GOVERNOR CUOMO DELIVERS REMARKS AT 2020 COLUMBUS CITIZENS FOUNDATION CELEBRATION GALA

Governor Cuomo: "While there is much sadness this year and I am disappointed to not be at the gala and not to march in the parade, there is a silver lining. This year we unveil a magnificent monument to our Italian American legacy and that monument will stand for all time... Thanks to the Columbus Club, and Angelo Vivolo and the Mother Cabrini Commission, we are unveiling a beautiful statue erected in Battery Park City on the shore of the Hudson River, looking directly at the Statue of Liberty." "As Governor, I used many of the lessons taught to me by my Italian parents and grandparents, our legacy. Tell people the truth. Be direct. Don't be afraid. Protect one another. Operate as a family. And believe in ourselves and believe that we can overcome"

Velow a rush transcript of the Governor's remarks

To Marian Pardo, President of the Columbus Citizens Foundation, thank you for all your good work.

To Angelo Vivolo, Chairman of the Board and Chairman of the Columbus Celebration for 2020, thank you for your leadership, your energy, your creativity and for being such an effective champion and fighter for the Italian American community. You are the best, Angelo.

For 75 years, the Columbus Citizens Foundation has organized the Columbus Day Parade. This evening's gala is always a spectacular night and kick-off event.

Obviously this year is oh so different. COVID-19 has turned the world upside down.

But we should be proud of what New York did. We came together and we took on the virus and we went from the highest infection rate in the nation to the lowest infection rate. And we did that together.

As Governor, I used many of the lessons taught to me by my Italian parents and grandparents, our legacy. Tell people the truth. Be direct. Don't be afraid. Protect one another. Operate as a family. And believe in ourselves and believe that we can overcome.

That is the beautiful legacy of the Italian American people. The immigrant experience drawn to America's promise of opportunity and always dedicated to improving America. My Grandfather Andrea Cuomo would say it all in three words: God bless America. It's been my pleasure this year to work with another great Italian American, Dr. Anthony Fauci the Co-Grand Marshall - smart, hard-working, honest, dedicated. A great Italian American representative. From New York, obviously.

And while there is much sadness this year and I am disappointed to not be at the gala and not to march in the parade, there is a silver lining. This year we unveil a magnificent monument to our Italian American legacy and that monument will stand for all time. Last Columbus Day if you remember, one year ago, we said that we could work together and create a statue of the blessed Mother Cabrini. And now in honor of Columbus Day, we will do just that.

Mother Cabrini is the personification of the Italian American legacy. She founded 67 schools, hospitals and orphanages. She served the poor and the immigrants. She had boundless energy and unlimited capacity and she was a model for female empowerment before the expression was ever used - doing all of this in the late 1800s and early 1900s.

Thanks to the Columbus Club, and Angelo Vivolo and the Mother Cabrini Commission, we are unveiling a beautiful statue erected in Battery Park City on the shore of the Hudson River, looking directly at the Statue of Liberty.

Now, Italian Americans have two great statues in New York City - the Christopher Columbus statue and the Mother Cabrini statue, and they will serve to educate a new generation of New Yorkers and all the international tourists who come here on the proud and true legacy of Italian Americans, who we are, and what we have done to make this country that we love so much even better.

We still have much more to do to tell our story - a proud and a beautiful story - but if we all continue to do what we do, we will tell that story and it will live for generations to come. Thank you.

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