



# Notiziario



November 2020

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## OCTOBER: ITALIAN CULTURAL MONTH

The last presentation is Friday, October 30<sup>th</sup> – 7:30 p.m. via ZOOM  
Dante and the Divine Comedy – A presentation by Dr. Seth Fabian

Please join us **Friday, October 30, 2020, at 7:30 pm for a Zoom presentation** by Dr. Seth Fabian about Dante Alighieri's epic poem, The Divine Comedy. This year is the 700th anniversary of the greatest poem ever written. Dr. Fabian teaches a 30-lecture course, "Dante's Divine Comedy: A Guide to Salvation" which covers all three volumes of the Comedy: *Inferno*, *Purgatorio* and *Paradiso*. The course, offered at the Archdiocese of Denver Catechetical School, teaches the Divine Comedy as Dante's guide for living the virtuous life and reveals the riches and depths of this medieval masterpiece. Dr. Fabian received his PhD in Italian Studies and Comparative Literature from Columbia University where he also taught Italian language. **Don't miss this special opportunity on October 30.**



Join Zoom Meeting ID: 690 439 9485 Passcode: DAS

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/6904399485?pwd=Skx1ZkJqaFRFN1pLbmVNVVmp3aEptQT09>

**PRESIDENT'S REPORT** During this time of COVID, there was question as to whether we could follow last year's successful Italian Heritage Month celebration with another one this year. But we did it! Governor Polis again signed the proclamation designating October as Italian Heritage Month and, thanks to the extraordinary efforts of Vice-president Susan Gurule, the Dante Alighieri Society has put on a series of

ZOOM presentations celebrating our Italian culture and history. For those in attendance, it has been an entertaining and enlightening experience. Thank you, Susan! Considering the uncertainty of the times, we will most likely continue using on-line, remote presentations to stay in touch with you, our members. Since we will be utilizing the ZOOM on-line format for meetings, presentations, etc., I thought it would be beneficial to outline some basic expectations for those meetings. The same will apply to in-person meetings as well.

Any meeting of the Dante Alighieri Society of Denver shall be considered a safe place to socialize, share knowledge, ask questions, and discuss matters related to our Italian culture. Consequently, bullying, degrading or rude and contemptuous comments about race, religion, politics or culture will not be tolerated. For the comfort and safety of the other attendees, those making such remarks will be removed from the meeting



**OCTOBER VIRTUAL CULTURAL PRESENTATION.** The Society thanks Alisa DiGiacomo for the interesting historical presentation via ZOOM about the life and legacy of Frances Xavier Cabrini. We also thank Paul Borrillo for sharing his uncle Ted Borrillo's autobiography which brought to life his family history.

**BENVENUTI** The Dante Alighieri Society of Denver gives a warm welcome to the following new members: Wendy and Scott Menefee, and Phyllis Ursetta.



**AUGURI DI BUON COMPLEANNO**

We wish our members a Buon Compleanno during their birthday month:

**Rhonda Hopkins** **November 13**

**Tonia Williams** **November 26**

**Rich Sabell** **November 30**

We want to include more members in this column, so please send a quick email, with your birthday month and day, to Dante Society board member, Suzanne Fasing, at [suzannefasing@yahoo.com](mailto:suzannefasing@yahoo.com) Grazie!

*Mese del cuore*

**Novembre:** *Per San Martino si Spilla il botticino.*

*Month of the heart*

**November:** On Saint Martin's Day you tap the little barrel. (and try new wine)  
Celebrated in Italy November 11

**ITALIAN LANGUAGE CLASSES WINTER SESSION BEGINS JANUARY 2021**

The Dante Alighieri Society will offer a 10-week winter session of Italian language classes, beginning in January 2021. The schedule for winter classes will be posted on the Dante Society website by December 7, 2020, and online registration will begin as soon as the schedule is posted. During the current fall session, language classes are offered as online remote classes, using the Zoom platform. The Dante Society board, in consultation with the teachers, will decide if the winter 2021 session of classes will continue to be offered through the Zoom platform, or whether it will be prudent to offer the classes in person, in the parish offices of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Church. That information will be posted on the Dante Society website when the winter 2021 class schedule is posted. Whether on Zoom, or in person, classes will be held once a week, for 90 minutes. Cost is \$115 for members and \$145 for non-members. New members are welcome to join the Dante Alighieri Society when they register for classes. Please register early because classes do fill up. For more information, please contact the Education Chair Suzanne Fasing at [suzannefasing@yahoo.com](mailto:suzannefasing@yahoo.com). To register for classes, visit the web site: <http://dantealighieriofdenver.com/classes/language-classes/>

