BETWEEN RUINS AND RENEWAL

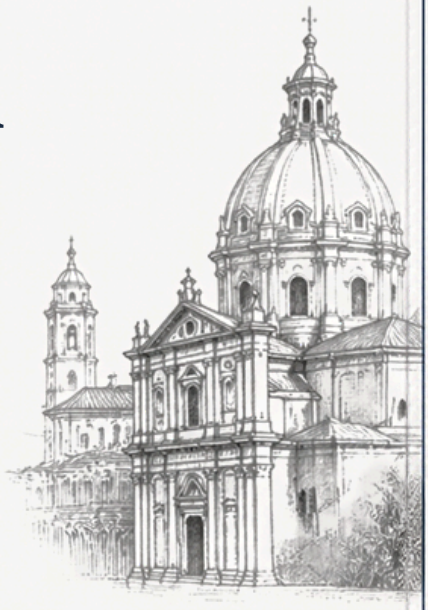
How to Pray for the Discipling of Italy



PMc

Practical Missions Cohort

WHY ITALY NEEDS PRAYER



Italy is known around the world for its history, culture, explorers, architecture, and people. From the ancient ruins of the Roman Empire to ornate cathedrals, its landscape tells a story of power, tradition, and eventual stagnation. The vitality of faith hardened into a cultural shell, and Italy remains a great unreformed frontier of history.

Today the Italian people are pressed between two destructive illusions: "The Nominalism of Tradition," a cultural Roman Catholicism that permeates the land but is hollowed out, void of the Gospel, and largely abandoned in daily practice; and "The Vacuum of Secularism," a modern secular state and pervasive humanism that has replaced the void, leaving the modern Italian adrift in materialism, moral relativism, conflict, and chaos.

A Disconnected Majority: Although most Italians identify as Roman Catholic, only 5% actively practice their faith.

The Gospel Desert: Less than 1% of the population are evangelical Christians. Of Italy's 34,000 cities and towns, over 31,000 have absolutely no evangelical witness.

A Lack of Shepherds: There is effectively one evangelical church for every 45,000 to 50,000 people in Italy.

Biblical Illiteracy: According to the Vatican's own records, Italy possesses the second-lowest Bible literacy rate in all of Europe.

At Practical Missions Cohort (PMc), we are committed to more than just planting isolated churches; we are laboring to see the nation of Italy discipled.

PILLAR 1: BREAKING THROUGH THE SHIELD OF EMPTY RELIGION

Pray for the hearts of those steeped in religious tradition, that they would recognize their desperate need for a living Savior rather than resting in a hollow cultural inheritance. The ultimate fruit of the Roman Catholic system in Italy has been a profound, widespread indifference to the things of God. For the average person, participation in the church is limited to the bare minimum: showing up for Christmas, Easter, baptisms, First Communions, weddings, or funerals.

Many have been misled to believe that the sacrament of infant baptism provides a permanent, unconditional standing before God, effectively nullifying the necessity of personal repentance and faith. This reliance on institutional initiation leads to the false conviction that salvation is a lifelong process of working out one's status through the Church, with purgatory serving as a final, post-mortem refinery for the soul. Because this framework substitutes human participation for the sufficiency of Christ's finished work, it renders the Scriptures largely irrelevant to the common Italian. They remain biblically illiterate, lacking the only foundation capable of sustaining a civilization.



Join us in praying for the following:

- **The Dissolution of the System:** We pray not merely for the reform of this system, but for its total dissolution. Pray that the Roman Catholic edifice would crumble under the weight of the true Gospel.
- **The Shattering of Nominalism:** Pray that the Holy Spirit would shatter this shield of nominalism, exposing the vanity of these traditions that keep millions inoculated against the Truth.
- **A Call to Living Faith:** Pray that the Italian people would be drawn out of the darkness of institutional ritual and into the necessity of a living, personal faith in the finished work of Christ.

PILLAR 1:
NOTES & FURTHER REFLECTION

De Chirico quotations referenced in Pillar 1.

> In a country like Italy, Roman Catholicism is not just a religion; it is a cultural inheritance that provides a sense of identity without requiring a biblical conviction. This 'nominal' shield, however, leaves the nation spiritually defenseless. When the foundation is a tradition of men rather than the finished work of Christ, the society lacks the necessary armor to face the challenges of secularism and the steady rise of other robust worldviews like Islam.
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> De Chirico, Leonardo. Same Words, Different Worlds: Do Roman Catholics and Evangelicals Believe the Same Gospel? London: IVP, 2021.

> The tragedy of the Roman Catholic system is that it has inoculated millions against the true Gospel by giving them just enough religion to be comfortable, but not enough Scripture to be transformed. It creates a cultural Christianity that is wide but shallow, leaving the people biblically illiterate and culturally helpless when the winds of change blow through Europe.
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> De Chirico, Leonardo. Credo Magazine, 'Roman Catholicism Today,' 2017, credomag.com/2017/05/leonardo-de-chirico-roman-catholicism-today.

