

## Italians at the Time of Coronavirus

Edoardo Innaro (April 14, 2020)



The thought of a young student in such difficult days. To look to the future ... Through action and inaction, but always aware of others, we can save lives and make it through, hopefully bettered...

We, as Italians, vary a lot amongst ourselves.

We can be harsh and elegant. We can be outspoken, while remaining introspective and contemplative. We have the businessman attire and the farmhouse traditions. The avant-garde and the classics. And yet, an Italian is always an Italian...

It might be due to our unapologetic nature because, in our infinitely varied forms, we know who we are. We know what we are. And though at times we are taken by simple jealousies and hedonistic



pleasures, we are kind, we are genuine, we are sympathetic.

We are, possibly, most embodied by our grandparents. Grandmothers who have overfed us, who worried about us even in our most serene moments, and grandfathers who nostalgically told us tales of the wars and of the lira. They would watch kindly over our shoulders even when there was no reason to, and taught us how to treat others.

This is who is being lost these days in Italy. With our older generations we are losing our nature, our past. With them we are losing that inner child we all still have inside.

Thankfully, many are attempting to salvage these ideals in any way possible. The tireless efforts of the medical staff across Italy are to weep for. Doctors are spending over fourteen hours at a time on the line, while dealing with deaths permeating the hospitals. Interns are cast with little experience into hellish scenarios out of pure necessity. Mental collapse is not an option.

Outside the hospitals, the streets of major cities are deserted. Pigeons rule over Piazza del Duomo and Venetian Lagoon is filled with empty gondolas and dolphins. The only visitors roaming St. Peter's Square these days are the homeless. They are the most impacted by this crisis. The displaced walk in the eerie silence between the chaotic hospitals and the family homes. They are alone on the streets, forgotten as always.

Thankfully, groups such as Sant'Egidio, a secular organization of Catholic inspiration, keep fighting for the weakest. In cities across Italy, but also abroad, they take in the homeless. Their motto is "no one should have no one" and thus they become someone to those who have none. They are mostly comprised of volunteers, who feed the poor and provide them with a bed, while trying to impede the virus from spreading. The volunteers wear gloves and masks, and rations are sealed in plastic containers. In Hong Kong, where there are shortages, they provide masks and gloves for free. It's a simple, honest and impactful attempt at alleviating this suffering.

The ideal of Sant'Egidio, and the one permeating Italy at the moment, is that of solidarity, an awareness of the shared objectives of humanity, of that humane approach that we are so drastically losing with modern society. It's necessary we work towards these objectives, if not always, then in these times. But be informed, be careful and wise. Be like our elders taught us to be, in the moment in which they need us the most. Don't leave your house unless there is a real reason to, suffer your loneliness if that is what must be done. If you can help, do so.

As an Italian, I feel I must spread this model of solidarity spurred by these unsung heroes. Only writing will I feel like I am doing my part in this catastrophe. I feel like doing what you can for others is the only way we can practically live in a time like this. Through action and inaction, but always aware of others, we can save lives and make it through, hopefully bettered...

## **Edoardo Innaro - 22 years old - graduated from LUISS in Political Science**

Up to the age of 18, I lived abroad, following my parents across the world. I was a ripe 20 days old when I was catapulted into an icy Moscow. There, I lived my first 3 years. At the turn of 4, we moved to Jerusalem, where the second intifada had just begun. Years of profound geopolitical instability would have followed, that brought me to experience a bunker and gas masks while remaining clueless to their nature. Once again, due to my father's work, in 2004 we moved to Cairo, where I spent most of my childhood. In those eleven years in Egypt I was acquainted with the desert, the dry heat and the ancient beauties of the Egyptian civilization. When I was thirteen, the Arab spring began, and I witnessed how rapidly a country could transform twice. At sixteen years of age, leaving behind a torn country and a bit of heart, we moved back to Russia. Once again, we were in the midst of a crisis. It was 2014, Crimea was in full swing. Finally, after having completed my IB in a sanctioned, economically damaged Russia, I realized I needed to know my own birthplace and work on my roots: Italy. So despite being accepted in well-respected universities in UK, I moved to Rome,



where I graduated from LUISS in Political Science. Just a few weeks before Coronavirus!

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