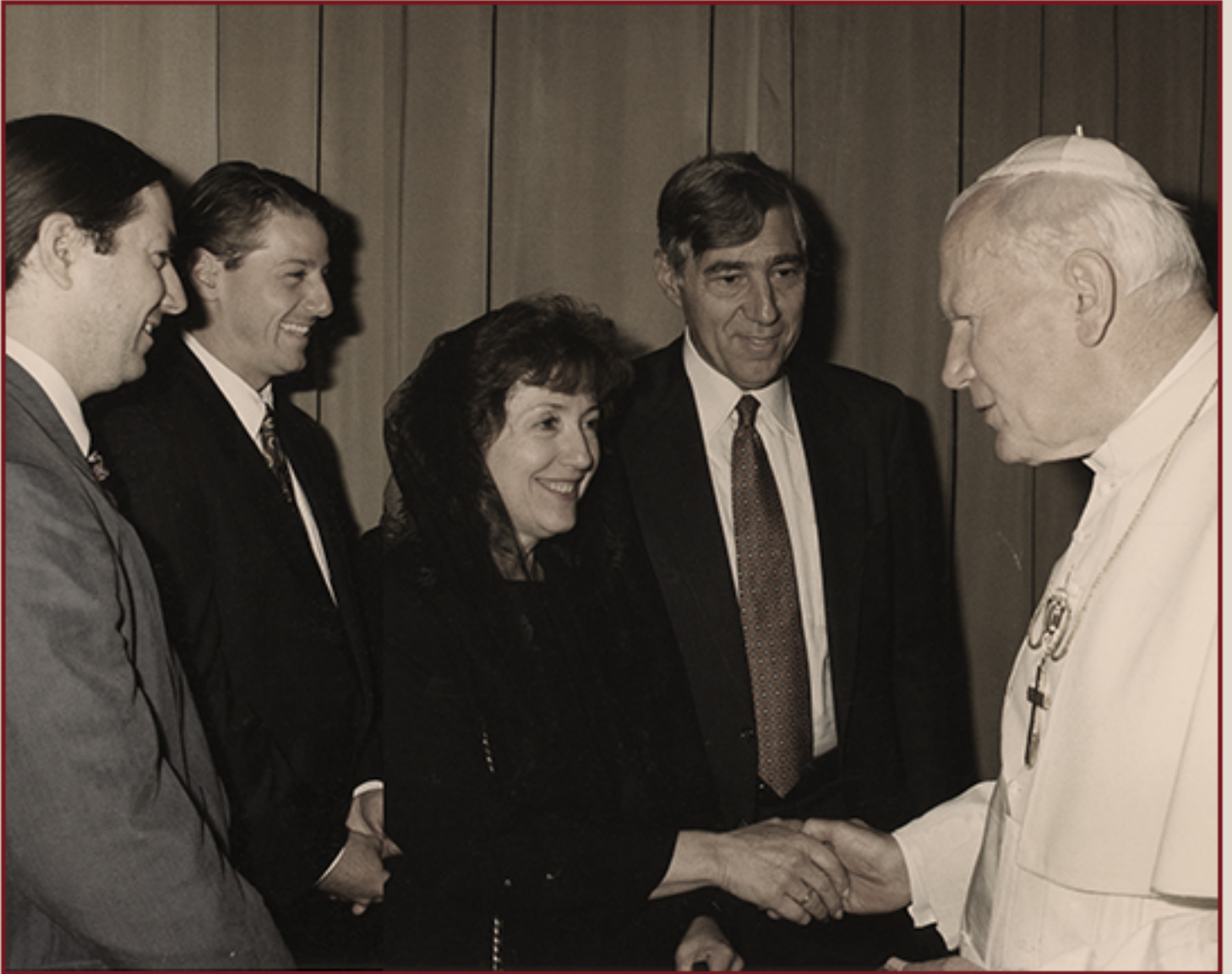


CHAPTER SIX

RELIGION



LTO R: ANGELO, JEROME, SANDRA
PAUL MONTRONE AND POPE JOHN PAUL

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Chapter 6: Religion

Introduction

The vast majority of Italians and Italian Americans have traditionally been raised in the Roman Catholic faith, a belief system at the heart of their culture that has influenced almost everything in their lives. Not surprisingly, the belief in God and the guidance of religious beliefs has occupied a primary place in the Montrone and Gaudenzi families.