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Dante Alighieri Society of Denver Website: <http://dantealighieriofdenver.com/>

**BOOK CLUB ANYONE?** Do you enjoy reading a good book? Wouldn't it be great to discuss it with other people who may have enjoyed it too? Well, the Dante Society may have a way for you to enjoy both of those activities! We would like to start a Book Club. If you're interested, we'll put one together. Once we know who wants to participate, together we'll select a date and time to meet via ZOOM. We'll also determine how and what type of books to select to read. Below are brief reviews of two books Suzanne Fasing has read to give you an idea of what's available in the way of Italian-related books and authors. If you want to join our merry band of book readers, shoot me an email at [susangurule@msn.com](mailto:susangurule@msn.com) or give me a call at 720-484-1014. Happy reading! Come join us.

## **RECOMMENDED READING OF ITALIAN BOOKS** By Suzanne Fasing, Board Member.

For the long winter nights of the pandemic, you might be interested in reading two books that provide a revealing look into different aspects of the life and history of Italy. **A Bold and Dangerous Family** written by Caroline Moorehead tells the remarkable story of an Italian mother and her two sons, and their fight against fascism in Italy in the 1920's and 1930's. Amelia Rosselli was the matriarch of a family belonging to the cosmopolitan and cultural aristocracy of Florence. Her sons, Carlo and Nello, were young men in their 20's when Italy was the first European country where fascists took control. The book describes the conditions in Italy that led to Mussolini's rise to dictatorship, the different segments of the Italian population that supported fascism, and the severe laws passed by the Italian Parliament that imposed censorship on newspapers and resulted in the imprisonment and execution of anti-fascists. When Mussolini established a brutal police state controlled by his Blackshirts, Carlo and Nello Rosselli, who were young married men with small children, became leaders of the anti-fascist movement. This is not dry history, but the suspenseful, real life experience of the Rosselli family, who risked their lives in dangerous missions to oppose fascism.

**Tears of Salt** written by Pietro Bartolo and Lidia Tilotta reports about the humanitarian work by Dr. Bartolo, providing medical care to thousands of refugees on the Italian island of Lampedusa, during the past 25 years. The book provides a glimpse into what life was like when Dr. Bartolo grew up on Lampedusa and studied medicine in Sicily. However, the focus of the book is on the experience of refugees from the Middle East and Africa, fleeing civil war, terrorism and grinding poverty, who arrive in Lampedusa, an island southwest of Sicily and only 70 nautical miles from the coast of Africa. Hundreds of thousands of refugees are exploited by smugglers who transport them across the Mediterranean Sea in dilapidated boats. The refugees who survive this treacherous trip arrive in Lampedusa after being rescued by the Italian Coast Guard. Dr. Bartolo's book gives witness to the heart-wrenching suffering and loss experienced by these refugees. The book is also heart-warming in telling the story of the great compassion shown by Dr. Bartolo and many other Italians to alleviate the suffering of these refugees. *Tears of Salt* has also been made into an award-winning documentary that is available as a Netflix DVD.

**INVITATION TO A MOVIE AT DENVER UNIVERSITY** Professor Roberta Waldbaum of DU invites members of the Dante Alighieri Society to a free DU virtual screening of the 2020 film ***Gli anni più belli*** (The Best Years) by the Italian director, Gabriele Muccino. The film is one of 10 Italian films to be shown in the Showcase on Italian Cinema at the Denver Film Festival.

DU's sponsored screening window begins at 2:15pm on Sunday, 11/1/2020. You must begin streaming the film between 2:15pm and 5:15pm on that date. Virtual tickets to screen the film are first come, first serve – so please reserve your spot as soon as possible.

**To reserve your spot** and access to view *The Best Years* on 11/1, use the following screening link - <https://watch.eventive.org/dff/play/5f6fb74e97ccb50127dbaff5>.

- Select "Pre-Order Now"
- Click "Have a discount code?" and input the code DFFDU2020. Click "Apply discount".
- You should now see a price of \$0. Follow the remaining instructions to reserve your screening spot, and we'll see you (virtually) on November 1<sup>st</sup>!

## **NEWS FROM ITALY** **Venice, the Mose works: no high water in Piazza San Marco**

The work created to defend Venice from high water went into action by lifting the mobile gates installed to intercept and stop the high tide that would pour over the city. The outcome of the operation is also visible from **Piazza San Marco, which has remained dry** while the water in the sea is reaching the peaks of 125 centimeters predicted by the Municipality's Tide Center.

