

Lynne & Steve Portugal, Spain Morocco, Italy, Swiss Itinerary
October 23 to November 15, 2015

October 23

5:55 PM Newark (EWR) TAP Portugal 204 Airbus A332 3,366 mi 7hr 10min

10/23 - 10/24

Greetings from Albufeira Jardim in Albufeira, Portugal!

From our living room/dining room/kitchen and from our balcony, we have a view of the Atlantic Ocean to the south of us. It is along the southern coast of Portugal. It is 7:22 a.m. Eastern Daylight time and 12:22 p.m. Portugal time. We've been up for 24 hours now.

Yesterday morning I led Moms in Prayer at Concordia Prep School in Baltimore. I left early, went home, did a few last minute chores.

We left about 10:15, drove to North Plainfield, New Jersey (where I grew up). My sister Barb's friends Marilyn and Carmine offered to let us park our car in their driveway while we were gone. Carmine drove us to Newark Airport.

After checking in, we took the escalator down to the next level. I made the mistake of pushing the carry-on suitcase ahead of me on the escalator. It didn't like the bump up at the bottom, fell over, and caused me to fall. I seriously bruised my ribs on the left side of my back - nothing like starting a trip with a bang!!! As long as I don't move, the ribs don't bother me. We went through security, then waited a couple of hours to finally board the TAP Portugal plane. We pulled away from the gate about 15 minutes late, then waited behind a dozen or more planes for our turn for take-off. Thus we were about 40 minutes late in taking off.

Our flight was a bit bumpy, the turbulence wasn't too bad. They served us dinner (choice of chicken with rice and green beans or tilapia with potatoes and carrots and other vegetables, salad (greens with a tomato wedge), cold macaroni with ham slices on top, a roll, and a dessert which was layers of different sweets) an hour after take-off.

On the screen on the back of the seat in front of us was a picture of a plane, showing where it took off, the time in Newark, the time in Lisbon, the number of kilometers we

had traveled, the number of total kilometers for the trip, estimated arrival time - it was fun to look at once in a while. Just after 9 p.m., they dimmed the lights in the plane and it was quiet so we could rest. At 11:30 the lights came back on and they served us breakfast (a roll with cheese, ham, and lettuce as a sandwich) and a Twix bar. We landed in Lisbon at about 12:30 a.m. (5:30 a.m. Lisbon time). It was dark the entire way, sunset before we left, not yet dawn when we arrived. Lisbon's lights were pretty to see when we arrived. We arrived a half hour early.

The plane parked with other planes. We walked down steps to the ground, took a bus a couple of miles to the terminal. The ground was wet but it wasn't raining then. We went into the terminal and joined more than a thousand people in line for customs (before 6 a.m.!!!). After struggling through those lines, we found our luggage, then searched the terminal for the car rental. It took a while to find it, finally got the car Steve had signed up for. After familiarizing himself with the Volkswagen Upi, we drove away.

They like circles at corners in Portugal. One large circle had traffic lights at every corner (including in the circle - we stopped for at least 3 lights going three quarters of the way around the circle!) We finally found the road we wanted. We crossed the Vasco de Gama Bridge across the Rio Tejo - I'm guessing the river is at least 10 miles wide at that point (though it is narrower near the ocean and not far upstream) - it seemed like we would never get across the bridge!

We drove for more than 3 hours. It rained off and on, lightly at times, heavier at other times. It is extremely cloudy. There are few billboards along the way. When there was a road off to a town, I rarely saw any buildings in the distance. They build cement culverts along the tops of hills and terraces (especially those which are terraced to cut the road through) - lots of them to keep the hills from eroding. Most houses in the countryside were white stucco with red tile roofs. When we got to the south central section of Portugal called the Algarve I saw more houses from the road.

We passed fields of cork oak trees. Cork comes from the bark of the cork oak, a 30' tree with a sprawling canopy and knotty trunk that grows well in dry heat and sandy soil. After 25 years, a tree is mature enough for harvest. The outer bark is stripped from the trunk, leaving a "wound" of red-colored "blushing" inner bark. It takes 9 years for the bark to grow back, and then it's harvested again. A cork tree keeps producing for more than 100 years. After harvesting, the bark is boiled to soften it up, then flattened.

Machines cut the cork into desired shapes or punch out bottle stoppers (think wine bottles). Portugal produces more than half the world's supply of cork (Spain makes most of the rest).

We finally found, after asking a couple of people, the time share where we are staying. Steve hit his head on the corner of the car trunk as he unloaded the suitcase. He is napping. I think I will do the same now.

Hello, again!

It's now 8:12 p.m. Portugal time.

We decided to go to downtown Albufeira, drove around for a while, then found a place to park (paid parking). We walked around "Old Town", up and down the steps, past lots of shops, eventually found the church - a wedding was going on. We walked down a street, found another church, which is now a museum of sacred objects. We looked in there, saw several old objects (statues, an embroidered chausable, a model of the Albufeira castle which was captured in 1260 by the king who was the unifier of Portugal by taking it back from the Moors, a beautiful wood altar which appeared to be behind the screen like the Orthodox church has, etc. We then walked up 2 blocks to the third church (Church of St. Ann) which was locked. All 3 churches are within 3 blocks.

We had seen a Louisiana Restaurant, a Tex-Mex restaurant, a McDonalds, a KFC, a California hotel (I thought we were in Portugal, not the US!), Indian restaurants, Italian restaurants, a Parisian restaurant, one from the Andes (Peru), and a couple of other restaurants from other countries. Many of the sports bar type restaurants had a soccer game on, with lots of people in the restaurants cheering. We also walked down to the beach - there were several sand sculptures to admire. I forgot to take my umbrella, and it rained off and on all afternoon, about 68 degrees.

We walked back to the car to put more money on the parking ticket (the policeman was checking for expired time as we walked up - he passed our car just before it expired).

Then we walked back into Old Town and found Restaurante Almareado, which is a Portuguese restaurant. Each dinner was served with a salad of grated carrots and grated beets, a slice of cucumber, a slice of tomato, a slice of onion, and lettuce, and French fries. I had scampi (fried shrimp), Steve had fried cuttlefish. We shared a half liter of red Sangria - they also had white sangria which we had never heard of. All was good.

Then we went looking for an adapter so we can plug in our computer, phone, and mini Ipad to charge them (ours is buried at home behind stuff moved for the construction going on at our house). After trying several stores, one employee suggested that we go

to Guia, a nearby town to a store there. That was a terrible experience. We found the mall where the store was located, but couldn't get to the shopping center. It took 3 tries to get the right entrance to the parking lot. Then we could only drive halfway across the parking lot (the store was at the other end), and then there was no way to get to the other side of the lot. We walked into the mall, but couldn't find the right corridor to get to the store. We finally walked halfway around the outside of the mall in the rain, up a flight of outside steps, and finally found the right store. At least they had the right charger! We had to use a charge card with a chip - fortunately ours had come shortly before we left, and I remembered my PIN number, so we could pay for it. Then we tried to go through the mall to go back to the car - the escalators were outside (but inside the mall walls). We found a shop that sold everything, including groceries (like a Walmart), in the mall, got some groceries. We finally found the way out of the mall and ended up right by our car which was good because it was pouring by then.

We found a way out of the parking lot, but ended up missing our road back to Albufeira, it was pouring rain, dark, ended up driving more than 50 km out of our way. Oh, well, we finally found a gas station and asked for help, and found our way back to our rooms. Thus ends our trip, so far!

God bless you.

love, Lynne and Steve

Greetings!

6 p.m.

A full day, no mishaps!

We slept overnight for almost 12 hours - very unusual for us, but, considering we didn't sleep the night before on the airplane, sleep was what we needed.

It was cloudy, but the sun was trying to come through the clouds, could occasionally see sunshine.

Steve went to the office to hook up wifi - they don't have it in the rooms, but the office is only open from 10 - 1 & 4 - 6, which doesn't correspond with our times here.

We drove to Old Town again, were walking up the hill when the service started at the Parish Church of Albufeira. We were amazed - it was packed, wall-to-wall worshippers, at least 350 there! I noticed the balcony and we climbed up to it, some people moved closer together to give me a seat, an older black teenager gave up his seat for Steve. The music was glorious, including an anthem in Latin which I understood. There were 2 choirs, the congregation knew all the responses. The long greeting ("the Lord be with you") and the Gospel (Blind Bartimaeus) were given both in Portuguese and in English. The rest was in Portuguese. We left after communion because our parking time was up. Beautiful music, some modern, all very well done with an involved congregation, an alive church.

We then drove west on a local highway, driving through different towns. We drove through Lagos, along the river which had many sailboats in marinas, and then to Burgau where we went down very narrow (barely a car width wide between buildings) steep streets to the end of the street which ended on the beach. The tide must have been high, because the waves came within 10' of the end of the road. During storms I guess you can't drive that road. We parked there and ate our lunch. I stuck 2 fingers in the Atlantic Ocean there - it wasn't too cold, but then the water wasn't even an inch deep where I put my fingers. It started raining while we sat there. Then we drove the section of road next to the beach, about 6" above the sand, and then up, up, up, about 200' up the side of the cliff.

We drove further west, passed a modern windmill farm. At almost every intersection there is a circle, thus very few traffic lights. I can't imagine how horrible traffic must be during high season when everyone comes to the beach - very few cars now enter a circle if there is a car already in the circle.

We drove to "the End of the Earth", according to Prince Henry the Navigator - before Columbus, when the world was presumed to be flat, this rugged Southwestern tip of Portugal was the spot closest to the edge of the earth. In 1420 Prince Henry established a school on this craggy, windswept, wedge-shaped point for navigators. It was devastated by the 1755 earthquake which destroyed Lisbon. Now an 18th century fortress is on the site. We saw people in wetsuits riding surfboards nearby.

We drove a mile or so past that point to Cape St. Vincent which is actually the southWestern tip of Europe. It was pouring, so we sat in the car for a few minutes until it slacked off a bit, then went to the St. Vincent Lighthouse Museum next to the lighthouse. The lighthouse has the strongest beam in Europe and one of the strongest in the world, can be seen for 60 miles. The museum had exhibits about celestial

navigation, some ships, and the lighthouse. There are many narrow promontories out into the ocean nearby with “haystacks” (cut off pieces of cliffs with ocean on all sides).

We drove back east, stopping in Lagos to take photos of the old fort, the statue of the patron saint (erected by subscription by the people of Lagos), the haystacks and beach. It had finally stopped raining, was just cloudy. We then took the superhighway the rest of the way back - you drive under a fixture which automatically adds your toll (like “EasyPass” but you don’t have to stop at tollbooths - you stay at the speed limit as you pay your toll).

We will go out for dinner shortly. It’s now 7:22 and we are at “Mama Mia 2”, a small restaurant around the corner from our rooms. I ordered the Jardinier (I think that’s how it’s spelled - a stew with steak and fresh vegetables) and Steve will have the cod.

Hope your day is good.

God bless you.

love, Lynne and Steve





Greetings from Tarifa, Spain!

We had an almost rain-free day - we had sprinkles here and there, but no major rain for once. (There was a thunderstorm overnight however.) It was sunny much of the day with lots of white clouds and some black ones! It was about 70.

We left our time-share in Albufeira after stops at Western Union to change American dollars into Euros and a stop at the gas station (I noticed that gas is much cheaper in Spain). We drove until about 1:30, having stopped at a gas station/restaurant along the highway to eat - we brought cheese and bread for our lunch. There were many tolls in Portugal, none in Spain along the same highway. Traffic was light in Portugal, a bit heavier in Spain. I'm impressed by the drivers - they move into the left lane to pass, then immediately move back into the right lane until they meet a slower moving vehicle. Occasionally someone flies by at 40 - 50 km above the speed limit, but I only remember that happening about 3 - 4 times all day. Spain is 6 hours ahead of Eastern Daylight time.

We drove to Seville, Spain, the fourth largest city in Spain. It was the gateway to the New World in the 16th century. Amerigo Vespucci and Ferdinand Magellan sailed from its harbor. We drove up and down a main road next to the Guadalquivir River, couldn't find any street signs or signs to where we wanted to go. Finally saw a tourist information building, had to go around several blocks to get back to it, parked illegally to go in. Her English wasn't too bad, we understood where to go, where to park, important information! We drove to the parking garage (under a park, I think) - I thought some of the parking garages in Baltimore had tight corners to go around - this was much tighter!

We walked up into the park, spotted the Seville Cathedral, and walked next to the tram tracks (bike lanes and pedestrian traffic only, besides the tram rails) to the cathedral.

Along the way an orange tree dropped an orange as we passed it, Steve picked it up for me. It was terribly sour - I couldn't eat it! We waited in line about 20 minutes for the cathedral, showed our passports to show our age, and got in for half price (4 euros instead of 8). Then we wandered around the cathedral which is the third largest one in Europe (after St. Peter's, Vatican, and St. Paul's, London, both of which we have visited on previous trips).

After the conquest in 1248, the old mosque was consecrated and for 153 years it remained in use as a Christian cathedral. All that survives of the Great Mosque in Seville are the Orange-Tree Courtyard and the converted minaret, the Giralda. It was

common after the reconquest to adapt and consecrate pre-existing mosques in that way until such time as funds were available to build a new church. In 1366 much of the most important buildings in Seville were destroyed or severely damaged by an earthquake.

Plans were immediately conceived to build a new cathedral so grand that, "When they see it, future generations will think that we are mad". The building began in 1401 and construction continued for over a hundred years.

We wandered around the cathedral, looking in different rooms and chapels. It has the largest altarpiece ever made (65' tall, with 44 scenes from the life of Jesus and Mary carved from walnut and chestnut, blanketed by a staggering amount of gold leaf). The work took 3 generations to complete (1481-1564). The choir has an organ with more than 7,000 pipes. The tomb of Columbus is there - he didn't just travel a lot while alive, he even kept it up posthumously. He was buried first in northwestern Spain (in Valladolid, where he died), then moved to a monastery in Seville, then to what's now the Dominican Republic (as he requested), then to Cuba, and finally around 1900 back to Seville. The sacristy has painted art work, the main sacristy has chalices (for the wine) and monstrances (to hold the communion wafer). The treasury has paintings, gold and silver reliquaries (which hold hundreds of holy body parts), Spain's most valuable crown (covered with thousands of tiny precious stones), and the world's largest pearl (used as the torso of an angel), lots of beautiful items!