Family Religion

Considering the Vatican's location within Italy, it is natural to assume that Italians and Italian Americans have a strong connection to the Roman Catholic Church, and most do. In the homeland of Italy, residents regularly attended the nearest church.

Olga (G2 - G) (Emiliani) Gaudenzi noted about her father's family in Sassoferrato; "There was a church right nearby that

they belonged to, that they went to. . . They were very friendly with the priests there.”¹

When the Giancini’s distant cousin, Emanuela (IT-M) Altimari of Rome thought back to the family church of her childhood, she recalled sensory details about the experience of going there: “Nativity parish. . . the smell of the incense, and the chapels where I liked to pray alone. . . I remember those cold mornings when my mother would take me at six to pray a novena before Christmas.”² Anna (IT - M) Battista attended two churches with her family. “In Boiano I went to the cathedral. There was also the church in [Cerro al] Volturno, Santa Maria. We went to both.”³

In Italy—and later in America, it wasn’t unusual to see men participating in religious activities *outside* the church (such as a saint’s festival) while women were more likely actually to attend Mass and focus on bringing up children in the faith.

Helen (G2 – M) (Montrone) Mastro spoke of the faith of her father, Antonio (G1 - M) Montrone, and mother, Maria (G1 - M): “They were both very religious . . . my mother especially. Very religious. Well, in later life [she lived to 95] she wasn’t able to go to church much, but she had a lot of faith. St. Anthony was her saint, [as well as the] St. Ann Novena. . . She always went to St. Ann’s [Monastery]when she was younger. She lived with faith. . . Oh, she believed. Oh, yes.”⁴

As Flo (G2 - M) pointed out, her father Eugene (G1 - M) Giancini “really didn’t wear out the path to the church. But we had to go. If you didn’t go to church on Sunday, you didn’t go out of the house. That was the law.”⁵

Sometimes a family’s other duties kept them from churchgoing, but not from their religious beliefs. Frank (G2 - G) Gaudenzi, for example, understood that his parents had to work to support the family even on Sunday, rather than attend services. His father, Francesco (G1 - G), he said “didn’t go to church too much.” Frank added,

He believed in God. Yeah. But, like I say . . . their biggest job was raising [and supporting] the children. Raising us, really. They really took care of us. . . She [my mother, Mary (G2 - G)] believed in God. . . They made sure we went to church, but they didn't have the time to go to church. Their store was opened on Sundays. . . you can't realize unless you were born in that era. You wouldn't know.⁶

Another problem expressed by Olga was simply getting to church. She faced the difficulty of most women in that era since they did not have a driver's license, let alone a car. Olga said,

I can't say that my parents were too religious. The problem was, you didn't have cars at the time, and you had to go all the way into Providence or to Hyde Park in order to belong to a church. If you didn't have a car, you had to walk, which was quite a distance. I think if we did have a church close by, we would be different, because my mother, she made sure that we had our sacraments. [I] worked on it later, after I had gotten married and had children. My daughters now, they went to church because we had cars at the time, so it was no effort for them to go.⁷

Whether or not the immigrant generation tended to be churchgoers themselves as evidence of their faith, they all seemed to push their children to participate.

As a result, those raised in America have often taken their faith very seriously. According to Beatrice (G2 - M) (Giancini) Montrone, after her kids left home, she developed this habit, to attend daily noon Mass at Our Lady of the Snows Church, where she found a group of women whose company she enjoyed; lunch often followed. She joined Friday Morning Company for Bible study and later in life a prayer group which met weekly at her home.⁸

Beatrice's brother Dominick (G2 - M) Giancini, as described by his daughter Denise (Giancini) Piepoli, was also:

...a faithful man who attended mass every Sunday at St. Lucy's where he was also a choir member in the early days. He passed on his Catholic faith to his children and was devoted to the Blessed Mother and Sacred Heart. A small

altar and vigil candle was kept every day where he prayed at his home.⁹

The evidence of a strong underlying religious faith with the older generations would come to the fore in times of illness and grief. Olga noted, “My father went to church, but as he got older ... he became religious, very.”¹⁰

This pattern also seemed to be the case in Italy, judging by Michele Battista’s (IT – M) comment that his grandmother went to church “a lot,” and that “religion was of big importance for my grandmother, in order to help her to deal with the death of my grandfather.” His mother, Anna said of her mother, Maria Incoronata Filomena (Montrone) Buontempo, “She went there to pray. She worshiped all the saints. Even at night, she prayed until almost midnight.”¹¹

The early lack of church attendance by a number of Italian American men made Protestants sometimes think that these “indifferent” Catholics could be converted. However, Catholics

traditionally have valued their religious as well as family and social connections, so those of Italian heritage typically did not convert to Protestantism.