Many lined up to see the bulkheads in action: "It will be the rebirth of Venice," says a visitor, while a Venetian speaks of a "historic day" for the city. «It is clear that this Mose works and stops the high water», says another Venetian proudly.

"The rehearsal went well," said **Cinzia Zincon**, the supervisor for public works. The President of the Republic **Sergio Mattarella** phoned the mayor of Venice **Brugnaro** to express satisfaction. (ItalPlanet News)



## **EU Commission approves a new Italian geographical indication**

The European Commission has approved the application for registration of Lucanian oil in the register of protected geographical indications (PGI).

The extra virgin olive oil "Olio Lucano" is produced in Basilicata and is characterized by a color between green and yellow, medium fruity, medium bitter and medium spicy, with possible aromatic notes of fresh grass, artichoke, tomato, almond and apple.

The name "Olio Lucano" derives from the history of Basilicata, whose current territory coincides with the larger one which was called Lucania, a land inhabited by the Lucanians, one of the Italic peoples of the pre-Roman era. This new name is added to the over 1490 food products already protected, the list of which is available in the eAmbrosia database . For more information see also the pages on **quality schemes** .

"Finally, the Lucanian oil also obtains the IGP certification from the European Union. An absolutely deserved recognition for this high quality product and for the more than 12 thousand Lucanian olive growers who produce it ". The Minister of Agricultural Policies Teresa Bellanova comments on the definitive green light for the registration of the IGP "Olio Lucano IGP " in the European register of protected designations of origin and geographical indications (PDO and PGI) and of traditional specialties guaranteed (Stg) against imitations. (ItalPlanet News)

## **The tragic story behind spaghetti all'amatriciana** by Julia Buckley, CNN

What's Italy's best pasta sauce? That's the kind of question that can start a fight in the home of spaghetti and tortellini. Will it be Bologna's meaty, slow-cooked ragu -- so famous that half the globe has bastardized it and called it "bolognese?" Liguria's nutty, basil-flushed pesto? Or how about carbonara -- a full-on carb load of pasta slathered in eggy, cheesy sauce with hunks of pecorino cheese?

Maybe it's the red stuff. For many, a great pasta dish needs tomato in it, and for that kind of people, amatriciana is the sauce to end all sauces. Thick, sweet tomato sauce pepped up by *guanciale* (an extra-flavorful kind of bacon from the pig's cheek), warmed by plenty of pepper or chilli, and with pecorino cheese giving it texture, it's one of the classics. But although its fans around the globe think of amatriciana as their carby comfort blanket, the dish's recent history has been tragic.

### **A terrifying earthquake.**

It is thought to have been invented in the town of Amatrice, in Lazio, Italy's central Italian region that's also home to Rome. While Rome is on the Mediterranean coast, however, Amatrice lies 90 miles northeast, closer to the Adriatic than the Med, in a basin in the Apennine mountains.

It borders the Gran Sasso e Monti della Laga National Park, which sprawls across 150,000 hectares and three regions of central-southern Italy. The park is one of the largest protected areas in Europe, known for its golden eagles, brown bears and Europe's southernmost glacier. But the area around the park has been at the center of Italy's earthquakes in recent years.

In 2009, an earthquake near the city of L'Aquila, an hour due south of Amatrice, killed 308 people and rendered around 65,000 homeless. The city is still in the process of rebuilding. And in October 2016, Norcia, an hour northwest of Amatrice, was hit by a 6.6 magnitude quake, whose tremors were felt across the country, from Rome to Venice, 260 miles away. It, too, has yet to be fully rebuilt.

Amatrice's turn came on August 24, 2016, at 3:36 a.m. An earthquake measuring 6 on the Richter scale destroyed almost the entire town in 142 seconds, as well as the nearby settlements of Arquata del Tronto, Pescara del Tronto and the epicenter, Accumoli. It killed 299, with another four victims dying later. Most of the dead were in Amatrice. "Amatrice no longer exists," the mayor at the time, Sergio Pirozzi, told reporters in the morning. Nearly 400 people were injured, and 41,000 lost their homes. Four years on, most are still living in temporary accommodation.

## **Still destroyed, but still cooking.**

Today, little has changed. The center of town -- or what remains of it -- is an army-controlled zone, with pedestrians banned. Driving up what was once the pretty main street, Corso Umberto I, only a few buildings remain, held up by scaffolding: a couple of bell towers, the vaulted hull of a church.