There are several side chapels with paintings in them. The pennant of Ferdinand III is in a glass case, the gravestone of Ferdinand Columbus (second son of Christopher - he gave the cathedral his collection of 6,000 precious books, thus was rewarded with this prime burial spot). He also gave a huge candlestick, maybe 15' high with maybe 30 candles on it.

Next we climbed the Giralda Tower. It has a ramp winding around the inside of the wall, 37 ramps (maybe equal to 18 steps each), with 17 steps at the top - quite a climb!!! But the view of the city from there is outstanding. It is also a bell tower on top, built in 1400, with huge bells hanging above the top walkway. After we walked down, we walked out through the courtyard on the way out. We walked back to our car. Seville has many buildings which are influenced by the Moors.

We then drove south and west, missed our road, so went over another large bridge to Cadiz by mistake. We finally found the right road, and continued south and west, reaching Tarifa just at sunset. It was a beautiful sunset, with orange-edged clouds, pink clouds, yellow/orange sky. We drove through the town (which is mainland Europe's southernmost town), around the old city walls, parked next to the castle, walked a block

to Hostal Alameda where we are staying (against the old city wall). Our room is 103 but it's on the third floor. The hostel has only 11 rooms. We ate at the Restaurant Alameda next door - we had mixed paella which had chicken, rice, clams, mussels, etc., olives and bread and butter (1 euro extra - the bread and butter and olives are served to you without your request, but you have to pay extra for it), and Sangria. All was good. We then took a walk around the block which included Paseo Alameda which is a paved "square" (rectangular in shape though).

To answer questions e-mailed to us: the church in Albufeira was Roman Catholic. Steve looks at the internet, also library guidebooks to choose our itinerary. Our current photo albums won't allow me to send more than one photo at a time. The photos are very slow in going from our camera (Iphone) to our laptop, so they don't always arrive on the right days. The wifi we've experienced in Europe is not as fast as at home.

Hope your day was good.

God bless you.

Love, Lynne and Steve

Greetings from the Petit Bistro in Tarifa!

We just ordered sweet crepes (mine was homemade caramel, Steve's was Nutella).

We had a full day, added another country and another continent to the list of where we've been!

We awoke to rain - after a beautiful sunset last night - I thought it was "Red sky at night, sailors delight, red sky at morning, sailors take warning", but that didn't hold, since it was pouring. Steve went and put 5 euros on the parking ticket for 24 hours, then we went to the boat dock (which was about 100 yards from our hotel - one reason we chose that hotel.)

We bought tickets for a boat ride to Tangier, Morocco, Africa. (The reason we came to Tarifa Spain was to go to Tangier.) Tangier was the original capital of Morocco and the first nation to recognize the United States as a nation in 1777. The 10 o'clock boat

didn't go, so we went on the 11 o'clock boat. Mostly it was a smooth ride with a few swells. It takes about 40 minutes, plus time for passport checks and security checks at both ends. Steve had e-mailed Aziz Saint Laurent this morning about arranging a guided tour of Tangier, and he agreed to it. He met us at the dock, had a taxi driver ready to take us, both spoke excellent English.

We drove through the streets of Tangier - I saw a Pizza Hut and an ad for McDonalds, past many stores. Most of the signs were in Arabic and in our Roman alphabet. There was a Spanish quarter, a French one, American one, Muslim one (most of the women in that section had their heads covered, in the other neighborhoods it was about 25%). He drove us to the American Consulate (dated from 1821 in that building) where the Tangier American Legation Institute for Moroccan Studies is located. There is a museum in the building, mostly paintings and photos (of US presidents with the officials of Morocco) and some letters from early consulate officials - one letter was about Morocco sending lions to the US and how that really wouldn't work in America.

Aziz had left us there, and our taxi driver "Speedy Gonzalez" chauffeured us through several neighborhoods, past mosques (at one the people were taking off their shoes as they went in - there is a separate room for the women to worship in) and a couple of Christian churches. He took us past the governor's house and the king's palace (lots of guards outside that wall) and Malcolm Forbes' home (of 30+ years, of Forbes Magazine), to see the Cap Spartel Lighthouse built in 1864, to see views of the beach and of the city. We then went to Hercules' Cave - a natural cave formed by the Atlantic Ocean - it is quite large with several "rooms". In one of the rooms was an artisan with some of his wares, along with a tiny Barbary ape on a leash - it was squeaking constantly.

Then he finally drove us a restaurant which Aziz promised was clean and wouldn't result in our being sick. (I was starving by then - it was 3 p.m. - Tangiers was back to 5 hours ahead of Eastern time). It obviously catered to English speaking guides' tours. There was a table reserved for us. Sticks of bread, olives, eggplant pieces, and carrots cut into small pieces, were served. You get a choice of 2 menus. Both are the same, except for the meat. For the two of us we ordered one of each item (the choice was a Moroccan soup or a Moroccan salad (which was a half cup of beet salad, a half cup of cucumber salad, a half cup of eggplant salad, 3 wedges of tomato, and lettuce), lamb tajine (spelling uncertain) or lamb couscous, and a "delicious" dessert which was slices of oranges with cinnamon on them. We shared our meals so we could each taste everything. All was very good. You could have had chicken instead of lamb, we both

love lamb. While we waited for Aziz to pick us up, we went up to the roof of the restaurant and enjoyed the view of the harbor and the city.

Aziz then walked us through the Kasbah, which is an enclosed, protected residential area near a castle, a kasbah is found in hundreds of Moroccan towns. It has narrow twisty lanes with lots of small markets, mostly selling fruits and vegetables, but other sselling whatever you need - the store with microwaves was barely 5' x 10'. Eventually he brought us to a cooperative which sells quality merchandise. We decided to buy a table and a Berber rug, which will be shipped to our home (probably spent more than we should have, but Steve bargained him down). He took us into several other stores. We saw a community wood fired bake oven. He walked us back to the boat at sunset.

The boat was almost a half hour late in leaving, so we got back here (now we're in our hotel room) late. I didn't want much to eat, so we walked up the courtyard until we came to the last open restaurant (the one I wanted to eat at was already closed), and got crepes.

The rain stopped by 2, it was cloudy, sometimes sunny the rest of the day, about 68. Oh, Steve got a phone call from our contractor in Baltimore while we were eating in Morocco!

Hope all is well with you.

God bless you.

love, Lynne and Steve



End of the road in Burgua, Portugal. Our car must go forward on the road in front of it.



Cape St. Vincent Lighthouse at “the end of the earth”, Portugal



Rugged coast at St. Vincent, Portugal



southern Portugal coast



Seville Cathedral



tomb of Christopher Columbus, carried by 4 kings



Main altar in cathedral



inside the cathedral



View from top of Giraldi Tower - note the shadow of the top of the tower



Lynne in courtyard with Giraldi tower behind

Greetings from southern Spain, headed toward Seville!

4 p.m.

Two days ago we drove to another country. Yesterday we took a boat to another country. Today we walked to another country!

We're on the road. I decided to write now, so that, hopefully, we will find a place to eat supper where there is free wifi. The office at our timeshare will be closed long before we get there, so we can't use the wifi there.

I forgot to mention that the light in the bathroom of our hotel turns into a night light in the dark. It is just bright enough to see the sink, toilet, tub, but not bright enough to wake you up completely - we need lights like that in the US!

Last night as we rode back on the boat from Tangier, I noticed a little girl wearing a fez, and remembered that Steve was to buy a fez for his friend.

Steve walked around town this morning, looking for a fez, in vain. We packed up.

The sky was pretty from our window. When we got outside, I noticed black clouds in the other direction, so would it be sunny or rainy or what? We left Tarifa, drove east. We passed many windmill farms. We had some rain, but not too much as we drove. Eventually we could see the Rock of Gibraltar. It suddenly appears very high from the flat ground around it.

Gibraltar has been controlled by Britain since 1704 when it took it from Spain in the War of Spanish Succession. Spain would really like it back, but the residents want to continue to belong to Britain. Gibraltar is a narrow peninsula (3 miles by 1 mile). The residents live at the bottom in a long, skinny town on the west side on mostly reclaimed land.

We found a parking garage in the closest town in Spain. Then we walked to Gibraltar. You wave your passport at the agent and keep walking - no stamps to get into there. Then you walk along the road, walking across the airport runway into the town of Gibraltar. We walked through town, stopping in a couple of gift shops, asking about a fez. The second one actually sold fezzes!

So Steve got the fez and put it in their plastic bag. We walked further, to the cable car to the top of the rock. We waited in line for maybe 45 minutes.

About 20 people fit in the cable car, it took 6 minutes to go to the top of the rock, 420 meters high.

When we got to the top, a Barbary ape jumped on the top of the cable car and then on the railing beside it. The warning signs said that the apes are wild, but associate plastic bags with food, so don't bring plastic bags. Steve put his plastic bag with the fez under his jacket and didn't have any trouble. There were Barbary apes all over the place. We ate in the Top of the Rock Cafe (shared a Cornish pastie and a pastry with spinach and feta). Then we walked around outside. To the east, the drop was straight down the rock. To the south, the rock was very narrow and then widened out a bit to where there were communications and a radar unit and the remnants of ancient military gun control. To the north the rock went on towards the Strait of Gibraltar, there were the remains of an old fort. The Rock and the mountain across the strait were named the Pillars of Hercules centuries ago. We had come up on the west side, it was a steep climb but not straight up. We could see many ships anchored on the east and west sides of Gibraltar in the ocean.

We took the cable car back down, then walked back through town, back across the airport runway (obviously the Gibraltar Airport isn't very busy!), back through passport control, waving our passports, and back to our car. We needed change to pay for parking, didn't have enough change, so Steve walked back out and found a place to buy coins. We then headed west and now are headed north. In a few minutes we will head west again, back to Portugal.

I figure we walked about 5 miles today. It was about 78 and sunny after the short rain this morning. The clouds are pretty against the blue sky. We've seen several large birds on large nests on top of high tension pylons (which carry electric wires).

We are now at the edge of Seville. The bridge across the river has a reversible lane for rush hour traffic, but instead of barricades, it only has lights on the roadway which indicate which direction the lane is going. Just saw a sign that Portugal is 133 km ahead. The sun is directly in our eyes.

Steve's forehead is healed. My ribs are almost completely healed, just hurt occasionally when they are jarred (across bumps on the road).

It's now 6:34 p.m. With the sun in our eyes, we managed to miss a sign and ended up in the city of Huelva. We drove for several miles, including on

cobblestones in the central city. I checked the application "Waze" on our cell phone and found the right road back to the highway. So another half hour added to our trip. It's a pretty sunset, with a yellow sky (now that the sun isn't in our eyes!). We are almost to Portugal where it's an hour earlier (only 5 hours ahead of Baltimore).

God bless you.
love, Lynne and Steve

Greetings from our timeshare in Albufeira!

Last night we stopped at a gas station/restaurant to have some supper - ended up with hamburgers, french fries, and lettuce, tomatoes, and onions - so had Portuguese "fast food". The exits from the highways only name the towns the roads go to, don't have the names of restaurants or gas stations, or places of interest to visit. Since it was already dark, I didn't want to drive off the highway and take our chances on finding a restaurant and a parking place in a small town, so we ate there. Not great, but at least we didn't starve!

I woke up around 12:30 a.m. with small Charlie horses (the muscles were only about an inch long) about an inch below my knees in both legs. It was excruciating, I couldn't move to reach them to massage them. I finally managed to get up and walk around and they disappeared. I've never before had small Charlie horses (usually my whole calf is in pain) and on both legs at the same time. I haven't had any further pain from them after I walked. It was strange! I'm guessing they are the result of walking up and down the ramps in the Seville cathedral tower on Monday and then walking so much in Gibraltar.

Today was a day of rest, nothing scheduled, just a day to relax. We stayed in the apartment this morning, I got some cross stitching done, Steve read on the internet.

About 11:30 we took a drive to the mountains - but we never got to the mountains! We drove on back roads, just meandered around for a while. We spotted a castle on a hill on the other side of the river, then followed the road across the Aracie River to the town of Silves where we saw "Tourismo" (tourist information). We got a map of Silves and a recommendation of what to see.

There was a free parking lot next to the building, so left our car there. We passed the Roman bridge, rebuilt during the second half of the 14th century - it

had 5 semi-circular arches. We walked through the market (fish really smell up the place, but there were also vegetables and herbs and other food for sale).

We hiked up the hill to the Silves pillory where the convicted were put on show and punished. Then we continued up the hill to the Municipal Archaeological Museum. The museum is around the Almohad cistern-well, including one of the towers of the well. The museum includes archeological finds from the pre-historic to modern periods, including how the finds are restored. One wall of the museum is glass so you can see the city wall from inside. From the top floor you can walk along part of the city wall and look out over the countryside.

There were 4 “row” house roofs below, so you could see how the owners use them as courtyards (with wash hanging on the lines). We could also see storks on nests on buildings (and on a large chimney). There were several menhirs displayed - they are Neolithic standing stones in bunches all over Europe (think Stonehenge, but not connected), these were short ones about 10’ tall. Even though most of the captions were in Portuguese, it was an interesting museum.

From there we went further up the steep hill - all the roads and sidewalks are paved with rough polygon stones (I imagine they are very slippery when wet) - to the Silves Cathedral. It was probably begun at the end of the 13th century, is very plain (modernized post Vatican II after earthquake damage) compared to many cathedrals we have visited, though the side chapels were ornately painted. One of the chapels had a “Christ of the Stations” clothed in a purple cloth robe and carved to look Arabic and in much pain.

We ate at Cafe de Sa, which was across from the cathedral. I had a ham and cheese sandwich (but there was no cheese on it, but there was lettuce, tomatoes, and onions with the ham), Steve had a tuna sandwich which was on toasted bread (looked almost like a panini). A white dove came to see us - it was walking around on the ground within 6 inches of our feet, later landed on the back of the chair Steve was sitting in.

From there we walked back up the hill to the Misericordia Church (across the street from the cathedral). This church was built in the second half of the 16th century to serve the Santa Casa da Misericordia charitable institution (founded by the queen D. Leonor) perhaps for an order caring for the poor.

The altarpiece is seven painted panels depicting 7 works of mercy around a painting of “the Visitation”. It is a very plain church.