Jean Miles did the opposite and converted from a Protestant faith to Catholicism when she married Frank Gaudenzi. “I changed for him, because I thought we should both be together and raise the kids together.”¹²

Overall, despite a strong religious tradition among Italian Americans, especially in attending Sunday Mass, in recent generations there has been a major shift in America that competes with and dilutes these traditions, including laws that have changed the meaning of Sunday from a day of religion and family into a day of shopping and sports.

Box 6.1: The Change in Sunday Tradition

Saint Lucy's Parish, Scranton, PA

Saint Lucy's Parish was one of the key Italian American churches in Scranton. Gene (G3 - M) Montrone described this place and its meaning within the Italian American community.

The Italian ethnic church in West Scranton is Saint Lucy's. That was in what would be known now as the Italian ghetto. Now, there are not even Italians down there anymore. But anyway, my mother and father were married in that church. I was baptized in the church. And they retained their parishioner status in that church for the time that they lived in West Scranton, which was most of their life.¹³

The parish was established in 1891 as Lackawanna County's first Italian congregation, and its church was dedicated in 1900. A new church building was constructed in the 1910s and 1920s. Issues with the ground underneath the church in 1956 resulted in the loss of the church's belfry and huge marble pulpit.¹⁴ Paul's Aunt Flo explained:

In Scranton we had a beautiful white marble church, [St. Lucy's Church], which the people that came over, saved their money, and they are the ones that . . . got the marble

from Italy. Carrara Marble . . . beautiful church. But then they had to be careful because in Scranton there are coal mines. And when the mines start acting up [caving in] there would be ground settling and the church was starting to show signs of damage . . . then they fixed it up.¹⁵

Although the parish was established as a neighborhood church, Italian Americans from other parts of Scranton went to St. Lucy's for services.

Paul's parents kept ties with the parish even after they moved out of the area as adults. Paul described the connection:

The Italian geography parish was Saint Lucy's. My mother grew up in that neighborhood, and therefore they were members of Saint Lucy's. My father's family stayed as members of Saint Lucy's, even though they had moved out of the Parish geography. My brothers and I also always felt connected there despite participating in other parishes where we lived.¹⁶

The Gaudenzi sisters, Gerry (G3 - G) and Sandra, attended Saint Lucy’s parish as girls, even though it was quite far from their home. Gerry remembered going with two older friends to St. Lucy’s Church, which was a distance from their home.

We would take public transportation, and when that wasn’t available, we would walk. That was several years before the Immaculate Heart of Mary Chapel came into being in our neighborhood.¹⁷

Many Italians who grew up in Scranton in the mid-twentieth century began their religious life at St. Lucy’s Parish, before moving on to other parishes in new hometowns and neighborhoods, but even as their lives, geography and parishes changed, their religious commitment never faded. Paul states, “Our religious life has always been an integral part of our family and it has been a blessing to all of us.”¹⁸

Box 6.2: The Montrone Boys and Their Wives’ Parishes

Sacraments

Deeply held religious beliefs aren't always evidenced by regular church attendance. But observance of a baptism, marriage, or other sacramental occasion usually brought this out. Some jokingly refer to these events as the celebrating times of when people are "hatched, matched, and dispatched," referring to baptism, matrimony and extreme unction. The Montrone and Gaudenzi family members had different stories to share about their participation in the sacraments.

From infancy through grade school, Catholic children are initiated into the Church when baptized and with their First Confession (Sacrament of Penance or Reconciliation) and First Communion. The Sacrament of Baptism takes place right after birth, and First Communion at age 7 or 8.

