gioia every day, and for kindness and patience for Martin
- * for both of us to continue to trust the Lord with everything that is happening

But first and most importantly seek (aim at, strive after) His kingdom and His righteousness [His way of doing and being right-the attitude and character of God], and all these things will be given to you also. Matthew 6:33 AMP

We continue to pray regularly for our non-Christian family and friends. Every one of us, in this pandemic are facing trials, but as Christians Martin and I know that Jesus is with us in all our trials and that gives us hope for the future and strength for today. We are so far away from our friends and family, but praying for them is brilliant, because it means we can still be involved in their lives.

*Thank you so much for your ongoing prayers, encouragement.
and support for us, with our love, as always*

Martin + Franxx

We are enjoying our Zoom calls, usually over lunch, but we are flexible. The calls usually last around an hour. Please contact us if you would like a chat on Zoom anytime in the next month or so.

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