

The Canticle of Creature in NYC

Letizia Airos (November 21, 2014)



EDITORIAL. If you want to know more about the current issue of i-ItalyNY free print magazine

Be praised, my Lord, through all Your creatures, especially through my lord Brother Sun, who brings the day; and You give light through him.

— Fra' Francesco

Why would a magazine in New York pick a friar who lived in Italy in the 1200s as its man of the year? Why open an editorial with verses written 800 years ago? Let me explain. First off, "our" Friar Francis, Patron Saint of Italy, is very relevant to the current climate and transcends the Catholic religion, a man who gave up the good life to live amongst the poor and dedicate his life to peace. We're not talking about the saint per se, but about his universal message.





But the idea for this issue of the magazine came to us when we were asked to make a promotional video for an extraordinary exhibit of Francis' original manuscripts, which opens soon at the United Nations and will later move to Brooklyn Borough Hall. To tell Francis' story in a few seconds was a real challenge. We decided to open with him departing Assisi (although you might realize the opening was shot in the Cloisters!) and then show him, barefoot in a tattered habit, walking through the chaotic crowds of New York—amazed, dazed and a little amused. We followed him through the streets for a whole day, from Times Square to Chinatown to Central Park to DUMBO. And we imagined him trying to come into contact with nature. Or people. We imagined his humanity. His poverty. Or rather, his refusal of wealth. His search for peace. In short, we wanted to evoke the past in the present. The life of Francis remains revolutionary to this day—and it's no accident Pope Bergoglio chose to be Francis I.

A large portion of this end-of-year issue revolves around Francis and his mission of peace. Several exceptional contributors reflect on the man. The Italian UN ambassadors to Israel and Egypt; two spokespersons—a journalist and a theologian—for Catholic Italy; Jerry Krase and Anthony Tamburri, who look at the saint from the point of view of interethnic relations in the US; and finally Stefano Albertini, who contemplates the Canticle of Creatures, Francis' best known work and the first work of Italian literature.



While we were at it, we decided to take a look at tourism on Francis' turf—Umbria, the greenest region in Italy, where you'll find a treasure trove of historic and cultural assets as well as a world famous jazz festival.



As always, the magazine has new recommendations for where to eat, what to wear, and who to read. We also remember our good friend and mentor Massimo Vignelli, the icon of Italian design, who recently passed away in New York.

Finally, there are two not-to-be-missed interviews linked to our television show: "Americans in Love with Italy" with Francine Segan and Parick Shanley, and "The Odd Couple" with Fred Plotkin and chef Davide Scabin.



Still haven't checked us out on TV? Shucks! Go to channel 22 or 25 in New York (Saturday at 11pm and Sunday at 1pm). Still haven't visited our website? Say it ain't so! Go to www.i-Italy.org. Still haven't friended us on Facebook? What are you waiting for? Our 100,000+ friends are proof you can't love Italy without loving i-Italy.

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