Anna (IT – M) Battista remembered, in Boiano, "We had to learn catechism. I had my First Communion there [in Boiano], with the nuns."¹⁹ Of her own First Communion in Scranton, Marie (G2 - M) (Giancini) Teot recalled her appearance that

day. “I remember that they took me for a haircut the day before. And if you see the picture, you’ll see they cut my hair up to here, and I had poker straight hair. I looked awful.”²⁰

Italian Americans have traditionally placed great importance on the role of godparents. To be asked is the highest honor and to refuse is a grave insult. The godparents attend the child’s baptism, and their role is to help ensure that the child keeps his or her baptismal faith.²¹ As the Italian proverb states, *Il buon padrino è il ponte che conduce al cielo*: a virtuous godparent is a child’s bridge to heaven. A godparent who is not already a relative of the family, almost becomes one by virtue of being a godparent. They forever become a *compare*.

Beatrice (Giancini) Montrone had a proxy godfather because hers was traveling back and forth over the Atlantic with her father. “My godfather [who had already been selected] . . . could not wait for me to be born,” she said.²²

Paul adds:

In my generation, First Holy Communion and Confessions (Sacrament of Penance) was a major deal. The boys and girls dressed all in white, symbolizing their purity at that moment. There were processions with only altar boys, a full Mass and ceremony, and we received the body of Christ for the first time. There was a great distinction made between Heaven and Hell and even purgatory. There were mortal and venial sins spelled out. Priests' sermons were called "fire and brimstone". And everyone went to confession regularly to cleanse their soul so they could receive Holy Communion. It was normal for half of the church attendees to decline receiving Communion for fear of not having recently confessed their sins. Today that fear has disappeared, and priests' sermons rarely mention sins or going to Hell. As a result, everyone receives Communion and rarely go to confession. What happened to sin? Are people so much holier today than they were in times past?²³

When Marie received the sacrament of Confirmation, her sponsor [the equivalent of a godparent when a person is given Baptism] —her sister-in-law Margaret (Corvelli) Giancini—

gave her the gift of a cross: “a chain with the marcasite thing with a cross on it.” It was a lifetime gift. “I think the chain’s gone, but the pendant itself is there.”²⁴

After a long process of instruction, Catholics are officially recognized by the church as adults through Confirmation. It is when the Holy Spirit comes alive in the individual.

Sandra’s mother Olga recalled the steps she had to take for her Confirmation as a result of the various neighborhoods in Scranton:

We were going to be confirmed, and we went to instructions at St. Lucy’s. We had to walk. It was very far. In the end, you have to go so often. But this priest told us that we didn’t belong to that church. We belonged to the other church because we lived in another part of town [Catholic parishes were defined by geography]. So my mother had a fit. She said, “Well, they’ve been coming to instructions.” He wouldn’t let us be confirmed there. So I wasn’t confirmed until after I was married. That was the reason.²⁵

Paul adds, “We always have to remember that the Church hierarchy (priests, bishops, etc.) are humans, not Gods, and sadly make plenty of normal human mistakes, sometimes driving people away from the church.”²⁶

When being confirmed, the person being confirmed chooses a new name -- a name that typically takes the place of a middle name and is usually chosen for a saint, hero, or an honored friend or family member.

Marie (Giancini) Teot had more personal associations than she at first realized: “I picked out my own name, and then didn’t even know [the significance of it]. [It was] Teresa . . . Then my mother tells me later that this was . . . her grandmother’s name . . . And I didn’t know that. I picked it after Teresa Wright, the actress.” She went on, “Italians are wonderful for all these names. It’s funny because when my kids were born, my husband said, ‘One name. They pick out their own second name.’ And I wanted to call my son . . . Christopher Robin. My

husband said, ‘Absolutely not.’ My son still thanks my husband.”²⁷

Angelo (G2 - M) Montrone wanted to get confirmed before his parents thought he really was ready, so he went off on his own to be confirmed while he lived in New Jersey. Since he didn’t have a sponsor, the church had a person present at the ceremony to sponsor all those who didn’t have one. The name of this church sponsor was Henry. So Angelo became Angelo Henry Montrone.

To prepare for the holy sacrament of Matrimony, Catholic couples attend a Pre-Cana course, a kind of marriage-preparation program named for the wedding feast in Cana, where Jesus turned water into wine.

