

# Faith is faith in English or Italian

I write after attending Mass in a crumbling, ancient village in Luras, Sardinia, Italy on Palm Sunday ... Domenica delle Palme. As I sit in a pew in my ancestors' sturdy stone church, built in 1740 (Chiesa di Nostra Signora del Rosario), the priest speaks much too rapidly for me to follow the meaning of his homily and prayers, however, I can follow the Mass' structure. Although I speak basic and broken Italian, I do not know their Catholic prayers (put that on my 'to learn' list), so I merely murmur the words in English. Works for me.



Fede è fede nel Italiano o inglese ... Faith is faith in Italian or English. Prayer is prayer. Mass is Mass.

It is not without interest I follow the Mass. I know on which part we are and I can read aloud in Italian the congregation's responses provided in the liturgical program.

Peace is peace (pace) with the same intention and feeling as I shake others' hands, smile, and look them in the eyes.

I take Communion, return to my seat, and attempt to kneel on the extremely hard wooden kneelers (ouch! apparently in 1740, padding was not yet invented) as I am filled with heart-fluttering emotions flooding my heart, soul and mind. Not only because I'm honoring the Holy Trinity in Communion, but also because I am feeling the presence of my ancestors who sat, stood, kneeled, were married, confirmed and christened here, and attended many Masses a century before me in this very ancient and beautiful church.

It is time to pray the Our Father ... I say it in English as the Italians pray it in their language, however, I marvel at how the inflections and pauses are exactly the same. I smile as we finish at exactly the same moment. Marvelous.

The procession of the palms before Mass was beautiful, interesting to experience a Palm Sunday amidst the Italian culture. It is different yet familiar. Here we bring the palms to be blessed, whereas in USA churches, palms are provided. Parishioners here also bring olive branches. The pastor speaks the benediction from the second floor decorated window of an adjacent home as we raise our palms and branches.

A procession through the streets followed, much like we do in my home parish of St. Leo the Great in Little Italy, Baltimore, during several feast days, Good Friday and Mother's Day. Tall branches of palms lead the way, held by clergy, behind a priest holding Jesus on the crucifix under a small canopy.

Familiar. Tradition.

Catholic.

Domenica delle Palme bella. Beautiful Palm Sunday.

Faith is faith in any language. We don't need to understand the words to feel it in our hearts.