

**Italy ----- NOT for ITALIANS ONLY**  
**Italy Mission Trip, January 9 – 23, 2006**

Team members: Virg & Dorothy Dykstra, Neale & Linda Roller, Carol Frazell, Lila Hassebrock, Lois Hoch, Jeff Klopfenstein, Arlene Parker, Cindy Spiker, Lois Van Heukelom.

The MDRC team was met in Palermo, Sicily by Missionary Dave Zomer, and went to the La Noce Diaconal Center which is the site of one of the Waldensian Churches. This Center carries out education and social programs within the regional heartbeat of the Mafia's legendary domination.

The Waldensian Church in Italy is a Protestant Church that predates the Protestant Reformation. In spite of its 800 year history it is one of the RCA's newest mission partners.

The Waldensian Church has 30,000 members, in 160 congregations. Its ecumenical relationships are with the Methodist Church. Many Waldensian congregations are reaching out to the many immigrants.

Each Waldensian Center has a guest house which is where the MDRC team stayed throughout the visit. Three sites were visited in Sicily; one in Naples; Ecumene, which is south of Rome where the Zomer's live (Arlan & Barb Van Roekel and George & Mary Jo McVicker volunteered at Ecumene this past May); and one in Florence.

Transportation from Center to Center was by plane, van, train, ferry, subway, hydrofoil, bullet train, taxi and by foot.

**Some highlights of your MDRC team were:**

**Spiritual:**

- Virg's morning thoughts for the day
- Passion and hope of the young pastors
- Ecumene
- Worship service at La Noce, Palermo – Africans, Italians, Americans – the "dance" offering
- Small group daily devotions
- Worship at the Methodist Church with Pastor Agosto in Florence

**Sites:**

- Pastor Franchesco and his church in Catania, Sicily. He has great vision for the future of his church. He asked us to pray AGAINST the Mafia.
- Florence-Pastor Augusto and his Alpha class with 15 people ranging in age from 19 – 59
- Catania—the opportunity to support a new church
- Ecumene
- Valley of the Temples and Pompeii

**Food:**

- Squid and octopus embryos
- Fish dinner at King Fredricks in Palermo
- ALL the great food at Ecumene cooked by Salvano and Leda
- Gelato everywhere!!

**View:**

- Night view of Velletri from Ecumene
- Agrigento
- Mt. Etna from Enna
- Views of the Isle of Capri
- Sunset from the Spanish steps
- The view out from the top of the Duomo's 476 steps in Florence

**Fun:**

- Getting to know each other--eating, laughing, working, carrying luggage together
- Getting to know Dave and Joy
- Visiting the Vatican at St. Peter's
- The encouragement we were able to give to the young churches

**Work:**

- Creating "artistic" rock edging around the rose bushes----Michelangelo and Raphael have nothing on us
- Staining, staining, staining shutters
- Making the wood box
- Cleaning and setting up the chapel for the upcoming conference
- Sewing quilt blocks
- Pick ax, spade, and rocks for a new prayer garden
- Cleaning the yard, the fireplace and helping with TONS of laundry