> And he said to them, 'Well did Isaiah prophecy of you hypocrites, as it is written, "This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men." You leave the commandment of God and hold to the tradition of men.' — **Mark 7:6-8**

PILLAR 2: DISMANTLING THE SECULAR STRONGHOLD

Pray for the intellectual and cultural spheres of Italy, that the hollowness of secularism would become undeniable to the rising generation. Italy is currently straining under the weight of deep-seated societal decay—the inevitable harvest of a secular humanist worldview sown over several decades. We see the fruit of this 'godless building' in every sector.

I. Economic & Social Stagnation: A failing economy stifled by taxation and a shrinking population with the world's second-lowest birthrate.

II. Institutional Decay: A struggling healthcare system, systemic political corruption, and a failing justice system that struggles to provide equitable recourse.

III. Ideological Control: An education system that fosters confusion rather than truth, paired with the rising specter of state surveillance.

These are not merely technical failures; they are the consequence of a nation attempting to build its house without the Architect.



Join us in praying for the following:

- **The Destruction of Strongholds:** Pray for the destruction of the secular arguments that keep the Italian mind captive.
- **Eyes Opened to Christ:** Ask the Lord to open the eyes of the people to see that true justice and life-giving prosperity are found only in submission to Christ.

> Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain. Unless the Lord watches over the city, the watchman stays awake in vain. — **Psalm 127:1**

> For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ. — **2 Cor. 10:3-5**

PILLAR 3: THE MULTIPLICATION OF FAITHFUL LABORERS

Pray specifically for Practical Missions Cohort and the Missions Academia. We are laboring to raise up missionaries and indigenous leaders who are not merely trained in "church management," but are equipped to plant churches that function as genuine outposts of the Kingdom rather than impotent social clubs. We are seeking a new generation of laborers who possess:

I. Presuppositional Clarity: The ability to dismantle the false foundations of secular thought by showing that the unbelieving worldview is ultimately self-refuting and illogical.

II. A Full-Orbed Gospel: A robust, biblical grasp of the Gospel that is not limited to private salvation, but informs an "all-of-life" Christian worldview.

III. Kingdom Perspective: The wisdom to bring every sphere of existence under the Lordship of Christ, reclaiming the intellectual and cultural ground lost to humanism.



Join us in praying for the following:

- **The Raising of Laborers:** Pray for the Lord of the harvest to send forth men and women of conviction who are ready to labor in this difficult field.
- **Rigorous Preparation:** Pray that as missionaries receive this 21st-century training for our post-Christian context, they would be thoroughly equipped to engage the Italian mind.
- **Endurance and Fruitfulness:** Pray that our laborers persevere through the spiritual resistance of the mission field, that the attrition rate would decline, and that they would bear lasting fruit for the glory of the King.



Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.” – **Matthew 9:37-38**

PILLAR 4: KINGDOM ENDURANCE ON THE FRONTLINES

Pray for the missionaries and families serving on the frontlines in Italy. Kingdom work in a post-Christian, hardened landscape is a marathon, not a sprint. We are not called to success as the world defines it, but to faithfulness as the King demands it. To labor here requires a "steadfast tenacity"; the ability to press on without the comfort of immediate results or the applause of the culture.



Join us in praying for the following:

- **The Grace of Tenacity:** Pray that we are granted the supernatural grace to labor faithfully, even when the work feels slow and the cultural resistance feels insurmountable.
- **Protection Against Weariness:** Ask the Lord to guard our hearts and minds against the fatigue of the "long haul," keeping us immovable in our conviction and anchored deeply in the Scriptures.
- **Eyes Fixed on the King:** Pray that we remain perpetually focused on the finish line of the race, drawing our strength from the joy set before us in the finished work of Christ.



Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. – **Hebrews 12: 1-2**



Share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. – **2 Timothy 2:3**



Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain. – **1 Corinthians 15:58**

"For from him and through him
and to him are all things.
To him be glory forever. Amen."
— Romans 11:36

Partner in the Reformation of Italy

The task of discipling a nation is not for the lone worker, but for the whole Church. We invite you to join us on the frontline as we labor for the genuine Reformation of Italy.



Stay Informed: Sign up for our mission family for monthly frontline updates at practicalmissions.org/pray



Listen & Learn: Subscribe to the Missions Incorporated podcast wherever you get your shows for missiological equipping and frontline reports.



Equip & Train: Pre-field and ongoing missionary discipleship combining hands-on field training with online study at missionsacademia.com



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Connect: Get inside access to the work and join the conversation by joining The Italian Cohort on Discord: practicalmissions.org/the-italian-cohort



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