



SACRED MILITARY CONSTANTINIAN ORDER OF SAINT GEORGE
USA DELEGATION

Southern Italian Royals' Concern for their People Continues in the midst of Covid-19

At the end of a special Mass on Sunday, February 23 in Newark, New Jersey, knights and dames robed in the blue mantles of a dynastic order over a thousand years old accompanied beloved Princess Beatrice of Bourbon-Two Sicilies as the national anthem of that Kingdom, "Hymn to the King" played. Standing at the front of the church was an emotional 87-year-old Vincenzo Martino, a humble immigrant and operator of a Hackensack eatery for almost 50 years. Moments before, the devout Martino had been awarded a medal from Princess Beatrice in recognition of his organizing a feast of the Madonna delle Grazie di Alia in his adopted country for decades. As the congregation lingered for espresso and Italian pastries after the Mass, no one could have imagined the vastly different situation in which they – and the rest of the world – would shortly find themselves, with the onset of the Coronavirus.

Princess Beatrice's brother, Prince Carlo, is head of the Royal House of Bourbon-Two Sicilies which remains deeply attached to southern Italy, its head continuing to guide the Sacred Military Constantinian Order of Saint George. Once a military society with origins dating to its Roman emperor namesake, the Order was formally organized by the Byzantine Empire in the 1100's and participated in the Crusades and later European battles. Ultimately an order of knighthood dedicated to the defense of the Catholic Faith, today it is still profoundly Catholic and unapologetically tied to the Royal House, functioning as a charitable organization present on four continents, which focuses on assistance to hospitals, outreach to the poor and funding education.

Given the Royal House's ongoing concern for meridional Italy and the connection of the Constantinian Order – of which Prince Carlo is grand master – to their homeland, their swift response to the outbreak of Covid-19 came as no surprise. Mobilizing his knights and dames, Prince Carlo's nonprofit Constantinian Order Charity foundation quickly coordinated a hospital relief fund, focusing on facilities in the country's southern regions. Hospitals on the front line of the fight against the pandemic began to receive donations of desperately needed equipment, supplies and funds, allocations totaling over 230,000 euros. Institutions located in Palermo in Sicily, Naples in Campania, Potenza in Basilicata, Catanzaro in Calabria, and at least seven other cities throughout Italy were beneficiaries. The Order's U.S. delegate, Mr John Viola responded with a GoFundMe campaign as part of the effort, which brought in 50,000 dollars.

An anonymous donation of 5,000 dollars to the GoFundMe was made in memory of Vincenzo Martino. Just weeks after the unassuming Sicilian man received the medal from the Princess of his cherished homeland, he fell victim to Covid-19, like tens of thousands of others in his native Italy as well as the nation which welcomed him, passing away on April 8. A grateful Martino would no doubt have been proud of the money given by his American friends in the Constantinian Order, and others, to the relief fund which assisted Italian hospitals with help they so desperately needed. He would have appreciated their contributions to facilities like those in Palermo and Partinico, close to his native Alia. The Constantinian Order headed by the Royal House of Bourbon-Two Sicilies remains committed to preserving and promoting the Catholic Faith and their cultural heritage, carrying on the mission to which Martino was so dedicated, and aiding those in greatest need.