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Il presidente Raffaele Vacca, per il tradizionale Incontro di fine d'anno, è lieto di invitarVi a leggere "Contemplazione a Capri", ovunque Vi troviate, mercoledì 30 dicembre 2015, alle ore 16.

The president Raffaele Vacca, for the traditional End of year get together, is pleased to invite you to read "Contemplating In Capri" at 4p.m. on Wednesday the 30th. December 2015 wherever you are.



CONTEMPLATING IN CAPRI

St. Domenic and St. Thomas D'Aquino believed that one must share with the rest of the world what has been the object of their contemplation (*contemplata aliis tradere*) but we live in a time where we often talk and write without due prior contemplation, allowing ourselves to be propelled by the circumstantial if not the ephemeral, repeating what we have just read or listened to without having carefully considered and reconsidered it and without having made it our own.

Contemplation is taking the time to carefully observe what attracts and elicits admiration, feeling spiritually part of it, thus discovering or rediscovering the truths of life.

For four or more centuries, contemplation on the island of Capri was exercised through prayer, work and study by the monks at the "Certosa di San Giacomo" founded in 1334 and for almost 2 centuries by the Sisters of the Monastery of the "Santissimo Salvatore" founded in Capri in 1661 by Sister Serafina, and the "Monastery of San Michele" also founded by Sister Serafina in Anacapri in 1683.

Sister Serafina was the very first Caprese writer and tells us how she would find reason for contemplation in what she observed. Contemplation was spontaneous in the inhabitants of the island living in constant contact with the amazing display of its divine nature; although they have not passed on their feelings or what their thoughts were.

Evidence of contemplation can be found in the works of visitors to the island who have not only described what they observed but have also shared their feelings, their thoughts and reflections.

Emperor Augustus in his contemplation on Capri, discovered a way of life in silence harmonizing with nature.

Emperor Tiberius strengthened his belief that failure to abide by ancient laws and contempt for those currently in force creates a smugness which leads to disaster.

Jean Jacques Bouchard appreciated the beauty of the island during his walks in Capri, which he considered city and in Anacapri which he called land or mountain.

August Kopisch noticed that the blue light that comes through from the depths of the sea in the grotto that he explored after Angelo Ferraro, and to which he gave the name of “Blue Grotto”, makes the water resemble a blue fire and each wave similar to a flame.

Ferdinand Gregorovius enthused about climbing the cliffs and walking along the sea shore where the waves break gently.

Axel Munthe found that although the backdrop of living changes constantly, the life of humans is always the same.

Maksim Gor’kij more deeply understood the value of the sacrifices of a mother for the beliefs of her son for which he has been sentenced.

Rainer Maria Rilke believed that men have banished the Divine, consider themselves the masters of the universe by clinging to earthly possessions, but wherever they look they see pain and death.

Ada Negri imagined the awe of coming to life in the wind of immortality among the blue hues of the sky and the sea.

Giovanni Battista Montini found that in mid -autumn the island gifts mild and bright sunny days conducive to dreamings.

Norman Douglas thought the island too small to withstand all the affronts made to its dignity.

Amedeo Maiuri realised that while living on the island, one can easily surrender to the desire of roaming with one’s spirit among ghosts of the past and not only of the past.

Edwin Cerio thought of Capri both as a destination and a starting point: destination for all the pilgrims in search of beauty and for all the free spirits in search of peace and relaxation; starting point for the great cruise on the sea of happiness and for the journey of exploration of the blue continent, land of dreams and poetry.

For Carmine Savastano the Island is a filter of secret pleasures and boasts scents and aromas of intense beauty.

Graham Greene discovered that the whole island is bathed in a magic atmosphere, that in Anacapri there is a joyous peace and that one must always return to the island as if it were the first time one is going there.

Contemplation helps to comprehend the essence of things and to give concrete answers to the mystery of life.

As the then Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger said ten years before coming to the Island of Capri for the first time, “the island is dialogue with truth and breathes truth into dialogue”.

It contributes to the regaining of spiritual youth even when one is no longer young in years, especially if efforts are made to achieve through actions what one has contemplated and gives shape and substance to one’s being.

RAFFAELE VACCA

Translated by TERESA GENTILE

NOTES

The subject matter attributed to the eighteen authors mentioned above are found in the essay collected in “Andando per l’isola di Capri” written by Raffaele Vacca and published by Nicola Longobardi.