

JCCIA Journal

Officers

President **JO ANN SERPICO**
1st Vice President **ANTONIO ROMANUCCI**
2nd Vice President **ROSEMARIE ANDOLINO**
3rd Vice President **JOSEPH RAGO**
Treasurer **EUGENE RENDA**
Secretary **JACQUELYN MAZZA**
Sergeant-at-Arms **JAMES CERAMI**
President Emeritus **DOMINIC DIFRISCO**
Past President **JOANNE SPATA**
Chaplain **THE REV. CLAUDIO HOLZER, C.S.**
Legal Advisor **JOSEPH M. GAGLIARDO**

Divisions

Women's Division
Rosemary Ranallo, President

West Suburban Women's Division
Naomi Serpico, President

Young Professionals Division
John Galluzzi, President

Affiliated Organizations

AIDA • Alpine Country Club • Amici d'Italia • Amici Naperville Area Italian American Club • ARPA • Associazione Veneti nel Mondo — USA • Calabresi in America Organization • Casa Italia • Casa San Carlo • CIACO • Columbian Club of Chicago • Elk Grove Village Italian Sister Cities Inc. • FIERI-Chicago • Flowers of Italy Club • Fra Noi • IANU Foundation, ISDA Midwest District • IANU, James E. Coli Chapter #15 • IANU, Club Calascibetta Chapter #75 • IANU, St. Anthony Chapter #10 • IANU, St. Joseph Chapter #319 • Italian American Chamber of Commerce • Italian American Civic Organization of Berwyn • I-A Executives of Transportation • I-A Human Relations Found. of Chicago • Italian American Labor Council • Italian American Police Association • Italian American Political Coalition • Italian American Society (Springfield) • Italian American Women's Club of Chicagoland • Italian American Women's Organization • Italian Catholic Federation • Italian Catholic Federation #392 • Italian Cultural Center • Italo-American Soccer Club "Maroons" • Italo-American "Maroons" Ladies Club • ITAM Vets, Illinois • ITAM, Illinois Ladies Auxiliary • ITAM, Filippo Mazzei Post #1 • ITAM, Filippo Mazzei Post #1 Ladies • ITAM, Joseph Gentile Post #2 • ITAM, Joseph Gentile Post #2 Ladies • ITAM James Cuzzone Post #5 Ladies • ITAM, Guido Belmonte Post #4 Ladies • Justinian Society of Lawyers • Marchegiana Society of Chicago Heights • Maria SS Della Croce Di Triggiano • Maria SS Lauretana Society • Mazzini Verdi Club, Inc. • Mazzini Verdi Club, Ladies Social Club • Mola Foundation • Old Neighborhood Italian American Club • Panormus Club • San Rocco di Modugno Society • Shrine of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel • Shrine of Our Lady of Pompeii • Sicilian American Cultural Association • Società Beato Giovanni Liccio • Società San Biagio Platani • Società San Francesco di Paola • Società San Giovanni Bosco di Ciminna • Società San Leoluca da Corleone • Società SS Crocifisso di Ciminna • Società SS Crocifisso di Rutigliano, Bari • Society of Santa Fara di Cinisi • Sons and Daughters of Italy in America • St. John Brebuef Italian American Club • UNICO, Chicago Amerital Chapter • UNICO, Chicago West Suburban Chpt. • UNICO, Greater Chicago Chapter • Veneti del Nordamerica

*The Joint Civic Committee
of Italian Americans*
3800 Division St. • Stone Park, IL 60165
708.450.9050 www.jccia.com
~ Organized in 1952 ~



Mt. Carmel Shrine gears up for a truly blessed event

by Jo Ann Serpico, President

When I attended the Feast of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel last July, little did I realize how close I would become to La Madonna Del Carmine and the parishioners of this Melrose Park Shrine. My sister and I attended weekly Wednesday-night novenas during the summer, and the nine-day Novena prior to the start of the festival.

During the feast, Christine Cerami and Lucia Esposito, the committee for the new crowns for the Madonna and the Infant, were collecting gold from devotees. At the end of the feast, 10 pounds of donated gold had been received from devotees from all over the United States. "It's been 36 years since La Madonna and the Infant had new crowns," said Chris Cerami. "We just wanted to do this! Everything is falling into place. La Madonna wants it."

Let me share a brief history of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel. The beloved statue of Our Lady came to Melrose Park as the fulfillment of a promise made by Emanuella DeStefano, an Italian immigrant, then a resident of Melrose Park, in the year 1894. Mrs. DeStefano promised La Madonna Del Carmine that she would initiate devotion to her if the Madonna would return health to her ailing husband. Mrs. DeStefano's prayer was answered and, as a result, thousands upon thousands of prayers to Our Lady of Mt. Carmel have been rendered and answered for more than a century.

"What started out as a personal devotion," the Rev. Claudio Holzer, pastor of the Shrine, told me, "became a dedicated group of women intent upon raising enough monies to buy a statue of La Madonna, erect a small chapel to keep her in, and hold a yearly feast in her honor. This small feast grew into the largest and oldest feast in the city of Chicago and surrounding suburbs. The small

chapel became a small church, then a parish with a school, then a large modern church. And in 2006, it was designated a Marian Shrine by the Archdiocese of Chicago. Our yearly feast draws more than 200,000 people from the entire United States and Canada, in addition to visitors from all over the world. We have a solemn Novena in preparation for the feast, a four-night street festival in the Italian tradition, and a six-hour procession on Sunday with more than 40 religious groups and two Italian marching bands and hundreds of devotees participating. The five-mile long procession route through the village of Melrose Park is lined with residents and visitors alike honoring Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, as she is carried through the streets blessing the children."

On May 4, Fr. Claudio and 30 parishioners of the Shrine traveled to Rome to accept the newly fabricated crowns, which received a formal blessing upon them by Pope Benedict XVI on May 6. Lucia Esposito made all of the travel arrangements with Alitalia and Fr. Claudio planned the itinerary for the six-day pilgrimage. My sisters and I were privileged to be included in this pilgrimage.

On June 28, the Shrine is having a formal procession and Papal Inconoration celebration. Francis Cardinal George is expected to attend, along with Archbishop Pietro Sambi, the apostolic nuncio to the United States, as well as and bishops Paprocki, Perry and Sabatini.

The great-great-grandchildren of the Italian immigrants who founded this parish continue to show their devotion to La Madonna del Carmine. They shower La Madonna with love and gratitude for all the blessings she has bestowed upon them and their families over the last 116 years.



IMPORTANT MESSAGE

Our brothers and sisters of Abruzzo have suffered the devastation of an earthquake. In view of this, the Joint Civic Committee of Italian Americans is calling on all affiliated organizations, associated members, friends and all interested parties or make a contribution of compassion and solidarity. Please make checks payable to the JCCIA Earthquake Relief Fund 2009. Mail to the JCCIA Office, 3800 Division St., Stone Park, IL 60165. Contributions will be distributed in accordance with the instructions of Consul General Alessandro Motta.

Through the efforts of Dominic DiFrisco, our president emeritus, WLS-ABC/Channel 7 aired the following public service announcement during the month of May.