

September 2016

I tried to buy petrol yesterday. However, when I picked up the nozzle, nothing happened. As the cars started queuing up behind me I tried hard to look normal (it didn't work). I went in the shop to ask advice, no one was there. By this time a symphony of horns (not brass) began playing behind me. One Italian tried to tell me - at light speed - what to do. I could only make out two words: "pay before" - but I wasn't sure where to pay. The shop was empty, there was no card machine in sight. As the polyphony of car horns began to melt my ear drums I contemplated abandoning my car. It was then, when everything seemed impossible, that I noticed a card machine hidden away in the corner. I managed to flee the scene unharmed.

Moving to a different culture, learning a new language, adjusting to a new environment- it can make your head spin. A fog of confusion pervades even the simplest of daily tasks. If your not careful, mental fatigue, a severe bout of intellectual constipation can set in. It is at these moments that one's mind longs for something familiar... something it can understand... something like a fish and chip shop-even a pot noodle.

I should not complain. After all no one has ever died from irregular verbs (though its possible Italian prepositions can kill you). However, while I have an army of church people helping me, I can't begin to imagine how migrants entering Europe must feel.

First they risk their lives, crossing both the desert and the sea. If they survive this, they have to adjust to an entirely different language and culture - often without any support whatsoever. They have little or no money, and no right to work (Lev 24:22). What a terrible situation to be in (Ex 23:9). May God have mercy on these brilliant and amazing people. May God bless them and make his face to shine upon them (Deut 10:18).

* Please pray for the thousands of migrants trying to make their home in Europe.

* Please pray for us as we study Italian.

* Please pray for our children-that they continue to enjoy the new environment and that they settle in well.

Daniel