



José, Elisa & Filipe Rodrigues

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“Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” Phil 4v4-7

Dear friends,

Thinking of the well-known words to the Philippians, brings some context to the new realities we have to face at the present time. *Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.* It is a reminder, that there are things that are worth saying again and again; it is a remedy against anxiety; it is instruction to every situation; it is an encouragement to face every situation in prayer, petitions, requests and thanksgiving. Rejoicing always in God is not a new approach, but it does apply to any new reality we may be experiencing.

Society in general and believers in particular, are now told not to do the things we like and consider to be genuine expressions of our love, care and sympathy to each other. We are told again and again, not to embrace each other; keep distance from other people; do not visit family and friends; do not meet for worship and so on. It is peculiar, but, if it was not such a peculiarity, we would not have new matters for thanksgiving.

Matters for thanksgiving:

We are to give thanks:

- For the technology that brought new opportunities to be connected online with people in their homes.
- The restrictive measures taken last month in the metropolitan area, because of the increase of COVID-19, to contain the contagion. Now everything is better, and restrictions are gradually being lifted.
- For the many good opportunities to witness to neighbours and friends. We have been encouraged with a commitment of some of the more recent contacts. For example, Sergio Vieira, a young man. He attends most of the online meetings and seems to have a spiritual concern for witnessing the Gospel. Also, Isabel Silva and her daughter Patricia. They too have been attending most of the online meetings.
- For the new arrangements to meet weekly. Mid-week meetings and Sundays, all have a limited number of people present in Alto Moinho and Azoia, as well as people attending online. So far, this has proved to be a good arrangement.
- The business of buying a property for the church premises is moving forward. It was already possible to gather, what we think to be all the necessary documents to make the purchase. Next week we are to submit the documents at the Registry. If all the documents are fine, we should soon have dates to sign a contract and proceed with the purchase. We give thanks for one church that has given £5000 towards the loan of 20000€.
- Despite the limitations that COVID-19 brings, even so, we are to give thanks that the believers in general are committed, with the work manifested among the church members and others related with the work in Alto Moinho and Azoia.
- For the strength Elisa is given for each day. We said last month, she has been without treatment from January to July. She started a new treatment in July, but the treatment has not proved to be effective,

and the marks of the tumour have drastically increased from 260 in May to over a thousand at the beginning of August. She has put too much weight on her belly and lost volume on the rest of her body. She is very weak, feels short of breath and very tired. The oncology doctor has asked for more specialist advice. It is expected that a decision will be taken this coming Wednesday on the possibilities for Elisa, to be followed up at Lisbon Central Oncology Department. We have the sense that something has to be done quickly, because she is getting weaker day by day.

Request for prayers

- For the new arrangements of meetings with some people online and others attending the meetings from the churches of Alto Moinho and Azoia.
- For the proposed new premises for the church. There are two aspects: First, to deal with all the legal processes for legalization of the church activities; Second, for the finances. The church does not have the full amount of the cost and needs to raise a loan of 20.000€. One church has given a gift of £5000 to decrease the loan of 20000€.
- We are so sorry that it has not been possible to have the usual summer camps. Prayers will be appreciated on behalf of the children and young people. For some of them, it was the only thing they get in all the year.
- For Elisa's strength and testimony to the many that follow her on social media.
- For the new people that have been attending the meetings, most of them online.

We acknowledge your prayers and support are means, used by God, to strengthen and encourage us to get this far.

Yours in Christ Jesus,

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