We then walked further up the hill to the Silves Castle. We walked along the walls of the castle, looked through the arrow slots and over the walls at the surrounding countryside. The views were beautiful. However, it's not my favorite place to walk - the wall walkways range from 2.5 - 5' wide and there are few railings along the edge - can't see bringing a young child there - not with my fear of heights. We went out in the towers also. The staircases also did not have railings - I'm sure this would not be allowed as a place for the public to visit in America! The walkways also were very uneven with missing stones every once in a while. We could also go into the center of the castle, inside the walls. They are restoring a palace inside the walls, but we couldn't walk in that section (you could look down on it from the walls). They also had a huge cistern which could supply 1000 people with water for a year (during a siege) it would refill every year from the seasonal rains. We could walk in that (there was a display about the Iberian lynx, there only a few of them left because of loss of habitat). The cistern is thought to have dated from 1189 after the city was taken over by the Christians (from the Muslims).

We walked back down the hill to the cafe and split a piece of walnut pie (similar to pecan pie but covered with walnuts). By the time we got half way down the hill it was 4 o'clock and the buildings were closing so we didn't get into the Algarb Islamic Heritage Interpretation Center. We drove to the 16th century Cross of Portugal, sculpted from white limestone.

We then drove through the countryside and back to our timeshare. It is dark now. I think it is 7:13 p.m. - the laptop and phone show different times, so we're not sure what time it is!

It's great to hear from friends at home. Since we don't have wifi all the time, we don't get to read the news and don't know what's going on in the world.

We had heard that Baltimore was to get lots of rain on Tuesday from the hurricane, but don't know if that happened.

Still no photos of Gibraltar to send to you - need to connect the phone to wifi in order to get the photos to the laptop.

Hope you are having a great day!

God bless you.

love, Lynne and Steve

Greetings from Cosmo Residences, north of Milan, Italy!

It's 9:49 p.m. Don't mind me as I write while eating my supper of 2 granola bars, crackers, and water! Not exactly the dinner I was hoping to eat, but I'm so exhausted that I don't want to go somewhere to eat (and that's all the food we have with us). Besides, eating this late means I won't be able to sleep.

I awoke at 6:30, went into our living room and saw the sunrise - pretty pink sky, eventually pinkish-red clouds before the sun rose. I went back to bed for 15 minutes until our alarm went off. We packed up, tried to find someone to sign out of where we were staying (office doesn't open until 10, we were leaving at 8), finally gave the key to the cleaning lady.

We headed to Lisbon. It was a nice day (so was yesterday), saw some cows in fields, horses in another, sheep in a couple of fields. Not too much of interest to report on the way to the airport. It was very hazy in Lisbon.

We pulled into the place to return the rental car, got it ok'd, headed into the airport. We thought we had lots of time. First we looked for a mailbox, finally found the post office (right in front of where I was standing - couldn't read the Portuguese for "post office"), then looked at the signboard for where to check-in for our flight. We both read "Gates 34-35". After standing in line for about 20 minutes, I realized that was for a different flight. Checked the signboard, then headed to the right gate. But since we don't have a printer with us, we had no boarding pass. We finally got to the place in line where the lady told us to get a boarding pass at a machine. Wait in line again. Get boarding passes. Get back in the former line. We finally got to the check-in desk and got checked in. By then boarding would start in 20 minutes and we hadn't gotten to security yet or eaten lunch.

Surprise, surprise, security went really fast, no problems and we were through there. Then we went through the gamut of stores, more and more stores to tempt one to spend money on the way to the gate. We also flew past the food court (yes, KFC, McDonalds, etc.), finally found our gate and had 10 minutes to wait until boarding began. So we shared a stale bread stick, a small bag of crackers, and a peppermint for our lunch - really nutritious food we're eating today!

Our seats were the third row from the back of the plane. There was a small boy (maybe 2 1/2) in the back row. I'm guessing he had some sort of toy bird which squeaked - he squeaked it for at least an hour of the flight. They did serve us a small meal: a meatball with rice and tomato sauce, a very small roll and butter, about a quarter cup of apple pieces, plus wine/soda/juice/water. I asked for a glass of wine and a glass of water. The flight attendant handed me a glass of water which cracked as he gave it to me, so there was water squirting all over me and everywhere else. At least it was water and not tomato juice!!!!

He gave me lots of napkins which were helpful in drying some of me (though my jeans were wet).

We sat in the plane for a while since we would be almost the last ones off the plane. It was sunset as we got off the plane (5 p.m.). No passport check this time - we were flying from a European Union country to another one which allows people to travel without passport checks (though we had them checked to get on the plane). England did not agree to the no passport check, so we had to show our passports to get into Gibraltar. You can drive from one EU country to another (Portugal to Spain for example) just like you drive from Maryland to Pennsylvania, as long as the EU countries have agreed to the no passport check.

Our luggage was ready for us to pick up, we then continued to the rent-a-car.

This time it was Hertz (sound familiar?). The one clerk was wearing a black witch's hat, there were pictures of black cats and ghosts, etc. in the booth.

Avis also had some Halloween decorations. But they don't celebrate Halloween in Europe like we do, so it was very unusual to see anything American-Halloweenish. We got our car, a Fiat 500. It's only a 2 door, and the trunk isn't big enough for our suitcase, so Steve has to manhandle the suitcase into the back seat.

Then we started driving. The road signs are so small that you have to be practically next to them to read them, the map we got had the road numbers so small you can't read them. We took a guess and ended on a highway which took us in the right direction. But when we had to get on another highway, traffic was stopped dead. Eventually we realized why - there were 8 lanes which had to merge into 3 lanes on the highway and traffic was bumper to bumper. It probably took us a half hour to go 3 miles.

Then we didn't know where to get off that highway. Steve stopped and asked for directions at a gas station, they said the exit was 2 km down the highway.

But how long is 2 km? We got off, got back on, got off. I told Steve that we were on the wrong road and were north (and west) of our destination. He stopped at another gas station, and this guy, who barely spoke any English, gave us great directions. Go right at the corner, go around 5 circles, head for this town, then gave us 5 towns to head toward, as soon as you reached one town, you looked for signs to the next town. We got lost a couple of times, but found our way finally.

We got to the town where our hotel was, but couldn't find the way to the hotel - we were right next to it, but there was no entrance to the hotel road. That took a few times of driving around before we finally found the hotel. What a night! It took 4 hours to go 60 km (about 40 miles)!

Our room is nice, but I hear loud music, I'm guessing there is a bar in the shopping center we are overlooking. Oh, well! They're singing, "Y.M.C.A."

Am I really in a foreign country? God kept us safe through everything today.

Tomorrow is supposed to be nice!

Hope to send photos sometime soon. Have to use our phone to send e-mail - the wifi isn't working right.

Have a good weekend.

God bless you.

love, Lynne and Steve

Greetings from our hotel room!

Despite the noise from a bar in the shopping center across the plaza (which may have quit as we went to bed), we slept well. It's the first time on this trip that we have slept in the same bed - at both our previous places, there were 2 narrow single beds in the room. This one is a king size bed, which is what we have at home. Even though you can almost see through the curtains (they're not quite sheer, you can see shadows through them), the sun didn't come in them (though we face east), and we slept until almost 8. We relaxed for an hour or so.

Then we took a taxi to the subway (30 Euros), then took the subway (3,10 euros - they use a comma where we put a decimal point) downtown, changed

subways, and took that one the rest of the way to the Milan Expo. When we were teenagers, we both separately went to the Montreal World Fair and the New York World Fair, now they have World Expos every 5 years. We went to the Shanghai World Expo 5 years ago. We, and thousands of people, were at the Expo today, the closing day. It was beautiful weather, about 68. It was very crowded!

We make a point of not getting in long lines, so we don't go in a lot of exhibits.

We walked around, saw a parade of people dressed like fruit. The theme this year was food. (At Shanghai the theme was cities - it was much bigger and much better, but it was a major expo and this was the minor one.) We ate at Tesoro D'Italia in "Eataly", I had 4 cannoli stuffed with cheese with a tomato sauce over it, Steve had angel hair spaghetti with meatballs, not sure what the spice in the sauce was, but it was very good. They sold drinks at a different stand from where you buy your food.

We went in the Iran pavilion - there was an exhibit with 2 people kneeling with food on a rug in front of them, showing how they ate and what they ate (there was a description of the food in English), exhibits of foods they grow (herbs, dates, walnuts, almonds), a few other exhibits. (There was no line, so we walked right in.)

We waited in a very short line at the Oman pavilion. This was a very excellent exhibit. First were exhibits of the food they grow and where. Downstairs were other exhibits. One was on the process of making rosewater - one plant can yield 750 ml of rosewater. Another was on conserving water (harvesting fog for example). Another was on bees - the honey in spring is different from the honey in summer is different from the honey in fall because of the different flowers the bees go to. Some of the uses of honey in medicine were explained: the smell is used in treating asthma, the sound of bees in treating inner ear disorders and migraines, also honey is used for treating nervous system disorders, heart problems, cancer, ulcers, digestive disorders. I found that very interesting.

There was a pavilion on Slow Food, an international association that promotes good, clean and fair food for everyone. It explained how much corn we are eating (without realizing it) (They said it takes about 500 lb of corn to make a gallon of gasoline. I doubt the figure?) - animals eat corn, we eat their meat, so eggs, cheese and yogurt also come from corn, along with many processed foods (sodas, cookies, mayo, chips, sauces, candies all have fructose, glucose,

ascorbic acid, malt, modified starch, etc. which come all from corn). Slow Food is encouraging biodiversity, eating less meat, growing your own garden. They had cheeses and wines for sale to sample (we didn't).

There was a pavilion of Arid Zones (countries which are very arid). There were large photos of deserts around the world - they all looked very different - one had star dunes (the wind blows the sand to look like a star), others had trees growing at the edge to keep the sand from blowing into the towns, very interesting photos taken by one man. We walked through a couple of the exhibits from those countries. Another pavilion had some African countries in it - most of these had items to sell and food to sell.

The architecture of the different pavilions was quite different, some looking very strange, others exotic. Malaysia looked like a ball cut in half with a water wheel between the halves.

We ran out of energy after about 5 hours of walking the expo. We shared a raspberry gelato, then headed back to the subway. We took one subway without changing subways to the end of that line - the taxi cost 37 euros to bring us back. The expo was at one end of the line, we took the subway to the other end. The hotel was not expensive for being large and fancy, maybe it is too far out from town from many clients.

We will be going out to eat in a few minutes. Hopefully we can send our e-mail from that restaurant.

A request: our younger daughter Katherine is flying solo from Atlanta through South Korea to Thailand and Anker Wat, Cambodia, leaving tomorrow, returning on Nov. 22. She will be going on tours while there. Please pray for her safety. Thank you!

Have a good Lord's Day!

God bless you.
love, Lynne and Steve



Sunset near Tarifa, Spain on Oct. 26



castle in Tarifa, 10/27



Steve in American consulate, Tangier, Morocco

Hi! Sat. night

I'm starting this letter tonight, so I remember about our supper - my memory is very short lately!

We walked around the courtyard outside, saw some children finishing Halloween decorations in one cafe. We decided to eat at the Wild West which has an American western theme - photos of Indians, partial teepees over some tables, another room for "Pioneers". We were in the "Indians" room. The names of the dishes are American - Steve had a Kansas steak (with french fries and eggplant salad), I had barbequed ribs with french fries. There were also Colorado steaks, California burgers, New Mexico steaks, etc., Tex-Mex dishes.

Some of the waitresses had black tiaras on, one waiter had a white mask on, there were carved pumpkins on the bar, gauzy material over the bar - guess they were celebrating Halloween. Glad we went when we did - there were at least 20 people in line to come in when we left. It must be a favorite restaurant because it was crowded the whole time we were there - the waitresses were really rushing!

Happy All Saints Day!

I'm in a rotten mood, stressed to the fullest and HATE MILAN ROADS AND SIGNS and DRIVING/RIDING IN OUR CAR THERE! My hip is also bothering me, which doesn't help my mood! It gets painful when I sit in the car too long.

Sorry, now that I've let off some steam, I'll try to be nicer. This morning we drove into Milan. BIG MISTAKE!!!! Just as we got lost coming to this hotel, we got lost trying to get downtown in Milan. We finally happened on the Duomo (by driving down a street which cars are not allowed on), ended up facing the Duomo. Turned around, went back out the way we came, and found a parking garage. Then we hurried over to the church. We had left an hour and a half early to get to church, still were a couple of minutes late by going down wrong streets and going the wrong way and losing our way, etc. Then we had to wait in line to get into the cathedral, so were late. The police check your bags before you can enter the cathedral.

The service was all in Italian. The cardinal gave the sermon, the bishop was also there. We joined about 600 for the mass. Lots of incense, glad we were as far back as we were! The girl (about 7) ahead of us was one of the children presented to the cardinal after the sermon - she got a small red bag, didn't see what was in it. Except for a few words, I didn't understand any of the service (Signore Nostra (our Father), Christo (Christ), Spiritus (Holy Spirit)).

After the service we went to the Duomo Restaurant across the plaza. You go up escalators 4 floors (they call it the third floor, guess the ground floor doesn't count), pay a half euro (about 65 cents) to use the toilet, then pick a restaurant. We went to the one which was like a cafeteria. I picked a salad (lettuce, tomatoes, croutons, chicken, and anchovies - Steve ate them!) which came with a small roll. Steve picked lasagna as our pasta. We each ate half.

We stood in line to buy tickets to get into the church and to take the lift to the rooftop of the church. Then we stood in line to go up in the lift (only held 10 people). You wander through a fancy forest of spires with great views of the city and the square and the spires on the church, 330' above everything. It was fun to see the gargoyles from closer up, and all the spires!

Steve wanted to see the Basilica di Sant'Ambrogio, so we hiked quickly around all the people out for a Sunday stroll and shopping, finally found it - we were on the backside, had to walk almost all the way around a long block to get to it.

The church was first built on top of an early Christian martyr's cemetery by St. Ambrose around 380 A.D. when Milan had become the capital of the Western Roman Empire. Ambrose convinced Augustine, a pagan, to become Christian.

The original church was rebuilt in the 12th century in the Romanesque style we saw. The entry is an arcaded atrium which was standard back when you couldn't actually enter the church until you were baptized. The non-baptized waited here during Mass. Ambrose's body is in the crypt under the altar. The ninth-century golden altar is beautiful! (It was taken to the Vatican during WW II and thus avoided destruction when that section of the church (the apse) took a direct hit in 1943.) They were starting a service as we were leaving.