Beyond the old town are more buildings, held up by scaffolding; others which appear to have survived or been rebuilt; and temporary huts where the town's remaining inhabitants live and shop. A statue of 16th-century artist and architect Cola dell'Amatrice has been restored, and sits at the edge of the disaster zone, next to a sign banning selfies.

And at what used to be the end of town is a collection of stylish modern buildings, hastily constructed around a pseudo piazza. The Area del Gusto, della Tradizione e della Solidarietà (Taste, Tradition and Solidarity Area) was designed in 2017 by architect Stefano Boeri -- responsible for the world-famous "vertical forest" in Milan. Surrounded by the green mountains, it's a space that has drawn together the remaining restaurants from the town.

The museums and churches may be destroyed, but thousands of tourists still come to Amatrice to eat its most famous pasta dish. And even in a glorified shed, it's still one of the most memorable meals you can have in Italy.

At Ristorante La Conca, Elisabetta Perilli doesn't have a printed menu. Instead, she tells you what's available -- and it's all what Italians called "*chilometro zero*," sourced from the local area. To start with, a platter of local cured meats and salami is the way to go -- Norcia, an hour away, is world famous for its cured ham. But afterward there's only one thing the tourists want to eat: spaghetti all'amatriciana.

So how is it different from the amatriciana we eat all around the world? At La Conca, the Perilli family uses square-cut spaghetti instead of round, as it gives more surface area for the sauce to permeate. The pasta is also rough-textured, rather than smooth, so that it's easier for the sauce to stick to it.

And if you're used to amatriciana with a kick of chilli, you'll be surprised -- because here, although they do add chilli, most of the spice is coming from regular pepper. That makes it less spicy than what you might be used to, but smoother, and warmer, almost with a hint of nutmeg. It's a warmth that spreads across your mouth as you eat. It's more subtle than the amatriciana you might be used to -- and it's masterful.

As for the guanciale, Perilli says the most crucial thing is that it needs to be clean. The family used to produce their own, but, like everyone else here, they lost their animals and their curing room in the earthquake. Today, they buy guanciale from a producer not far away.

## **The aftermath of the earthquake.**

Like everyone else in Amatrice, the Perilli family were hit hard by the earthquake. Their house in the town center was completely destroyed, as was their restaurant, which her father, Gabriele, had opened in the 1950s, and had been popular with Italian celebrities including singer Adriano Celentano. "You should have seen our restaurant," she says, pointing at a photo on the wall of Celentano with Gabriele -- who made a cameo in his film, *Serafino*. "We had photos everywhere. It was so beautiful."



Yet she calls her family "lucky" because they had land -- so they built two wooden chalets to live in, rather than having to move into the estate of prefab huts that other residents from the town center have moved into. And the slow bureaucracy of the recovery process means that residents don't know if, or when, their houses will ever be rebuilt.

"Those of us with houses in the center still don't know if they will rebuild them in the center, or move them outside," she says. "We went from a peaceful city to a disaster. "The town is a building site now. We can't walk there. Our houses have been flattened, and we can't visit where they were. There's nothing."

After the earthquake, residents were allowed to return to what remained of their houses to see if they could save any possessions. Then the town was walled off, and was deemed a military zone. Residents can drive through, but cannot stop, cannot get out, and cannot visit the site of their old homes.

### **Kitchen secrets.**

The secret of a great amatriciana, according to the Perillis: making sure the guanciale is clean, and cooking it with the rest of the sauce, using the meat's fat to fry the mix, instead of cooking the vegetables in olive oil first. There's just one problem. According to Elisabetta, ordering amatriciana in Amatrice is what marks you out as a tourist. The real dish of Amatrice, she says, is spaghetti alla gricia -- a 'white' (tomato-free) amatriciana, whose ingredients are nothing but guanciale, pepper, and pecorino cheese. This is thought to be the original dish of Amatrice, with residents adding tomato only in the 19th century.

The dishes' fame -- though they originated here, both gricia and amatriciana are closely associated with Rome -- meant that Italians rallied to support Amatrice after the earthquake. "We were lucky," says Perilli. "People donated, and gave us the chance to start again." The Area del Gusto was built with donations raised by the *Corriere della Sera* newspaper and L7 TV channel, and allows those residents who have stayed -- because many of those who could, left -- to earn again.

"We had fewer people here this summer, but many Italians on holiday come here. There are no hotels left, but they come for lunch," says Perilli.

## **2020 CALENDAR**

**Friday, October 30, 7:30 p.m.**

**Virtual Presentation: Divine Comedy – Dr. Seth Fabian**

**NOTE: ALL IN-PERSON EVENTS HAVE BEEN CANCELLED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE**