

Gathered Together Under the "Mother Italy" Monument

Maria Giovanna Pagnotta (May 14, 2014)



The annual ceremony, right before Mother's Day, was held last Friday, May 9th, under the patronage of the Italian Heritage and Culture Committee of New York.

Many prominent personalities and guests, among them the President of the IHCC Joseph Sciame, and the well known writer and playwright Mario Fratti, as well as the Consul General Natalia Quintavalle, Calandra Institute's Dean Anthony Tamburri, Supreme Court Justice Dominic Massaro and Vice-



Consul Lucia Pasqualini, gathered to celebrate a special kind of MOTHER'S Day. Also present at the event were representatives of the Sons of Italy and NIAF. The only negative was the rainy weather.

The ceremony, held right before Mother's Day took place in the park adjacent to Hunter College, in a courtyard, which houses the sculpture "Mother Italy, a work of art created by the genius from Abruzzo, Giuseppe Massari.

A statue pays tribute to the heart of what was once the Italian immigration to America in the postwar years and was created by the artist, born in Ortona on the sea, with the intention to depict an allegory with an image of a young Italy.

"The statue represents the strong link between Italy and America and is primarily a symbol of all the mothers of all nationalities who witness their children leave for a new life in a foreign nation," explained Massari back in 2000, when Dr. David Caputo, President of Hunter College welcomed the statue into the little garden where it is still located, an accomplishment owed to the perseverance of Dominic Massaro.

The commemorative plaque of the Mother Italy statue proudly reads: "Dedicated to Italian immigrants ... symbol of the mothers of all nationality who have sent their children to build a nation made up of immigrants, conceived in liberty and dedicated to equality of all those who are arrived and all those still to come."

Joseph Sciame, President of the IHCC explained the importance of the words at the foot of the statue that touches not just Italians but all of humanity, especially in a varied context of multiculturalism such as is the city of New York. The Italian experience is nothing more but a symbol of a migration experienced by many people who, with their cultures have enriched and made it a unique city.

"Holding the ceremony in the park that houses the statue of the Mother Italy is very important, and opens a path to the later occurring celebration of Mother's Day.

This statue is a symbol of Italy in all its personifications, and it precisely represents its universality. Italy is particularly appreciated for the discoveries, inventions, and the hard work that the protagonist country has gone through. I think this is the main theme of this annual ceremony."

The guest of honor of the event was Lucia Pasqualini, the Italian Vice Consul of New York, a great example of a mother and career woman. The official diplomat, after being awarded by the NY Police Department, tells us: "I am very happy and proud of this recognition. I am a daughter myself, and a mother of two children, and in addition I happen to be also a working woman," she continued, "this award makes me particularly proud, because my diplomatic role requires many sacrifices, I often have to participate in many events each day, and even I, sometimes have that sense of guilt typical of a busy mom with a thousand things to accomplish."

Lucia Pasqualini is almost at the end of her tenure in New York, and for her this ceremony has a special meaning: "I am proud to say that the NY community has welcomed me warmly and I think they all appreciated my efforts."

"Last night I was very proud to tell my children that I would be given an award on Mother's Day. They were very pleased to hear that and I hope that they too will give me this kind of award," Lucia Pasqualini concluded with a smile.

Overall this was a beautiful initiative of the Italian Heritage and Cultural Committee of New York, and the only regret was the lack of public's participation. Sadly we are aware that the New York whether these days is not very inviting, especially for outdoor ceremonies.

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