We hiked quickly back to the Duomo and went inside. They were also having a service then (wonder if 4 p.m. on All Saints Day is the time for Catholic mass?), but only a few people were sitting in the pews. We wandered the side aisles which were not blocked off. The church has stained glass windows high above the floor - I guess God is the only one who can see them - which let in some

light, otherwise it would be a very dark interior. There was water damage on the ceiling of the center of the church. There were paintings hanging next to the main aisles - you couldn't see the stained glass windows on the sides because the paintings were in the way - we thought that was strange. One of the statues in the church was of (half naked) Julius Casear, holding his toga in his hand - not who I would have expected to see depicted in church! This is now the fourth largest church in Europe, (the 3 larger were built later) at 525' by 300' with more than 2000 statues inside and another thousand outside, and 52 one-hundred-foot-tall pillars representing the weeks of the year. It was built to hold 40,000 worshippers, the entire population of Milan when construction began in 1386 (finished in 1810), built from pink Candoglia marble (rafted in from a quarry 60 miles away).

Then we tried to get out of the city. We couldn't find the right direction or the right roads or any way to get back to our hotel. It took more than 4 hours (with a quick stop for pizza made in a wood fire oven - good) and many wrong turns and missed turns and wrong roads to finally get back here. I was so stressed from trying to read signs (covered by other signs or by overhanging tree branches). I told Steve I'm not going back into Milan except by subway - that's the easy way to travel!

It was a beautiful day, about 69. Most of the people were wearing buttoned up winter coats (some with hats, scarves, gloves), I was in my short shirt sleeves, I only saw 2 males who also had no coats. It's not winter weather yet!

Our photos still haven't come from our iPhone to our laptop, so can't share them with you. I'm frustrated with that!

Hope your day was good. Have a good week!

God bless you.
love, Lynne and Steve

Greetings from Locanda "Al Leon" in Venezia! www.hotelalleon.com

I'll trade Milan for Venice any day - sure like Venice better!!!!

We got a phone call at 7:30 a.m. that we were supposed to have left yesterday from our hotel, but Steve had booked 3 nights (2 nights at one price, the third night at a different

price) - don't know if that has been straightened out yet. We left, couldn't find our way to the highway (found it yesterday with no problem!), finally found it, then missed the superhighway to Venice. Finally turned around and found it. (When we rented the car, Hertz offered a navigation system for 20 euros per day, maybe we should have taken that! There were "Autogrills" across the highway (like a bridge over the highway) at rest stops to buy food - they reminded me of the ones we see on our way into Chicago. There were almost as many overpasses on the highway as there were kilometers something like 355 overpasses and 380 kilometers! Tolls cost over \$20 to go from Milan to Venice!

We followed the directions our host here sent us, parked in the San Marco garage, got tickets for the public service boat "Vaporetto" to San Zaccaria. We took the boat, saw some of the city from the water, saw a couple of private yachts like small cruise ships, tied up, the water didn't feel rough but was choppy. When we landed, we then walked about 2 blocks to our hotel (down a very narrow alleyway). The hotel is located in an original Venetian House of the 15th century that is divided into 2 floors (above the ground floor). The estate was built around 1480-1490 and is more than 600 years old! We are on the first floor (second floor US), in a corner room, overlooking a small courtyard which has 4 kiosks of stuff to sell plus a couple of restaurants with outdoor seating. Room price off season less than 2/3 high season.

We left our luggage in our room, then walked about a block to St. Mark's Square. We went into St. Mark's (no photos allowed), wandered around and looked at it - it has much gold everywhere. The golden mosaics on the walls and ceilings are in the Byzantium style. The floor is mosaic, with geometric patterns and also pictures of birds (peacocks and others), the floor rolls like the sea since Venice is sinking and shifting, creating cresting waves of stone - you could feel the differences in the floor as you walked on it. The basilica was built in the 11th century, and has a distinctly eastern-style architecture underlying Venice's connection with Byzantium (which protected it from the ambition of Charlemagne and his Holy Roman Empire). Since about 830 A.D. the saint's bones have been housed on this site (7 centuries after his death, his body was in Muslim-occupied Alexandria, Egypt. In 828 A.D., two visiting merchants of Venice "rescued" the body from the "Infidels," hid it in a pork barrel (which was unclean to Muslims), and spirited it away to Venice).

We then wandered past the Doge's Palace - the seat of the Venetian government and home of its ruling duke, or doge - which was the most powerful half-acre in Europe for 400 years. The Doge's Palace was built to show off the power and wealth of the Republic. We walked along the canal, past gondolas until the end of the walk. In

Venice you travel by boat or by foot. You walk up the steps over the canal and back down - every block or two has a canal at the corner. Obviously this is NOT a handicapped friendly place! We wandered down streets, alleyways (some were only 3' wide), up steps, over canals, down steps, along further, trying to find the Grand Canal. We didn't find it. We did wander into a couple of churches, some had entrance fees (we didn't go in them), some did not allow photography. We did find St. Moses Church with a painting of Moses with the 10 Commandments over the altar. There is a church about every block or two.

We ended back in St. Mark's Square. This time we took the walkways towards Rialto Bridge which is one of the world's most famous bridges. This distinctive and dramatic stone structure crosses the Grand Canal with a single span. There are shops all along the bridge, and it is now undergoing reconstruction so we couldn't see how pretty it is. We wandered around for a while, looking for a restaurant. We finally went back to the Grand Canal, and ate at the Ponte Rialto Restaurant. We sat next to the glass-less windows next to the walkway along the canal, so we could watch the boat traffic while we ate. Boat "buses", long motor boats (which carried tourists), and gondolas went past, rarely was there any time without a boat going past. It was fun to watch. The boat buses were full of people, I'm guessing they were bringing workers home. The gondolas had no lights, it didn't look too safe to be on the canal after dark without lights! They did seem to stay on the side closest to us. We shared the appetizers of minestrone soup (not at all like what we know as minestrone) and spaghetti Ragu (sound familiar? it tasted better than our commercial Ragu). Steve had calamari and fish, I had grilled chicken, both had salad (lettuce and shredded carrots). All was good. Then we walked back to our hotel, with a couple of stops at shops.

Some items I forgot to mention: at St. Ambrose church yesterday we used the W.C. They had Chinese toilets which are "squat toilets" - just a porcelain slot in the floor with tiles to step on. Not my favorite kind of toilet! Many places in Europe do not have toilet paper, you have to carry your own. At one restaurant we went to, the men's toilet seat was only a foot above the ground, women's was the regular height. Many toilets do not have toilet seats, you have to sit on the porcelain. First car's engine stopped when car stopped and restarted when was needed to move. This car transmission is both auto and manual, confusing to work the shift.

At St. Ambrose's Church you could see the bishop in his robes under glass.

We could see the Alps from the plane as we flew from Portugal to Italy. The Alps rise from flat land just as the Rocky Mountains rise from flat land. We also saw the Bay of Biscane where France and Spain meet at the ocean.

Our daughter Stephanie suggested connecting our iPhone to our laptop and now our photos came. Yea!

God bless you.

love, Lynne and Steve























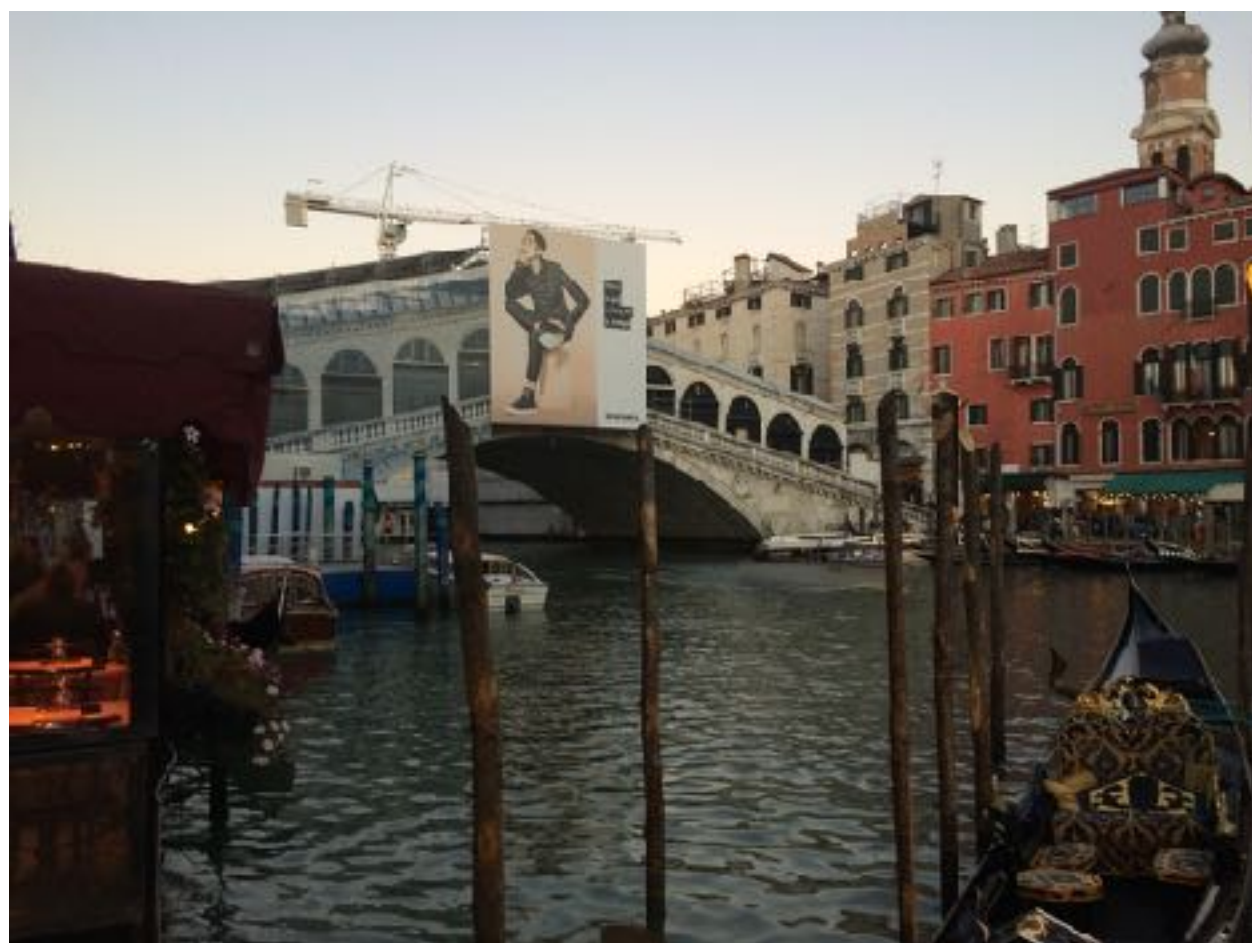


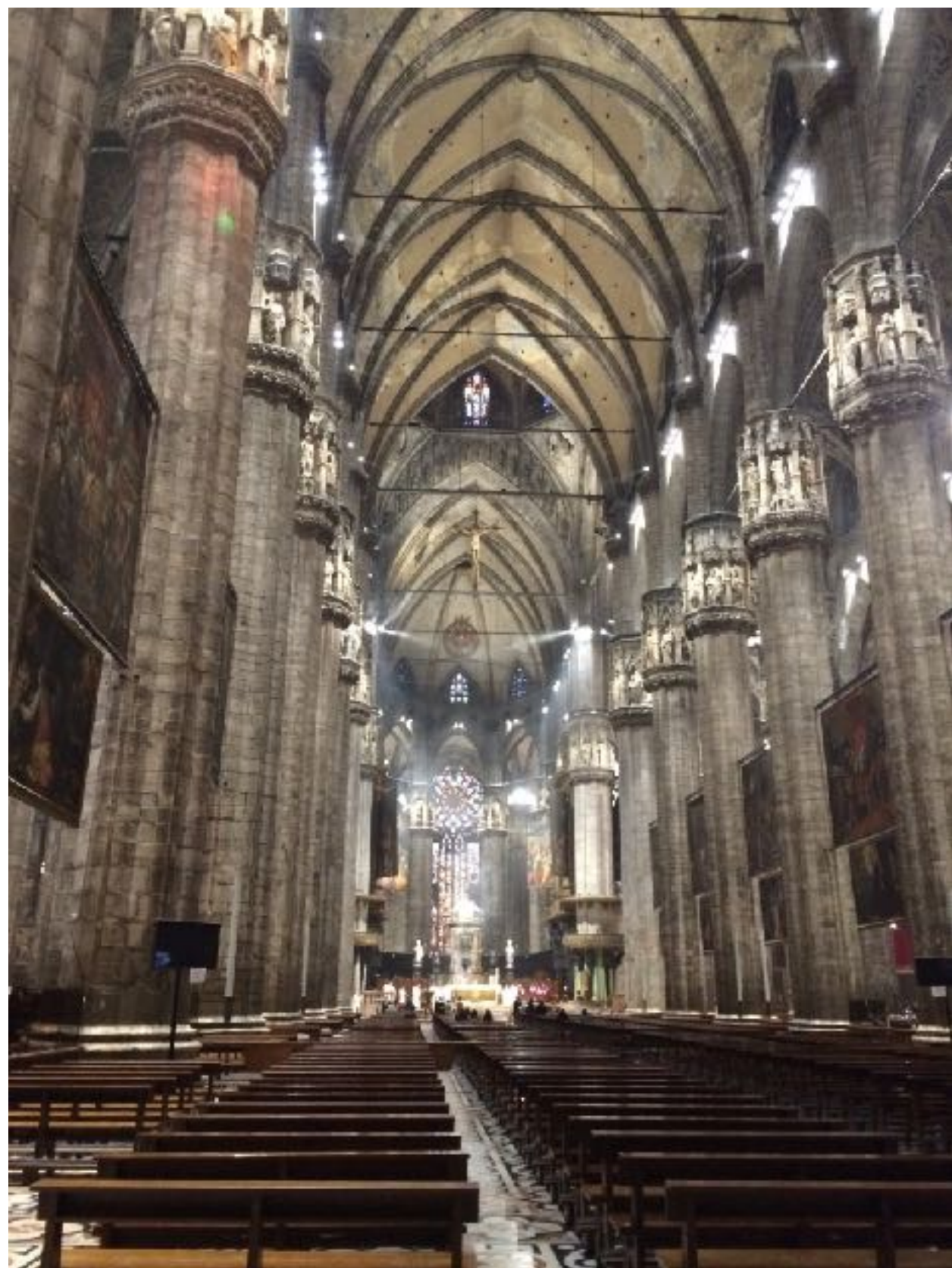




















Hello!

We're at our hotel in Venice, I was wrong, the building is just over 500 years old, can't count in my old age!

Today Steve said we were going to take it easy - not what I call taking it easy, but maybe my definition doesn't agree with his!

