

# A Lesson in Hospitality

Romano and Silvana Marianelli live in the borgo — the medieval section of the small village of Licciana Nardi in the Italian province of Tuscany. Their house opens onto a street so narrow that a man can touch houses on both side by extending his arms.

The Marianellis live near the house that belonged to the parents of Father Joseph Beatini, the Rochester priest who was celebrating his 25th jubilee in his ancestral home town.

The handsome, hand-carved and polished door on the Marianelli home hints that the inside of the home is different from the medieval trappings of the borgo. Indeed the inside with marbled floors, delicate ceiling work, rich furniture, and all-round tastefulness might be found in much richer provincial homes.

Romano Marianelli, 47, is, I think, what we would call a mason. He specializes in ceiling work but is handy enough to "invent" a special flue from his living room fireplace to heat a bedroom down the hall.

He is as handsome as his wife, Silvana, is pretty. When Anthony J. Costello and I were in Licciana to cover the Father Beatini celebration, they were our hosts. Originally we were to stay with them but, at our request, wound up at the village hotel where we thought we could do more work without disturbing a household.

The Marianellis are gracious hosts. We arrived at their home at about 10 o'clock Saturday night and Silvana had been keeping dinner hot from about 7. We ate sumptuously, as they might say in Regency novels, and although the Marianellis spoke very little English and we about the same amount of Italian, communication nevertheless sprouted. Mary Favasuli and Pinky Smith, two members of Father James Marvins' tour in Licciana for the special event, also were dinner guests and Mary helped in the translation. The Marianellis daughter, Piera, and son-in-law Luigino, married just 10 days, also were at the table.

Costello asked Romano the inevitable question: What did he

## THE SLOT MAN

Carmen Viglucci

think of President Nixon?

He was too gracious to give a direct answer and his new son-in-law Luigino took the same tack. Instead, both began telling how crooked Italian politicians were. Then Romano added that even among such Italian politicians Nixon would have deserved the gold medal.

Enough said.

Pinky Smith is a physical education teacher and asked Romano if gym were a regular subject in Italian schools. A somber Romano said no and he hoped it never would be. To make up for his lack of English words, he demonstrated some calisthenics, ending up with the raised arm salute of Nazi Germany. The Nazis had occupied Licciana and Romano still sees gymnastics as military.

Women's lib hasn't exactly had an impact on Licciana Nardi. As we sat and talked, groping for words, gesturing to make points, Silvana Marianelli kept busy heaping food on our dishes. Her daughter, Piera, from time to time would join her mother in marches to and from the kitchen.

Romano would not admit his intelligence, grimacing that he was just a poor worker. But many another philosopher had just such a background.

He complained that his stomach was giving him problems; he had to drink beer instead of his elegant home-made wine. Silvana managed to explain that he had an ulcer.

"Just getting old," he smiled. "It is not good to be old but it is better than not getting there at all."

About midnight we said our goodbyes and Romano guided Costello and me through the borgo to the village hotel. There, the padrone's son spoke German but no English. Nonetheless we

managed to have a typewriter (Olivetti) set up in the room and all went well.

The hotel was more concerned with the quality of its food (it was the site of the great dinner celebrating Father Beatini's jubilee) and the living quarters were secondary. Thus the bathroom was down the hall and a community affair. But we survived despite a spider with a body the size of a golf ball which took two whacks from a folded magazine before it succumbed.

About 8 a.m. Sunday Costello and I showed up for breakfast at the Marianellis (we didn't miss a meal in 11 days on the road). Coffee, tosti, bread, jam — the usual continental breakfast — and we were off to cover the days festivities, described elsewhere in this paper.

The underlying impression of all of us visitors in Licciana for the celebration was how royally we were received by the villagers. Some 30 of us from this diocese were distributed to various households, most for sleeping privileges as well as for meals, and all were treated like visiting dignitaries.

After the huge meal at the hotel on Sunday afternoon when the Marvin tour took off for a mountain ride, Costello and I ended up at the home of Alcide Baldassini, whose family had played host to Bishop Hogan. The day had been hot and on the veranda of this hillside home, mountain coolness was refreshing.

