



## **"DireNapoli". Interview with Vincenzo Scotti**

Letizia Airos (January 16, 2011)



Italy's Undersecretary of State for Foreign Affairs speaks about Cardinal Sepe's visit to New York

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"DireNapoli" is the slogan that will be used during Cardinal Sepe's visit to New York. Naples is a city that speaks to the world of its difficulties but also of its hopes. You understood immediately the

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message that Cardinal Sepe wanted to bring to New York. What does it mean to you when you hear the words, "Telling Naples"?

Cardinal Sepe is a reference point in Naples for those who want to take back the city and who want to build a path of growth and development in the entire area. Sepe was able to give a voice to the desires of many Neapolitans who haven't given up on their city and who want to work to meet the challenges that they face and the reality in front of them. The slogan of the Cardinal's trip, "DireNapoli" aims to show the realities of Naples that are often not seen on television or discussed in the press but that of the everyday lives of people who look to build a modern city, a civil city, a city that is able to give future generations a reassuring vision of the future.

Naples is an exceptional city... Not just from a panoramic or natural perspective but also because of its scientific, manufacturing, artistic and cultural traditions. How can we explain these aspects of Naples to the world?

Yes, Naples is a beautiful city and not only because of what God has made, the landscape, but also thanks to the efforts of man throughout the centuries. The great artistic patrimony and cultural traditions which have been passed down from the time of the Greeks and Romans to today is still evident throughout the city.

Naples is a city where much scientific research is done and where researchers from all over the world are located. There are also manufacturing areas that create niche products not just in traditional food sectors but also in aerospace, precision mechanics and packaging.

Naples is very well known for its tailoring as well, for the production of shirts, ties, and leather goods. All of these sectors show the good taste and refined aesthetic for which Naples is famous. Not to mention the wonderful theater, music and great actors of the past and of this current generations. One only has to think of the role that the San Carlo theater has had throughout the centuries.

During Cardinal Sepe's visit, there will be discussion at the City University of New York, which is a moment to analyze the migrations of people throughout the centuries. In fact, one often asks. How is it that Italians, of all people, who themselves immigrated to the USA in droves, especially from Southern Italy, have so much difficulty accepting immigrants themselves?" Can you share with us your thoughts on this?

Certainly the Cardinal's visit in this particular moment is linked to the problem of immigration, especially in the United States. Naples has been a focal point of emigration in the past and many Neapolitans had difficult experiences but were able to work their way up in the United States to positions of true authority, in politics, in business and finance, in academia and in research.

What the Neapolitans were able to achieve in the United States, as well as Italians from all over the country, shows just what they are made of. At times, life was surely difficult, but they were able to emerge victorious thanks to their natural gifts and great abilities.

Today Italy, and the City of Naples certainly, are places which immigrants flock to and we should look at the American experience so that we can have a peaceful cohabitation with immigrants and an integration of their cultures and religions into ours.

The United States has an important lesson for us to learn. "Don't be afraid of your fellow man!" We need to understand that immigration is a resource and it can enrich our culture and our religions. We need to understand that other cultures, religions, and ethnicities are not a danger but offer great possibilities for us to enrich our lives, on both sides. We must understand that we can receive something from the other who is not a stranger but another part of ourself: namely, of man. This is the language of the gospel, love your neighbor as you love yourself. The "other" isn't different than you are but another part of you.

Cardinal Sepe is particularly taken with the dialogue between different faiths and cultures both in Italy and abroad. He was recently in Peking where he brought his message of dialogue between peoples. I believe that the world is in need of this message today. The Cardinal will meet



representatives of the Jewish community in New York and young students at a school. Young students need to be aware of the Holocaust and what it was so that it can never happen again.

Cardinal Sepe will visit the United Nations as well...

At this precise time, there is considerable worry about Christians and the violence that they have been exposed to in recent times. It isn't just an issue of Christians though. In general this is a problem that all International organizations must address, freedom of religion. In the USA, this is a fundamental concept, freedom of religion and tolerance

Dramatic events happen such as the recent shooting of U.S. Representative Gabrielle Giffords, but these are isolated incidents. We can in fact learn from the USA examples of tolerance and respect for our fellow citizens. Italy wants the European Union to be the guarantor of this type of religious tolerance and the defender of freedom of religion. I think the Cardinal is bringing this message to the United Nations to encourage it to be ever more the defender of religious freedom throughout the world.

You know New York very well. What would you bring from New York to Naples and from Naples to New York?

I would bring to Naples the organizational capabilities that I find in New York and the growth opportunities that make this city famous. At the end of the day, the American dream is the ability of anyone to dream something and to be able to make something of themselves. I would like to bring this optimism to Naples, the idea that you should never settle or be resigned to your fate, but that you should work to grow and develop your future. On the other hand, I would like to bring the wonderful openness and solidarity that you find in Naples despite the misery and many difficulties which have always characterized the city. Neapolitans are open and very collegial with one another. This is what makes it possible for so many social classes to live together in harmony there.

[DireNapoli New York](#) [2] Info Cardinal Sepe's Visit

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