We started the day with a free breakfast in the breakfast room up 2 long flights of steps. There is a floor in between that is not available. They offered croissants, rolls, cheese, yogurt, cold cereal, fresh fruit, hard boiled eggs, juice, coffee, tea. I stuffed myself! I also had 2 glasses of orange juice: big mistake!

Shortly after that we started walking. Steve wanted to go to the point of the next island (the island across the Grand Canal and the Rialta Bridge we crossed last night). First we stopped at the post office to change American dollars into Euros. However the closest post office couldn't do it, but the one by the Rialta Bridge could.

That was ok, we were headed that way. No line at the post office (on a previous trip the line was long).

We crossed the Rialta Bridge, then wandered around, trying to find our way. We stopped at a couple of shops and bought some souvenirs. We continued to walk and climb the steps over the canals and down again, walk a couple of blocks, climb steps over canals and down again, repeat! We went in the Church of St. Roch - he was born in 1295 of a noble family, left his riches at age 20 to help the plague-stricken in Italy. He fell sick himself and recovered miraculously with the help of a dog who took bread to him in the forest. He returned to his hometown but was not recognized by his family and died in jail at age 32. His deeds led to sainthood.

By this time I am dying to use a bathroom and can't find one. After about 2 hours of walking and climbing over canals, we finally came to Accademia, which is Venice's top art museum. After paying 15 euros to get in, we searched and searched and finally found the sign to the "toilette", only to find we had to go down an elevator (we had come up a flight of steps because we were told it was upstairs) to the toilette.

Then we could look at the paintings, especially ones of the Venetian Renaissance. One of the largest paintings was called, "The Last Supper", but Veronese was forced by the Inquisition to change the title to "Feast in the House of Levi" because of the sumptuous painting of the luxury of Renaissance Venice in the picture. There were many more than just Jesus and the 12. It was interesting to

see religious paintings with castles and forts in the background (of, for example, the Nativity scenes or scenes of the Annunciation).

I was tired and hungry by then, so we walked further, looking for a cafe, found the point of the island which Steve wanted to see, couldn't find cafes, finally found "Ristorante Cantinmone Scorico" along a canal. The menu said, "Antique Venetian restaurant popular with locals for its traditional dishes". We ate inside because it was only about 62 out. So at 4 p.m. we had lunch: Strozzapreti (hand-rolled pasta) with vegetables and smoked ricotta cheese, liver fried with onions Venetian style served with Polenta, buttered spinach, bread, and wine. All was good.

We then wandered back to the Accademia Bridge, a wooden bridge over the canal - most bridges are marble - climbed up the 30 or so steps, stopped to take photos at the top, then down all the steps on the other side. We finally found our way back to our hotel. I was worn out! Steve wanted to go to a concert tonight, but I'm too tired!

It was another nice day, about 65. The gondoliers were wearing their striped shirts yesterday (black and white or red and white), but today they had black jackets over their shirts.

There are many souvenir shops, Venetian glass shops, shops that sell masks (think Mardi Gras). We finally found a fruit and vegetable store (and a boat which sold fruits and vegetables), but haven't seen anything like a supermarket or even 7-11. I guess the residents must go out to eat most meals. We did see several delivery boats, since there are no motor vehicles on the islands.

Wonder what they do for fire engines or ambulance service. We did see one wheeled cart which said, "Taxi", carrying suitcases (but the people were walking beside it). You have to have lots of

endurance to live here! We've seen maybe a half dozen strollers, and one man who had a walker.

We bought sweets on our way back to the hotel to serve as our supper. Steve went out and bought himself coffee.

Oh, forgot to mention: last night we could buy 2 bottles of coke for 4 euros each or a half liter of wine for 9 euros - we bought the wine!

Update from our daughter Katherine: she had 2 good flights to Thailand, had a day of rest (went to the beach and got a pedicure and did some shopping). Now she is on a boat trip ([Sail Ko Phi Phi to Phuket](#)). She had to get a small duffle bag to carry her clothes, all the space available for luggage on the boat! Please continue to keep her in your prayers. Thank you.

Hope your day is good.

God bless you.

love, Lynne and Steve



Bridge of Sighs, bridge from court to prison, last view of Venice before execution



I liked the angels on top of this church



Painting of St. Mark and other saints in Accademia



Steve at the Point, Tower on San Marco Square in the background



Accademia Bridge



canal traffic under the Accademia Bridge

MISSING 11 / 4

Hi!

I don't know what happened to my letter of 11/4 - I know I wrote it, but the computer must have eaten it. I'll try to rewrite it.

We ate breakfast in the breakfast room in our hotel in Venice, then packed our bags. The walls in our room were covered with brocade. Running electric and water through the stone behind must have been a major task. We left the luggage in the room and walked to

the Doges Palace. This was the seat of the Venetian government and home of its ruling doge, or duke, the most important half-acre in Europe for 400 years. The palace was built to show off the power and wealth of the Republic. The doge lived with his family on the first floor up, near the halls of power.

We started in the courtyard which is larger than a football field. We climbed the steps to the first floor, looking at the exhibits and the fancy ceilings. They had exhibits of maps from the 1300s and on.

There were paintings of fancy dinners. In the Senate Hall 120 senators met, debated, and passed laws. Other rooms were for councils of 40. Scattered around outside each department chambers were lion's mouths. Anonymous accusations were placed there and investigated. The government rooms had huge paintings on the ceilings and walls. The armory had a dazzling display of military might. At that point I decided to go ahead down to the restroom, thinking all I had to do was to go back down the steps we came up.

WRONG! The next rooms were more government rooms. The giant Hall of the Grand Council (175' by 80', capacity 2,600 largest room in Europe) is where the entire nobility met to elect the senate and doge. They met there each Sunday after mass. Imagine how many common folks there were if there were that many greats. Then I went down to the prison - I got lost in there, finally went the opposite way of the arrows, back upstairs to where we started long before, climbed over a couple of ropes, and found the steps to go down. Steve met me at the bottom - he had been looking all over for me. We went past the grand staircase and out.

We then walked past our hotel and across the canal bridge we could see from our room to St. Zaccare Church (Zechariah, as in John the Baptist's father). Altar painting was Elizabeth lying in bed with nurses caring for the new born John. We looked around in there,

then paid to go into their museum which was the original church.

We looked at the choir, then went downstairs into the crypt.

There is an altar in it. Also, the floor is covered with water (there is a walkway above the water). Then we went up into the original chancel where there is an altar covered in gold. From there we walked back toward the hotel, stopping to eat at a corner sandwich shop. We bought a ham and cheese sandwich, the bread had all kinds of seeds on it.

We went to the hotel and checked out, then dragged our suitcase through San Marco Square to the water. We took a different boat line which goes along the Grand Canal and back to the mainland.

We went under the Accademia Bridge and the Rialto Bridge, past some beautiful buildings along the canal. There were about 6 - 10 buildings between each small side canal, so there are plenty of canals! At the mainland we paid for parking the car and started driving.

We had no problems with directions, didn't get lost once! As we left Milan, I had looked back to see what the exit was that we would need, so we didn't have any difficulty in finding the Cosmo Hotel again. We had a different room, this one had a made up sofa bed in the living room plus a queen size bed in the bedroom.

We were planning to eat supper in the hotel dining room, but it didn't open until 7:30, and it was 6 o'clock and we were hungry, so we walked around the shopping area, the Old Wild West steak house was closed, so we ate at a bar/cafe. First they brought pieces of bread, then 3 pieces of something like flat muffins with melted cheese on top with spinach on top of that and also four pieces of thinly sliced ham. We had spaghetti carbona (can't remember how to spell it) with small pieces of zucchini in it, baked veal and very thin pieces of grilled zucchini.

That's all I remember from that day. Hope you got the photos, and you receive the rest of my letters.

God bless you.

love, Lynne and Steve

P.S. I wrote this on Sat. Forgot to mention in today's letter (11/7) that although we bought tickets, no one checked them on the buses or trains! The fine of not having a ticket if you ride the train is 90 euros, so guess most people are honest and buy a ticket.

11/5

Greetings from Royal Alpage Club in Champoussin, Switzerland!

This morning we packed up and left the Cosmo Hotel. We had had a suite with a pullout sofa bed and a bedroom. But they didn't charge us extra for 2 beds.

It was a beautiful day, about 70 when we left. Yesterday was very hazy, about 66.

We drove north to Lecco, then west to Como, both towns on Lake Como. From there we continued west past Lake Maggoire, and then north into Switzerland. At the border you have to slow down, but the guy waved us on, so we kept going. We went through many tunnels, including the Goddard Tunnel which was 17 km long.

The tunnels had doors to escape into the tunnel going the other way. Some of them had pullouts inside in case your car broke down. At one place there was a sign, "Tunnels 6x" - you went through 6 tunnels with only a short distance between them.

We stopped at a rest stop along the highway, the restaurant was called "Marche". It was cafeteria style, but there were workers to cook your Chinese food or make a sandwich for you, etc. There was soup, pasta, fruit, desserts, all kinds of food. You could take a plate for 11 Swiss (don't know how Swiss francs compare - close to Euros) or a larger one for 15 Swiss francs, I guess you could fill it for that amount. We got ham sandwiches on bread like a small baguette - it also had a slice of carrot and lettuce on it. We ate outside on the terrace.

We had intended to go more west, but our major highway took us north to Lucerne, then west to Bern. South of Bern we had a lot of fog. We came close to Lausanne, but cut off to the southeast at that point and drove around Lake Geneva. I saw a pretty sunset over Lake Geneva.

Then we tried to find our way into the mountains. By then it was 5:30, the sun had set. We drove through the town of Monthey 1316', climbed switch backs to 3232', found the road to Champoussin, followed it switchback by switchback by switchback - you get the idea! We drove up and around hairpin turns and up and around more hairpin curves. Glad I couldn't see much since I knew it was straight down off the side of the road - and there are almost no guard rails. (I remember seeing one!) I could see snow on the nearby mountains which weren't much higher than we were. Finally we saw lights on the side of the mountain and hoped it was the right place. 5148' altitude with a ski lift start.

www.holidaychampoussin.ch

Yea, it was the right place. We went into the cafe, one of the workers spoke English and took us to where our key was waiting, pointed the way to go up to our apartment. We brought our suitcases up, looked around the apartment, then headed back to the cafe for some supper. We ordered a mixed salad (had corn in it, plus the other regular stuff in a salad) and Croustade au fromage and

jamebin with oeuf (a layer of bread with ham on top of that and melted smoked cheese on top of that with a fried egg on top). It was ok, I'm not a big fan of smoked cheese. She also served us a carafe of water (first time we had water served to us - we could always buy a bottle).

Our apartment is really 2 rooms. One has a kitchen, bathroom, and a Murphy bed. (I slept on a Murphy bed when I taught in southern Indiana more than 45 years ago.) The second room has our beds and a bathroom. This can really be used as 2 separate rooms in high season (think ski). We also have balconies from which we can see down in the valley (there are lots of lights at night). Lots of stars in the sky!

We saw a McDonald's truck - it had pictures of an onion, a piece of cheese, a tomato, and a piece of lettuce, but no hamburger! We have seen a few McDonald's, but not many. We stopped at another rest stop to check the map - you paid 1 euro to use the rest room but could then use the ticket towards the price of something there.

A Burger King was in there, and a store with fruit, vegetables, some frozen foods, cereal, juices, soda, etc. (They don't refrigerate their juices.) I bought 1L of juice. We've seen 2 UPS trucks, one was a van, the other a very small truck.

So we spent the entire day (9 hours) in the car. I'm tired!

Our daughter Katherine went kayaking and then snorkeling in bathtub temperature water. She said it is so clear and you can see so many fish.

God bless you.
love, Lynne



Lake Como, Italy



Road shot - see the snow?



I'm writing to you from our apartment in Champoussin.



The balcony door is on the right. The building is pine, our apartment doors are pine.

11/6

Greetings from Champoussin!

This morning I waited and waited for the man to come for check-in.

He never came. The lady in the cafe finally said he called and wasn't coming today. So instead of doing laundry, we headed north of the Rhone Valley. We stopped in Val d'Illez to find out when church is 5 Sat, 10 & 11 Sun, and also found a tourist office - she gave us lots of information. We found the road on the south side of Lake Geneva (called Lac Lemman here) and headed west on the

edge of the lake. Eventually there was a small building in the middle of the road, and the car in front of us slowed down, so we did too.

After we went past the building, I realized that was the border between Switzerland and France, though there was no sign. Another border crossed without a passport stamp. The border goes through the middle of the lake for most of the east-west direction of the lake.

It was pretty along the lake, but very hazy over the lake. When we got to Evian, we drove past huge hotels. We stopped there and walked along the lakefront - there was a miniature golf course in the park against the lake. When we got to the hotels, we checked the menus of the restaurants. We walked to the end of the shops, then turned around and went back to Le Ferme des Alpes (End of the Alps) restaurant where we ate. The menu was completely in French, and I sure don't remember my junior high French! The waiter spoke very, very little English. So we guessed on what we ordered. We ordered Salade Savoyarde (salade verte, oeuf, tomate, lardons, croutons, des de tomme de Savoie (green salad, egg, tomato, ?, croutons, salad dressing is my guess) - it was served on a square black slate, not a plate. We also ordered what we thought was duck, but sure tasted like beef! Carrots, french fries, parsnips and black beets (cut like french fries) were served with it. All was good. When asked he assured us it was duck, looked and tasted like good steak.

Then we continued for a short time along the lake until we found a road which went inland a bit, we took it, hoping it would be faster than going through the towns along the lakes. For a few minutes we were on a highway, then ended up on going through towns, so don't know if it saved any time. We drove from France into Switzerland, no one to check us through. We drove through Geneva (the west end of the lake), and then turned east along the north side of the lake. We got on the superhighway very quickly, and

skirted around Lausanne, and continued back to the highway we were on yesterday on our way here.

We got off the highway and took the road against the mountain, through a couple of towns until we got to Monthey. There we stopped at a shopping mall, went in the grocery store and bought Kellogg's muesli (in a plastized paper bag), bread (different kind then we get in the US - we like to try different varieties), cheese, salami, and beer. We normally go out for one meal a day, try to eat breakfast in the hotel room, and carry bread, cheese, meat for lunch. We then drove up the mountain, coming all the way up in the light.

The man to check-in was there. I got my laundry, he showed us how to use the machines - you have to use a card to start them.

Steve checked in and I came up to our room to write to you.

It was a beautiful day, about 56.