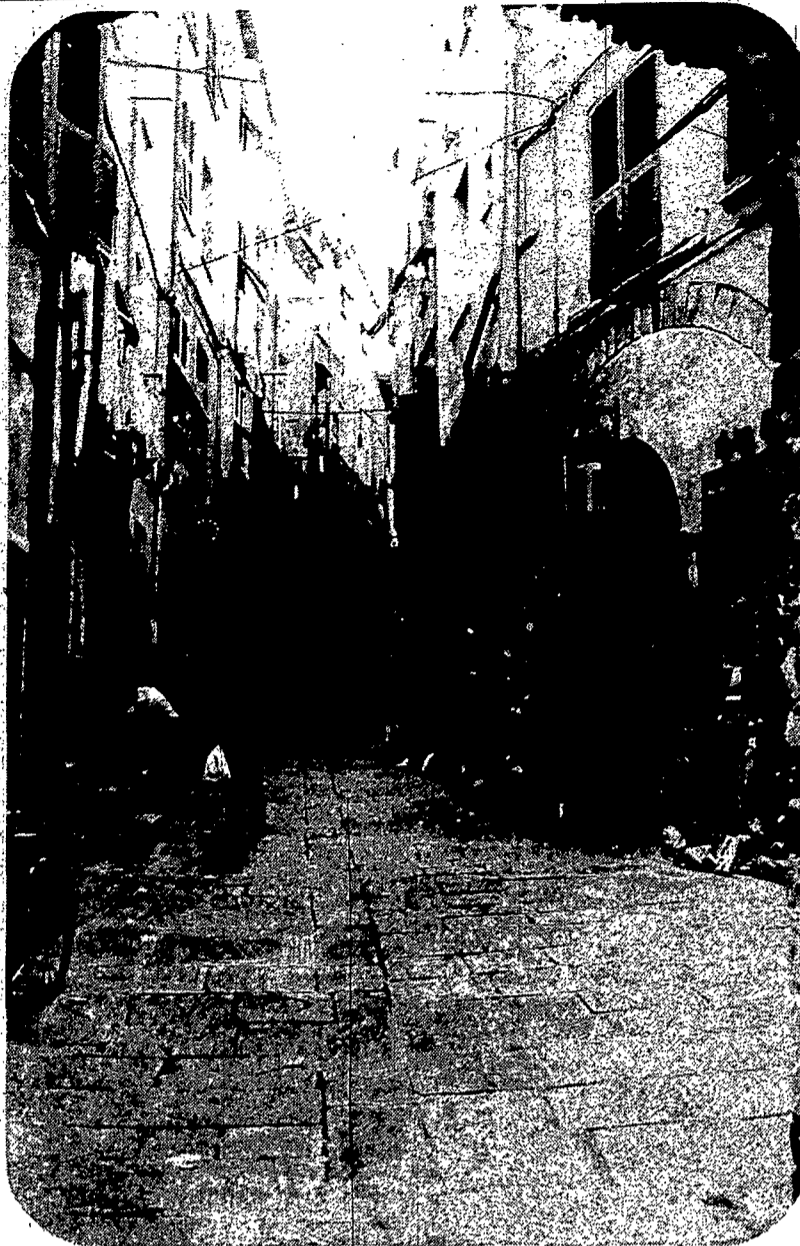
Baldassini includes a sparkling variety among his home-made wine. It was delicious but he saved the best, a dark red, for last. Even as Romano Marianelli had done the night before.

Not bad for a couple of boys from Scio Street — sitting in the Tuscany mountains, sipping wine, contemplating the trip from the day before which brought us through Siena and Pisa. Yes, the tower really leans. So much so that is difficult to climb the stairway which winds to its top.

Alcide, in his early 20s, is studying for a degree in geology. He also oversees quite a few acres of vineyards and is conversant on many subjects. One of these is Italian billiards and later that night, during a break in the action, he gave us and Ed Marvin and Allan Brooks a first-hand lesson at a local pub.

Monday morning, our last in Licciana, for we had to return to Rome to keep appointments, Costello and I again breakfasted with the Marianellis. We had known them at that time less than 36 hours yet it was a difficult good-bye.

In truth, the people of this sequestered mountain village had taught all of us a great deal about grace and civility and sensitivity. A lesson, I hope, we will keep with us.



Photos by Anthony J. Costello

Borgo sections date back to medieval days.



Some old men of Italy.



Silvana and Romano Marianelli in center of photo with her father, Anselmo Ricci, at right and their son-in-law Luigino and daughter Piera at the left.



# Teacher's Conference Hears Msgr. Costello

By PAT PETRASKE

Ten years ago the forecast was "normal precipitation, partly cloudy, patches of rain followed by sunny intervals, winds from the southwest." Today the winds are stiff and ominous and threaten to blow out the candles.

Msgr. Thomas Costello, superintendent of schools for the Diocese of Syracuse, gave a brief history of the Catholic schools in

his analogy to Irish weather. Speaking at the annual diocesan teachers' conference, Monday, Sept. 30, at Bishop Kearney High School, Msgr. Costello discussed "Reaching for Mission through Catholic Education." He also spoke at the conference held at DeSales High School, Geneva.

He was introduced by Sister James Lynch, coordinator of educational services, who described the ministry of a teacher as "one who is really a

good host."

An appropriate image for a teacher is "not to make demands on you or to make you what you're not," she said.

Msgr. Costello believes the problems facing teachers are not only the withdrawal of support but "the indifference and helplessness. The big problems of society have not gone away but the eyes have been turned away."

The distinguishing feature of

the Catholic schools is their ability to integrate religious truths with life. Quoting from St. Paul, Msgr. Costello stated that the ministry of the teacher is a true apostolate which renders authentic service to society.

"The Church is to be together as believers in Jesus Christ, to listen together, respect each other, help each other and to celebrate together," he said, acknowledging that this simple definition could be applied to all

the ministries within the Church.

He compared the relationship between teachers and students to a marriage contract . . . "for praise or blame, success or failure, for progress or retardation, to teach you 'til I promote you one grade higher thus we must part."

Following the presentation were two series of short workshops dealing with topics such as reading concepts, art, career education, classroom learning and children's literature.