

IHCC-NY Mother's Day Ceremony. Honoring Consul General Natalia Quintavalle

Martina Marcantoni (May 12, 2015)



Homage to Mother Italy. The annual ceremony for Mother's Day took place once again 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. The ceremony was the occasion to honor Consul General of Italy to New York Natalia Quintavalle in the last year of her mandate in New York

Under the patronage of the Italian Heritage & Culture Committee of New York, the annual Mother's Day ceremony was held once again on May 7th. In Hunter College's Poses Park, also host to the "Madre Italia" statue by Italian sculptor Giuseppe Massari, illustrious guests gathered.



First of all IHCC president, Joseph Sciamè, who opened the ceremony by presenting all the other figures present, among them the president of the Columbus Citizens Foundation, Knight Grand Cross Hon. Dominic R. Massaro, Consul General Natalia Quintavalle, Director of the Italian-American Institute John D. Calandra Cav. Anthony Julian Tamburri, president of the Italian-American Education Committee Cav. Berardo Paradiso, rector of the Scuola d'Italia Dr. Maria Palandra, president of NOIAW Maria Tamburri and Joseph J. Di Trapani, president of the Figli d'Italia Foundation and former president of OSIA.

Furthermore, the event was brightened by three feminine voices from the Scuola d'Italia's choir, who sang the hymns of Italy and America.

Joseph Sciamè reminded everyone of the importance of the event's location. Since 2012, the IHCC has been responsible of the statue of Madre Italia (mother Italy), Sciamè himself began his speech, stating: "The statue represents our motherland, Italy, the importance of the unifying element of Italy, family, the theme of discovery with Christopher Columbus, the cross that represents our faith, and the Mother as the element of unity."

"An emblematic example of these values of ours is our Consul General Natalia Quintavalle", this is how the Consul General, who is in the last year of her mandate here in New York, was welcomed.

She spoke of the first time she attended the Mother's Day celebration, when she knew nothing about the history and the significance of the statue and of the Italian-American associations. And it's to the latter that the consul addressed her profound gratitude for their promotion and protection of Italian culture in the United States and beyond.

She spoke of the women present at the event: "I have a profound admiration for the women of the new generation who work at the consulate, like Isabella Periotto, who manage to coordinate their professional life and their private life with efficiency and elegance".

She then thanked Deputy Consul Dino Sorrentino, who did great work at the consulate while also supporting the work of the women who worked alongside him.

The Consul also felt compelled to thank Lisa Calello: "She's an extraordinary woman, she's a pillar for the consulate and, unfortunately, she too is also about to leave".

In addition to symbolizing the figure of the mother, the statue also represents the strong tie between Italy and the United States. Massari, the artist, conceived it after the tragic events of World War II to thank the United States for liberating Italy, which on its part has contributed to the development of the United States ever since Christopher Columbus made his discovery.

The statue's history is long and tumultuous, it first went from the hands of the sculptor Massari to those of Dr. Nicola Brunori, an illustrious figure from the Bronx, but an appropriate placement for the piece couldn't even be found at the 1965 World Expo held in New York. It was Dominic R. Massaro who found a permanent space for the statue, thanks to Dr. David Caputo, then president of Hunter College, which in 2000 accepted to place the statue within its University.

The deepest message however, lies in the words of Massari himself: "to the Italian immigrant ... symbolic of mothers of every nationality who sent their children to build a nation of immigrants, conceived in liberty and dedicated to the equality of all those who came, and of those yet to come."

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