HELP! My sister Debbie said that she did not get the letter of 11/4. I talked about touring to Doges Palace, seeing St. Zechariah Church, riding the boat on the Grand Canal. I can't find the letter on my computer. Does anyone still have that letter? If you do, please send it back to me. Thank you.

Almost time to change the wash to the dryer.

Have a good rest of the day. I either cross stitch (Christmas ornaments) or knit (a prayer shawl) in the evenings.

God bless you.

love, Lynne and Steve



Church and cemetery in Val d'Illeiz



Hotels in Evian, France

Greetings!

I'm exhausted, stressed, not sleeping well, these roads are horrible to drive along (no guard rails, 1000s of feet drops off the side), but we got safely back with just a tiny bit of light in the sky. It's so hard to figure out where the road is going, and when you can't see the road at all, it is nerve wracking!

This morning we drove to Martigny to the train station to pick up a train up the mountain, but they are working on the train tracks, so you have to take a bus up to where you can take the train further.

Steve gave me the tickets, then went to put the parking ticket in the car, told me to hold the bus. Then he didn't show up and it was time for the bus to leave. The bus driver spoke only French (this part of Switzerland speaks French), he asked the driver of the short train on the tracks next to the bus to translate. Finally Steve showed up and we could leave - the bus was therefore off schedule because it goes on to France. We had to ride standing up because there were no more seats.

The bus goes up the edge of the mountain - you can see hundreds of feet straight down (and I don't like heights!). Then you go around hairpin turns (10 of them), and the bus barely can make it around the turn, in fact at one point the bus had to back up to go around the turn. Now you can see thousands of feet straight down! My nerves were no good by then! At one point we had to wait for the car ahead of us to move since it was blocking the road - it's a 2-way road but only one car/bus wide! We arrived at the train station on the mountain and quickly got on the train.

We took the train through tunnels and along a gorge (1200' straight down) and further into the mountains. One of the stops was at "Frontier", shortly after that we entered France (so now I have flown to another country, driven, taken a boat, walked, and taken a train to another country on this trip, haven't gone by bus yet!). A couple of stops later we had to change trains because that was as far as that train went. We finally got to Chamonix-Mont-Blanc.

Mont Blanc is the highest European mountain at over 15000'. We wanted to take a cable car to the top of a nearby peak, but cable cars don't run in November when there are no crowds. (Could have fooled me, there were sure a lot of people around. I would hate to be here in high season!) We wandered around, looked at menus at several restaurants, finally decided to eat at L'M Bresaerie. Since we were in France, we had French Onion Soup, and also their

specialty which was potatoes, smoked ham and onions baked in white wine with reblochon (?) and a green salad (with 3 slices of radishes in it). All was good. The toilet at the restaurant flushed by you waving your fingers over the toilet cover (like you wave your fingers to get a paper towel) - I'd never seen that before.

We walked a bit, Steve suddenly remembered he had left his shoulder bag at the restaurant, so I sat down, and he went back and got it (glad it was still on his seat). Then we went into St. Bernard Catholic Church and looked around. We wandered a bit, then headed for the railroad station, thinking our train was at 1:54. But when we got there, we discovered it was at 2:54. So we went to a souvenir shop to get me a magnet (I collect magnets as souvenirs of our travels), and then found a place to sit and rest for a while.

We decided to go back to the train station, just barely made it on the train. Two teens got on with their bicycles and rode for a few stops. We couldn't remember where to change trains, but finally figured it out when everyone got off our train and got on a different one. We got back to where the bus was waiting, and traveled the rest of the way to the train station where our car was parked. We did walk down the street and find an ice cream shop to get a cone before we drove back here.

I was glad I brought my winter jacket today - it was really cold this morning! Later in the day it warmed up, so I didn't need it. It was another beautiful day.

Have a good Lord's Day!

God bless you.

love, Lynne and Steve



Lunch today.



Mont Blanc



Mont Blanc is the highest one just to the left of and above the round red sign.



Yellow trees among the green evergreens on the mountainside (from the train)



Looking down from the bus - we went over that bridge and down to where the water was.



Pinocchio? in Evian



Lunch in Evian



Lake Geneva in France, Switzerland is across the lake



Purple mountain from the sunlight almost up to where we are staying

Greetings from our hotel in Champossin!

This morning we planned to go to church in the village down the road (20 min. away by lots of mountain roads - I can't imagine what this is like in winter with ice and snow on the roads which are barely 2 cars wide with no guard rails with drops straight down of at least a couple of hundred feet!). But when we got to church, they had changed the signs and there was no service. So we drove to the next town, hoping for a service there. But their service had been earlier, so we couldn't go.

We drove on to Chillon Castle, a conservation and restoration site, in Lake Geneva. (It was a good day to visit because entrance was free.) It was such an interesting place to visit (it's a UNESCO World Heritage site). They have explanations in German, French, and English. We could visit almost every room from the cellars to the top of the keep!

Chillon Castle was built on a small rocky island in the lake, the lake forming a moat around it - the castle is only about 15' from the land, a cliff at the end of the mountain range. It was a strategic location to control movement between the north and south of Europe - mountain chains made it strategic. All traffic from the passes to Italy had to pass by. The castle's history was marked by three important periods: The Savoy era (12th century to 1536), the Bernese era (1536-1798), and the Vaudois era (1798 - today).

Excavations carried out from the end of the 19th century indicate that the site of Chillon has been occupied since the Bronze Age.

The oldest written mention of the castle dates back to 1150 and establishes the Savoy family controlling the fortress. On the land side, the castle is designed for defense, while the lakeside buildings were the residence.

After looking at a model of the castle, we headed through the first courtyard to the cellar. It has Gothic arches - some of the wood used as forms for the arches is still there. Part of the cellar was a storeroom, part was a wine cellar where they were fermenting wine (which they sell in the shop). The cellars were used in the 17th and 18th century as an arsenal for the Bernese squadron. They were also used as prisons. Lord Byron recounted the captivity of Francois Bonivard in his poem "The Prisoner of Chillon". There was a postern gate (a small door built into the castle wall or fortification) possibly allowed the castle's occupants to unload goods or, if necessary, escape via the lake, as occurred in 1536 when the castle was taken by the Bernese. That room could have also become an

execution room (handy to throw the body out the postern gate).

There was also a crypt, probably part of a chapel from the 11th century which served the then tiny village there.

On the ground floor was the second courtyard, enlarged in 1836 to allow cannons to pass through. We then went to the second floor Constable's Dining Room, restored to give it a medieval look. There were exhibits about the multi-day feasts held here. One section quoted from a cookbook from 1420, listing the need for 10 cooks to prepare 100 oxen, 130 sheep, 120 pigs, and for every day of the banquet: 100 piglets, 60 fat pigs, 200 kids, 200 lambs, 100 calves, 2000 poultry, 6000 eggs plus what had been brought in from hunting, including venison, hares, partridge, pheasants, cranes, herons, and more! There was a lot of work in preparing for feasts!!!! The Dukes of Savoy were great but just think what Kings were like. Think King Herod the Great.

The next room was probably a large ceremonial room for the constable. It had paintings as examples of what it might have looked like. A large shield was painted with the Savoy coat of arms. There were large chests on display, some simple, some very ornate.

As the king/count/duke moved from castle to castle, chests were needed to carry important papers, belongings, clothing, bedding, cookware, etc. When the servants at the castle heard the king/count/duke and his entourage was coming, beds, tables, chairs, etc., were built for them to use. (I don't know why they didn't leave the furnishings, except for the chests, behind until the next use, but that's what the exhibit said.) There was also a map, showing where the king traveled on two occasions in the 15th century - he stayed a few days at each castle (Steve says until all the food from the area was gone), then moved to the next one. They moved from the French side of the Alps across to their lands on the Italian side. There are no good passes. Then across the St. Bernard Pass - also

terrible - to their lands in Switzerland. Each move requiring many hundreds of horses.

Then we went into the section used as a private residence by the House of Savoy. These rooms were only opened, furnished, and occupied when the Savoy were at the castle, which was rare. In the bedroom was a stove made of stone - it was fed from another room. The Bernese decor was painted on a white background and adorned with plants, fruit, and animals. The lord's bedroom was the bedroom of the Counts and then Dukes of Savoy. Remnants of murals show animals in the middle of lush vegetation. The spiral staircase, built in about 1336, allowed the lord of the castle to climb up from his bedroom to the ramparts or go down to his private chapel - we couldn't go on that staircase. There were other rooms plus the latrines.

One room was wood-panelled. It was probably used to accommodate the ladies of the House of Savoy. It has a splendid view of the lake, the town of Montreux, and the Chillon vineyards.

The castle's current estate includes 12,5000 square meters of vineyards. The castle's wine, named Clos de Chillon, is produced from a white Chasselas grape. From there we went through an inner courtyard and up to a watchtower to look out.

Next we went into Saint George's chapel, a private chapel of the counts and dukes of Savoy. Abandoned at the time of the Reformation, it was used as a granary and then a powder house during the Bernese period. Interesting the "religious" Protestants seemed not to need a place of worship. The chapel returned to its original function in the 19th century, becoming the place of worship for prisoners when the castle became a cantonal prison.

The third courtyard, known as the courtyard of honor, was surrounded by the private apartments of the Savoy family. We

couldn't go in them - they are sometimes rented out for different affairs. There was another room with models, showing how the castle grew in size over the centuries. In the next room a man was demonstrating the clothing of one of the time periods - he was speaking in French, so we didn't stay to listen. A woman was serving tea with orange and cinnamon and cookies in that room.

There was a fire going in the fireplace there. (All of the fireplaces were huge, maybe 12' across and 8' high.)

The fourth courtyard, known as the curtain-wall courtyard, was entirely designed to defend and control the old road: thick walls, narrow openings (loopholes and embrasures) and defensive architecture (defensive apron slope). We went into a bastion (semi-circular towers built about 1230 and then their height was raised several times for defense). We walked around the sentries' gallery - the guards could shoot out from there, or, if the outer walls were breached, they could shoot down into the first courtyard which the invaders would have entered.

There was a clock tower (with a clock operating from centuries ago). We last went into the keep, probably dating from the 11th century.

This was a refuge tower and symbol of power, and a defense observation post. It was also used as a provisional residence, storehouse, prison, and powder house. We could climb the steps to almost the top where you could have a 360 degree view over the castle and surrounding area. There were displays of weapons (cross-bows, swords, muskets, pikes, halberds) and pictures showing how they were used. It was all so interesting!

In the museum shop you could purchase a coat of mail for 240 Swiss francs, swords 95-105 francs, daggers 42-70 francs. They had the wine (19.50 francs), books in English and French, other souvenirs.

We took time out to go across the street to the Taverne du Chateau de Chillon for dinner. We had a salad of tomatoes, mozzarella, and basil, and ravioli with ricotta and parmesan. Very good. Seemed unpatriotic to eat Italian in French Swiss. A waiter and waitress were Chinese and there were Chinese writing characters.

We drove through some small towns on the way back. There were parasails (I think that's what they are called - they look like part (the center from side to side) of a parachute with someone hanging below the chute), sailing off the mountain by Chillon and floating down, hopefully not landing in the lake or at the top of a tall tree!

Since we couldn't go to church this morning, we worshipped via internet - Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Catonsville, MD, has an 11 o'clock service, so at 5 p.m. our time we tuned in the service (an advantage to a 6 hour time difference). The day school children were singing, very well done, a teacher who taught with me, Brad Royuk, was the director and accompanist, so we got to see him at his church! He also leads worship some Sundays at Living Water where Steve usually preaches the first Sunday of the Month.

Yesterday the sun had not gotten to part of Chamboix by 11:30 a.m. - the mountain kept it in shadow for much of the day.

Monthey, the town at the bottom of our mountain, was already in shadow before 3:30 this afternoon.

We pass many pastures with sheep or cows, a few with horses.

We've also seen pastures on the mountainside - the pastures are at a 65 - 70% grade - wouldn't want to have to help a sick or injured animal off those mountainsides!

I looked out just before 5 a.m. and saw 2 bright stars near the moon. I think they were the convergence of some bright stars.

We looked at the sky when we went to do laundry (so we can have

clean clothes for the last 8 days of our trip), there were stars visible (saw Casseopia), but is much cloudier now.

Our daughter Katherine continues her vacation in Thailand. She got seasick the next to last day on the boat, has recovered, is now in Bangkok to go on a different tour of the north part of the country.

Have a good week!

God bless you.

love, Lynne and Steve



Our chalet, our balconies are on the second level of balconies, just to the left of the last one on the right, our car in lower left.



View from in front of our chalet.



Chillon Castle



Chillon Castle in Lake Geneva



castle cellar



one of the chests. It shows Eve coming out of Adam, the Fall of Adam and Eve, being forced from the Garden of Eden.



Stove in Bernese bedroom



water fountain in Bernese bedroom



view of first courtyard from sentries' gallery



view from the keep



the keep in the center of the castle



sheep on the hillside, 65-70% slope



Middle Teeth Mountain



More mountains (from our balcony)

Greetings from Alpenruhe, Wengen, Switzerland!

This morning Steve worked for a long time, trying to find a hotel near Jungfrau mountain - he finally got an e-mail to this hotel. Many were closed at this time. We started out driving. It is 10 km down

from our timeshare to the nearest town (barely 2 car width wide road, no guard rails, no center line). From there, Val D'Illiez, to the bottom of the mountain it is another 10 km (guard rail most of the way, white center line) which is an easier drive (though it still is around corners where you can't see ahead). 1 km = 0.62 miles, so about 12.4 miles from our timeshare to the bottom of the mountain. 4000 ft. down in 30 minutes.

We drove another windy road, with some switchbacks, for miles and miles. At one point we stopped to eat our picnic lunch (bread, cheese, and cold cuts) overlooking cows in a pasture. We opened our car windows to hear the cow bells - the cows didn't seem to be moving, but their bells sure made a lot of noise. One cow bell weighs 10 pounds, so the cows don't like them. We drove on for many more miles, saw several pastures with goats in them, one with llamas, many with cows, some with horses. We drove for almost 4 hours.

South of Interlaken, we found the parking garage next to the train station in Lauterbrunnen (2812' above sea level). We took the cog railway train up the mountain to Wengen (4180'). Steve called the hotel, the woman had not checked her e-mail, but had room for us.

She sent the conveyance for us - it's like a small (think golf cart size) electric truck with no sides or top. He put the suitcase and our bags on the flat bed, we sat on the cushions on the back, and we went up another 150' at 2 mph to our hotel (the next to last one on that side of town). There are few cars in town, most of the vehicles we saw were small work trucks. All have to come up on the cog railroad.

Our room is small, but this is the first time I've seen a washcloth since we left home (European customs are different from ours, at restaurants there is no spoon in a place setting). Our balcony looks

at Jungfrau mountains. There is a Gideon New Testament in our room - it's in German, French, and English.

November most everything shuts down. The cable car from here is getting its cables replaced. Very few hotels are open.

We took a walk through town, back to the railroad station and up a hill on the other side for a short distance. We stopped at the Tourist Information building. There is only one restaurant open in town! It opens at 6, the hotel would have made a meal for us, but it was at 7:30 and there is no choice as to what to eat (the man who drove us up to the hotel and served as bellhop was also the cook) - 7:30 is much too late for me to eat (I was starved by 4).

We found a bakery and bought some treats for our snack tonight.

We saw the church and climbed the 50 steps up to it. It was an Evangelical Reformed Church. It was open, so we went in, very modest, no fancy paintings or decorations like we have seen in the Catholic churches. There are at least 4 different ministers that come from nearby towns to lead worship.

The church site overlooked the valley and the mountains. There was an exhibit which named the various peaks and gave heights for some of them. One peak looks like holding your four fingers together and holding them out at the top of the mountain - it certainly stands out! We walked back to our hotel and rested for an hour.

We then walked back down to the restaurant - it is a Pizzeria Restaurant (Italian). We got there at 5:58 and it was all dark outside. As the church bells rang 6 o'clock, the outside lights of the restaurant came on. The maitre' d, waiter, whatever his title (he turned on the lights and finally opened the door at 6:02) let us in. We were the only ones in the restaurant for at least 20 minutes - people in Europe eat later than I do! We ordered the mushroom

pizza. Everything in Switzerland is expensive (a bottle of coke was 8 francs, a franc is a bit more than a dollar). Everything in Wengen has to be delivered by cog railroad and is more expensive. We walked back to our hotel - I huffed and puffed my way up the hill - besides it being a hill (for those in Baltimore, think walking up Harford Road from the Beltway to Putty Hill Av.), the altitude is much higher.

There are many stars here, since, like at our timeshare, there is little light pollution.

I wore my winter jacket - it's colder in the mountains! It was sunny all day, except in the shadows of the mountains.

My cousin Dottie in Florida reminded me that what we saw sailing off the mountains yesterday was hang gliding. I knew the term, just couldn't think of it.

I usually remember the details of my day by taking notes as we go through the day or by using the guide provided at the place (Chillon) or using the Rick Steve's guidebook. Most of the vineyards we passed early in the day had yellow leaves on their vines. In Aigle, there were vineyards all over town, in small yards and on the hillsides. We passed several covered bridges over one river. There are many varieties of cows here, some have short horns, some don't, some have long curly hair, most don't, there are brown and white, brown, black and white, black spotted on white. There is often a sign as you enter a town with the church service times listed. (These assorted ideas are from my notes today.)

Even though we plugged the phone into the laptop, the photos are not coming, so I'll send them when they come.

Hope your day is good.

God bless you.
love, Lynne and Steve



Road shot



Jungfrau is the white Alp



Jungfrau from the railroad station



Wengen in foreground, Alps, including Jungfrau



Alpenruhe Hotel



How plain the Evangelical Reformed Church is!

Greetings from Alpenruhe!

This morning we had breakfast at the hotel - besides croissants, rolls, cheese, cold cereal (Muesli), hard boiled egg, fruit, you had your choice of scrambled egg, fried egg, fried egg with bacon, and

another kind of egg (can't remember what that was), orange juice, tea, coffee.

We then walked to the train station - should have checked the schedule before we left because we had to wait 45 minutes for our train (at least we could sit inside, and there was a brochure about the area we could peruse while we waited). We took the cog railroad train up the mountain to Kleine Scheidegg where we transferred to a different cog railroad train that went further up and inside the mountain (tunnel) to the top. In the tunnel in Eiger Mountain we made 3 stops to look out - they had windows for us to look at the snow. At the first stop Eigergletscher we were just where the snow line begins (7612'). We only stopped there for a minute.

At the next 2 stops we were allowed 5 minutes (though at the first one it was probably 15 minutes because we had to wait for 3 trains to come down the mountain before we could climb further).

Eigerwand was at 9400', it was 37 degrees. Eismeer was at 10,360', it was 35 degrees. Both had panorama views. The total distance we traveled up the mountain was 30,511'. Each time we approached a stop, information would come over the loudspeaker in about 8 languages. (I recognized German, English, French, Italian, Chinese, Spanish, don't know what the other languages were.)

There were many, many Chinese visitors - the menu in the restaurant was also in Chinese. There was a Bollywood (Indian) buffet also but it was closed.

We finally reached Jungfrauoch which is advertised as the "Top of Europe", altitude 11,333'. It is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

There are several different places you can go there.

First we took the elevator to the Sphinx, where you could walk around outside on metal platforms. There were a number of crows

hanging around at one place, many landed on people's hands to take food from them. We walked all around the building. At one point we came to a pipe blocking the way. Since there were people on the other side of the pipe, we ducked under. Then we read the sign, "Danger, falling icicles" - but there was no sign at the other end of that walkway to keep you from walking below the icicles!

There had been snow and ice on that portion of the walkway. We could see for miles, seeing glaciers and snow, bare rocks (on lower mountains), towns, lakes (Interlaken was between 2 of the lakes), so we had a 360 panorama view. There was a watch shop at this level (touted as "the highest watch shop in Europe"). We did not see the "highest post office", missed it somehow! We looked down at Konkordia Platz at 9,186' (the junction of 4 glaciers forming one).

We then took the elevator down and followed the tour. We passed a Karst Cave, the highest natural cave in Europe. Caves do not naturally occur at the top of the hill/mountain. There is one under the rock under the ark of the covenant of the Jerusalem Temple.

Further on, the Ice Palace was carved out of snow (Steve read that it was inside the glacier) and ice - there were several carvings in the Ice Palace, of bears, penguins, eagles, etc. Yes, we were walking on ice with ice walls and ceilings around us - it has to be kept at 3 degrees so that the body heat of visitors does not melt the Palace.

Yes, it was cold in there!

Then we went out on the Plateau where we walked on snow to get closer to Jungfrau (altitude 13642'). Today the temperature hit an all time high for November of 45 at Jungfrau - the sun was hot on me, but it was much cooler in the shade. A couple from India (who now live in Oman) asked us to take their photo with their 2 children, he took a photo of us then.

We came inside, decided we were hungry (it was after 1:30), so went to the Crystal Restaurant where we shared their Autumn

Special. It consisted of Pumpkin Cream Soup with roasted pumpkin seeds, the entree of sliced venison, chanterelles sauce, buttered small flour dumplings (spatzli), brussel sprouts with glazed chestnuts, and a cranberry pear (half a pear with cranberry jelly on it), and dessert of apple fritters with walnut ice cream and vanilla sauce. Steve ordered coffee with water (coffee alone was 4.50 francs, with water was 5 francs, so I had a half liter of water to drink). All was appealingly arranged and delicious. There was a cover charge of 3.50 francs for each of us for bread and butter - at each restaurant, the bread has been different and delicious. The special dinner, Pumpkin Soup with whipped cream garnish, Venison with Spatzle, Apple fritters, walnut ice cream, vanilla sauce was 44.50 francs. The best meal and the best presentation we have had and at a fair price.

I was exhausted by then (whether from the altitude or not sleeping well), so we stopped at the gift shop and then headed back to catch the trains back down the mountain. It was after 4 when we arrived back in Wengen. We stopped in the bakery and bought 2 sandwiches and 2 cheese quiches (but no eggs in it) which we had for supper and will have for lunch tomorrow. We then walked back up the mountain to our hotel.

We have been relaxing the rest of the day. I worked some on cross stitch - have started 7 Christmas ornaments (several just need faces finished, but I decided to do them all at once) of the eleven I will make. I have finished knitting an infant hat (except for sewing it together) and am half finished with the prayer shawl I've been knitting. At home I would have finished much more, but with being on the go so much, I haven't finished as much. Steve reads the news, etc., on the laptop.

Glad it was another nice day, especially so we could see the mountain scenery.

Hope your day is good.

God bless you.

love, Lynne and Steve



Eiger (North face) and Monch peaks. A plane put the white line in the sky as we approached this view.



View from Eigerwand.



On top of Jungfrauoch



Konkordia Platz



Crow feeding from someone's hand on Spitz



View from Spitz - you can see why it is called "Top of the World"



Jungfrau



Jungfrau and beyond



Lynne and bears in Ice Palace



Eagles in Ice Palace



Lynne and Steve and Jungfrau, yes, we're on the snow.



Pumpkin soup with toasted pumpkin seeds and cream, half of my piece of bread is eaten!

Greetings from Champoussin!

This morning we ate breakfast at the hotel in Wengen, packed, and checked out. We walked down to the train station, dragging our suitcase. We saw several helicopters delivering wood a couple of blocks up the mountain from where we stayed. We only had to wait about 10 minutes for our train to take us back down the mountain to where our car was parked in Lauterbrunnen. It cost almost the same to park our car for 2 days as did our 2 round trip tickets between Lauterbrunnen to Wengen! We drove to the end of the valley where Lauterbrunnen is located, between lots of tall mountains.

Then we headed back towards our timeshare here. We drove to Kandersteg where we drove the car onto a train. (We only had to wait less than 15 min. for the train.) The train cars have open sides with a metal roof overhead. About 3 cars fit on each train car.

You were not allowed to open your car doors while on the train. It was a very bumpy ride! The train took us through a tunnel to Goppenstein - it was about a 12 minute ride in the dark - a train did pass us in the tunnel, going the other way.

We then drove back roads back here. We'll be taking the autostrassa (superhighway) through the same valley tomorrow. We saw thousands of vineyards going up the mountains - it must be quite a job to care for them, and also to keep the stone walls around them in good repair. We arrived here about 3 o'clock. Steve booked us a room for tomorrow night. I worked on cross stitch and knitting.

We went downstairs to Le Cavern restaurant. Steve had decided we couldn't leave Switzerland without having a meal of fondue. So we had fondue for supper. It was ok, but I like to have vegetables with my meals, and very few places serve vegetables, other than french fries, with their meals. I'm looking forward to having vegetables at home!

It was about 35 degrees this morning, but warmed up (especially in the sun) to the mid 50s. It was another beautiful day.

The geraniums and roses and other flowers are blooming beautifully here - I would think they would have had frost (especially in the mountains) by now, but I guess not.

I forgot, yesterday we saw 2 hang gliders come over Jungfrau and glide past us in Wengen - not sure where they came from, since Jungfrau is so high and I doubt whether you can hang glide off it!

We saw another hang glider today.

Thinking of you and praying for you.

God bless you.

love, Lynne and Steve



Couldn't resist - our granddaughter Joanna yesterday - no, we didn't see her, but we received this photo!



Road shot. The valley is still in shadow, even though it's after 10 a.m.



Lake Thon - Interlaken is at the end of it.



On the car train



Waterfall in Matigny



Valleys are deep, no guard rails along the edge of the road as we travel up the mountain to our timeshare



Our dinner at the Crystal Restaurant



Dessert - doesn't the food look delicious?



Cog railroad wheel and cogs



Jungfrau and mountains below



Jungfrau from our balcony



Can you see Lobhorner Peak in the center? It looks like fingers sticking up!

Greetings from Hotel & Hostel Montarina!

Yes, we're in Lugano, Switzerland.

We packed up and left our timeshare on the mountainside. We drove down the mountain roads (without guardrails) to the town which had guardrails (mostly) and a white center line and then on to the superhighway. At one point there was a truck stopped in the fast lane with its yellow blinking lights on - a man was in a cherry picker in the truck in front of him, working high in the air. In the U.S., the lane would have been closed for a half mile before the man working!

We drove to the end of that superhighway, then kept going. We eventually saw the signs for Zermatt and headed 20 miles south to see the Matterhorn. But when we got to the end of the road (no more cars allowed), we still couldn't see it! We weren't willing to pay to take a train or bus or whatever transportation, so never did see it - I really didn't want to spend a lot of time there, but just wanted to see it. Oh, well!

We drove back through the valley (yes, mountain roads, but mostly with guardrails and white center lines) to the highway, and continued on. We took the Simplon Pass over the mountain (2005 meters high). We stopped at a restaurant just before the pass and had goulash for lunch - it was mostly a soup, but good. As we drove, we went through tunnels and also snow sheds, built to keep the avalanches off the road. We saw cows walking on one snow shed - there was grass growing on top of the shed. Often we would come to a red light along the road - men were working and had closed one lane, so traffic could only go one way at a time - road repairs were going on all over the place.

Eventually the trucks in front of us stopped, we realized that we had reached the Italian border. A man waved us on, and we continued on that road, supposedly on a major road, but it was actually another mountain road with guardrails and sometimes white center lines and very twisty. At two points it went straight for about 200

yards! But the rest of it was twisting around the mountain, taking 70+ degree turns to the right, then to the left, then to the right, etc. - very hard to drive! We drove through some towns where the road couldn't have been more than 10' wide, yet they were two way roads! At one place we had to back up to let a car go the other way, fortunately most of the time we didn't meet opposing traffic.

We drove to another border, the guard questioned us about where we were going, and then sent us on our way back into Switzerland.

Switzerland has at least 3 major languages, depending on what country you are nearest. When we were at the timeshare, we were near France, so French was the language of the people and on the signs. When we were in Wengen and went to Jungfrau, German was the major language. Now that we are so near Italy, Italian is the major language.

We thought we were taking the autostrassa (superhighway) into Lugano, but ended up on another mountain road. Finally we reached Lugano, then looked for the center of the city and the train station. We eventually found the train station, high on the hill, and further up the hill behind the train station was our hotel. Rick Steves describes the Hotel & Hostel Montarina as a creaky pink mansion in a palm garden overlooking the lake, has to be one of Europe's most appealing hotels. We'll walk through the palm garden another day. We can't see the lake from our room because of high buildings across the train tracks. <http://montarina.ch>

We took a walk down to town. We walked a long block (close to a half mile down the hill, parallel to the train tracks) down the hill before we found a road that turned toward town. I saw some steps leading down to the lakefront - I think it was 270 or so steps down - yes, way down! At the bottom was Chiesa of Santa Maria dyli Angeli (church of St. Mary of the Angels). We went inside - the church dates from 1499, was part of a monastery. According to

Steves, the city's best frescoes are here. "The Passion and Crucifixion of Christ" by Bernardino Luini, painted in 1529-1539, is the artistic highlight of all Ticino (Ticino is the Swiss canton where Lugano is located) and the finest Renaissance fresco in Switzerland.

It's an interesting depiction beginning with Christ being crowned with thorns through Thomas touching the wound of Jesus after the resurrection. There are many other paintings in the church. Luini's Last Supper is on another wall.

We walked through the major shopping area, passing mostly upscale clothing shops, wandered through the COOP, a grocery store with a restaurant on one floor, groceries on another, department store items on the two in between floors. We looked at menus on the restaurants. Many people were sitting outside the restaurants to eat outside. We chose to eat inside "Argentino". Steve ordered crispy crab pie, lettuce, fried lotus root, sweet and sour sauce. I ordered one of their specials, guinea-fowl ravioli with cherry tomatoes and basil. All was delicious. The crab pies were really crab cakes, but with different fillings than we are used to.

We then started walking back, but were unsure where to go. (It was dark by then.) We came across the bus station, realized that the front desk lady had said to take bus #2, so we got tickets at ticket machine, and got on the bus. Buses are faster when the driver does not have to sell tickets, collect for the trip. No one showed or checked tickets - many got on the back door, never came near the driver. We got off at the train station and walked back up the hill, after waiting for a passenger train and a freight train to go past.

It was another beautiful day, started out about 37 degrees, got up to about 50.

Only 4 more days and we'll be back in Baltimore!

Hope your day was great!

God bless you!
love, Lynne and Steve

Greetings from Lugano!

We relaxed this morning, I worked on cross stitch, Steve planned our day. We walked around in the palm garden around our hotel, decided the property must have relations with the next door hotel since they share the property.

Then we started driving south. There is an attraction of Swiss in miniature I was interested in seeing, but it wouldn't open for another hour when we got there, so we drove on.

We tried to find Mendrisio, but Steve didn't like where the sign pointed, so drove the other way. We started up a mountain which was supposed to have nice views, but then there were no more signs for it, so we gave up on that. We went back to looking for Mendrisio, finally found it, but where we wanted to go was on the other side of the superhighway. We finally found the way across the highway, and came to a small part of the village. We were looking for the Riva San Vitale Baptistery. I saw the sign for it, and we turned down this tiny street. The street between the houses was barely 6" wider than our car (and we are driving a small Fiat)!

The road goes from house to house, no yards at all. We finally got to the next corner, and looked for a place to park. It took a while to figure out the parking payment machine, but finally got that worked out.

We walked back to the Baptistery which is "the most ancient stonework Christian monument in Switzerland. Dating back to the 5th century, it rises above what were probably foundations of a

building from the Roman era. Inside there's a rare immersion baptismal font in the shape of an octagon. 12th century Romanesque frescoes are visible on the walls and ceiling." (from a brochure on sights in the area of Lugano). It was interesting to see. We also went into the church on the same property.

Then we looked for a place to eat. We finally figured out what the lady said in Italian about where to find a restaurant. Steve ordered gnocchi, I ordered ravioli with Swiss cheese in it. Steve's plate was totally full of gnocchi, I only had 6 ravioli (and they weren't very big!) Glad that we were splitting our dinners, so I had enough to eat! The waiter was from Transylvania and plans to visit Hawaii next year for vacation.

We drove on, headed to Como. There we drove around the south end of Lake Como, then back through Como and up the western side of the lake. Near the north end we headed west back toward Lake Lugano. There were more mountain roads, decided that when the street was too narrow for two way traffic, they don't bother to put a white line down the middle. Sometimes driving was very uncomfortable! We came back to our hotel and relaxed for a couple of hours. I worked more on cross stitch and knitting.

We walked down to the railroad station, decided to eat in the dining room there. They had cloth tablecloths and cloth napkins! We shared a calzone and a foccacia, neither were like what we have in the U.S. We then came back to our room. As has been the case every time we have crossed the train tracks, whether walking or driving, the crossing gates are down and we have to wait for one or two trains to pass. The gates go down when the train is sitting in the station, so sometimes we've waited more than 5 minutes to be able to cross.

People take their dogs everywhere. Last night at dinner, the lady at the table next to us had her dog in the restaurant, next to her table - she fed it food from her plate. I've seen dogs on trains. These are not service dogs, just your pet dog.

We see many bicyclists along the road, somehow they are all cycling uphill or up mountain, never have seen one going downhill! They must have strong legs to tackle these mountain roads!

We've seen several orange trees - there are lots of oranges on them, but no leaves.

It was another beautiful day, about 50. We've been told that these are the usual days in November.

Have a good weekend.

God bless you.

love, Lynne and Steve



Painting at Church of St. Mary of the Angels of the crucifixion. Note Adam's skull and rib at the base of the cross.



Baptismal font in Riva San Vitale.



Romanesque frescoes around the font.



Outside of the Baptistry



View from our window at the Hotel & Hostel Montarina. Our car is the small white one.



Hotel Montarina

Greetings from Switzerland!

We slept in this morning - 9:30 when we got up! Very late for us, but we are on vacation!

We walked down the hill, stopped at the Cathedral which is undergoing renovations to become a museum, so we couldn't see the main part of it, just one small chapel. We continued down the hill to the waterfront. We walked a distance east a couple of blocks from the water, through a couple of parks to a bridge over a stream. There were many people out walking, some with dogs, some with children in strollers, some with children riding scooters.

We then turned back and walked along the shore until we reached the boat dock just before the boat pulled out. We rode the boat to the first stop, Paradiso, where we got off. We walked uphill to the funicular, found out it was closed until March (one of the problems of traveling in the offseason is that a lot of attractions and restaurants are closed, but there are fewer people around now).

We started back towards the lake, came across a Tea Room and decided to eat lunch there. We ordered the bratwurst, Steve had something like hashbrowns with his (with lots of butter on them), I had french fries. Neither of us thought they were really bratwurst, maybe weisswurst, but very long (think long hot dog). They were good. We wandered along the lakefront then, we had to wait 2 1/2 hours for the boat to come back, we had planned to spend time up the mountain after riding the funicular, so had lots of time to wait.

We watched the seagulls, mallard ducks (I saw 6 males and 1 female), another duck which was totally black but had a white bill and white forehead, another duck which had a white neck and was mostly brown - that one would stay under water for more than 30 seconds at a time, swans. We saw flowers blooming: roses, geraniums, other flowers, most of which would be killed by frost at home by now.

The boat finally came back, we got on. It went across the lake to another town (Gandria), then back to Lugano. We saw some of the road we drove yesterday from the boat. Then we had 2 more hours to kill. We wandered among the stores, found a couple of different stores that we hadn't seen before. We also went into some churches, Immaculata had new stained glass windows, St. Joseph's was very plain, St. Antonio's had many paintings on the walls. We shared a crepe which had chestnut jam in it (though we didn't taste the chestnut).

Then we walked to the Church of St. Mary of the Angels for their mass (since we won't be able to attend church tomorrow). I'd guess there were at least 60 in attendance. The people knew the hymns and liturgy and sang. There was an electric signboard with the hymn numbers, which was very helpful (at least I could hum along since I don't know Italian - a couple of the hymn tunes were familiar).

We walked to the bus station and took the bus up to the train station. We stopped at the snack bar there to get some supper (a piece of pizza for me, a roast beef sandwich for Steve). We then walked back up the hill to our room. Today there was no train stopping us from crossing the tracks!

It was cooler today, maybe 47, and hazy.

Tonight is our last night overseas. We fly out of Milan on an Emirate flight at 3:40 p.m. (9:40 a.m. EST), arrive in NYC at JFK airport at 7 p.m., an almost 10 hour flight. It will be 1 a.m. our body time then (plus an hour or so going through customs, finding luggage, etc., so we will spend the night at a nearby hotel, and head home on Monday. Please pray for safe travel for us. Thank you.

God bless you.

love, Lynne and Steve



See the orange tree in the center of the photo?



Lugano from the boat



Steve's lunch



Lynne in Paradiso, waterspout in harbor, town near Lugano in background



lots of swans in Lugano, you can see the waterspout in the distance, Paradiso wasn't far away.



See the meat hanging from the ceiling of the shop? No plastic wrap to keep bacteria away!

Greetings from our hotel in Jamaica, NY!

It's 6 a.m. on Monday morning and we've been awake for a long time. We're still on Swiss time, which is 6 hours ahead of this time. We don't usually get up so early!

Yesterday morning we awoke to fog - could barely see across the parking lot outside our building. Some of the fog lifted before we left. We packed up and left before 10. We drove towards the airport in Milan, Italy. We were supposed to fill the car up with gas

before returning it. However, the first 2 stations both without attendants (nearest the airport) wouldn't let Steve use his credit card. After driving around a nearby town and finding no gas stations, we headed back out the way we had come to the airport and found a gas station with an attendant, and thus could get gas.

We went to the airport and returned the car. We drove 1204 miles in Portugal, Spain, 1702 in Italy and Switzerland.

Then we went into the airport and checked in. Since we had checked in online the night before, we could get in a shorter line, got our boarding passes. We went to the food court - I got a sandwich to eat since it was after noon. I had seen a salad which looked good (tomato, mozzarella, basil), but the wrong price tag was on it, and I decided I didn't want to pay that much for it.

We wandered around the airport, looking for the aviation museum, but decided that taking a bus to it would take too long. We went quickly through security (don't have to take off shoes or belts), walked through the store area, and then had a long wait at the passport check. It was then a 4 minute walk (according to their figuring) to our gate, I'm guessing you have to be walking very fast to make it in 4 minutes (and we're usually fast walkers). We waited for over an hour for check-in (but we didn't miss our plane like we had done the last time we were in Italy). I counted at least 25 stewards and stewardesses getting on our plane.

We were in section F, the third section to board. We figured it would be in the back of the plane, so didn't start looking for our seats until we had gone through the first section of the plane, then discovered that section F (row 45) was the 6th row from the front of the plane! It was an Airbus 380, the largest plane built, first class and business class were upstairs. Our section had some

empty seats, I'm guessing there were more empty seats in the other sections also.

The man in the third seat in our row decided to move to an empty row (he had been on the plane for 8 hours already and wanted a bit more room - he was flying from India to Syracuse NY), so we had lots of room. These seats didn't seem to be crowded as closely together as usually they are in economy class. We were given HOT washcloths before we took off.

About an hour and a half later we were served dinner: roll, farfalle salad (bowtie pasta tossed in pesto, with baby mozzarella cheese and a piece of sundried tomato), lamb ragout (with pomegranate and apricot sauce), saffron rice, creamy spinach with artichokes, chocolate mousse with cherry compote, a piece of chocolate, crackers, beer, wine, soda, water. During clean-up, they offered coffee, tea, and spirits. Twice they came around with liquids (water, apple juice, orange juice, mango juice). Later we were given Emirates pizza (vegetarian pizza topped with tomatoes, melted cheese, and oregano), soda, water. Before we landed we received another HOT washcloth. During the late afternoon, a stewardess and a photographer came around and took a photo of the two of us on a Polaroid camera, so we have a photo to remember our flight.

Flying the Emirates is a pleasant experience! Steve chose to fly Emirates to JFK instead of going to Newark. It was direct and almost 1/2 the price of the other ways.

I finished knitting a hat which I had started at the airport and started and finished knitting a hat while in the air. I also knitted some on the prayer shawl I'm making. I watched a movie (Mary Poppins - there were many choices of movies, but I haven't watched that movie in a while and I've been singing "Chim-Chim-Charoo" for a few days in my head, so picked that one). Steve watched 3 movies.

We were in the air for more than 9 hours. The sun set about 2

hours into our flight, and we could still see the sunset 5 hours later over Maine - guess we were following it across the Atlantic!

We landed almost an hour early, then had to wait for the gate to be ready for us. Going through customs wasn't too bad - they have a machine you stick your passports in, then it takes your photo, then you get a paper with your photo and name on it. Then you get in line and a person checks your paper and your passport. Next we waited and waited and waited to pick up our luggage (they were almost the first suitcases off when we came into Milan). Then we had a long line for Border Control - he wanted our receipts, we didn't know what he meant - if he had said photo with passport info, we would have been ready with them.

We took an airport train to the fourth stop where we called our hotel. The shuttle came a few minutes later and brought us to the hotel. Ours is a "quiet room", but I consider it very noisy - the traffic outside is really loud! It was much quieter next to the train station with freight trains running past all night! We're on the 4th floor, too much noisy traffic going by!

We checked in, were in bed by 8:30 (our bodies said it was 2:30 a.m.), slept fairly well considering the traffic noise. But I was awake by 4 a.m.

A couple of things I forgot to mention in previous days: When we were in Paradismo, waiting for the boat, I noticed exercise equipment in the park beside the lake - it had the parts of the body helped by the equipment and how to use it and for how long, both in Italian and in English - there were about 11 different pieces to use, all metal. The previous day we drove in and out of Italy - Lake Lugano is partially in Switzerland and partially in Italy, so we drove into and out of Italy twice, some of the border stations were unmanned, others waved us through. Going into Italy with an Italian

license plate felt like we were going “home” to the car’s country.

Did I mention that traffic drives in the slow lane until ready to pass someone, passes them, and immediately returns to the slow lane?

The drivers were very courteous about that!

It’s now 9:15 and we’re waiting in the lobby for our ride back to NJ to pick up our car. We ate in the breakfast room here, good variety of hotel breakfast food (waffles, sausage, bacon, scrambled eggs, cold cereal, rolls, small croissants, yogurt, cold cereal, etc.).

We’re eager to get home. We’re wondering what the house will look like. We’ve had a contractor working on the house. Our larger bedroom was just finished when we left. There’s also a walk-in closet and a storage room upstairs. The deck off our bedroom was finished when we left. The contractor was supposed to have built a new back porch (under the deck) and a four season room where our deck used to be. So many changes to see! Then we need to move all of our clothes from the downstairs bedroom we have been using for the past 4 months up to our new bedroom.

We will be home for 2 days, then drive to Atlanta on Thursday for Steve to attend a conference of the Biblical Archeological Review this weekend. We will stay there to celebrate Thanksgiving with our daughter Katherine who flies back this Sat. - Sun. She will be in Anker Wat in Cambodia until then.

Thank you for your prayers for us. Thank you for accompanying us our trip to Europe. We hope you enjoyed it. We enjoyed most of it.

God bless you.

love, Lynne and Steve

P.S. We arrived safely at home at 3:30. Lots of work to still be done on the house! We're exhausted!