Roger and Marie Teot participated in Pre-Cana and then later became teachers in the program: “We were on a team of six couples. And we did it for twenty-five years.”²⁸

The Sacrament of the Holy Orders is given to those who become priests, and take the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience. Although they have had friends and classmates who have become priests, neither the Montrone nor Gaudenzi families have been blessed by having one of their current generation called to a priestly vocation.

For centuries, the other most important Catholic Ministry were nuns. Fortunately, the De Cristofaro family was blessed with a nun, Sister Concetta, the youngest sister of Maria. She was a Mother Superior in a convent in Rome. She was Paul's great aunt and he and Sandra had the pleasure of meeting her on one of their trips to Italy.

In addition, later in her life, Paul's mother Beatrice came the closest to being a nun, becoming a third order Carmelite. And Angelo Montrone (son of Paul and Sandra), seriously considered the priesthood, and spent a month in Medjugorje (site of an apparition of the Blessed Virgin Mary) as he

contemplated this possible calling. But he said he was guided in another direction. Still, the family hopes one day a member will bless them with a religious life.

Another of the seven sacraments of the Catholic Church is Extreme Unction, which is administered to purify a person who is dying so they are cleansed and ready to go to Heaven. It is an extremely important last step and Catholic priests regularly walk the halls of hospitals to give this Sacrament to anyone who desires it.

Reverence Toward Death

After death, a wake and funeral Mass followed by a burial service are traditional for Catholics. Beatrice's first memory of a funeral Mass was on the occasion of the death of her grandmother while in Italy.

Eight-year-old Beatrice's beloved Nonna Fausta died a few months before Beatrice's departure [to America]. It was

Beatrice's first experience with death. She and a cousin vied to prove by their screams and fainting at the funeral Mass who loved Nonna most. And for the few months that remained before boarding the "Re [sic] d'Italia," Beatrice trudged quite a distance, daily, to visit her grandmother's grave.²⁹

Loud emotional outbursts were standard fare at Italian and Italian American wakes and funerals. Paul recalls:

The first time I went to a wake was on the death of my grandmother. It was the morning of her funeral, and the family was in the funeral parlor with the casket open. Each person walked by the casket to view their loved one for the last time before the casket was closed. I was shocked by the loud outbursts, especially by her children (then adults). They would scream "This is the last time Mother; I love you so much, I don't want you to leave me."³⁰

Another funerary custom, dating back to Roman times, is the wearing of black both at funerals and during the mourning period. The length of mourning varies depending on the relationship of the deceased to the mourner. During the period

of intense mourning, all black is to be worn, with no other jewelry or adornment.³¹ Marie commented about her mother Settimia (G1 – M) (D’Annibale) Giancini:

She [my mother] didn’t wear black to my wedding. . . Maybe [navy] . . . I don’t remember my mother too much in anything but black . . . because she was always wearing black for somebody. Either her mother, her father, my sister, my brother, my father. You know? It was like, she would hardly be out of it [mourning] before she’d be back into it again. . . In those days, that’s what you did. . . It was like forever. . . But I think for my wedding she didn’t have [on] black. She had something else on.³²

Tony (G3 - M) Montrone and his wife, Lisa (who converted to Catholicism), have been very active in various Catholic ministries. For many years they have been helping the dying. As a couple, Lisa leads her parish ministry to the sick and Tony leads the bereavement ministry. As Tony describes:

This allows us to work with a team from our church to help our parishioners and their families through the difficulties of dealing with sickness and hospitalization. And if the

outcome is not favorable, then through the funeral process.³³

After her children became adults, Sandra also became heavily involved in helping to guide individuals and families through the emotional period of terminal illness and death of a loved one through her dedication as a volunteer for hospice.

At that time hospice was a relatively new service provided by caring volunteers and not part of the normal “healthcare” process. Sandra later became one of the founders and served as the President of Seacoast Hospice, the organization providing these services in the communities of the seacoast of New Hampshire.

Cemeteries

In Italy

The many generations of ancestors buried in Italy have not been forgotten by their American family members. To many

family members, burial sites and cemeteries are places of importance, not places to be avoided.

The Giancini siblings while growing up in Italy had family burials in St. John's Church in Ceccano. Beatrice recalled a game her mother used to play with her at the Church.

My mother, Settimia, would say that they [deceased family members] were buried in St. John's Church [in] the basement. She would say to me, "Look for your great-grandfather's . . . markers on the floor of the Church." I would be looking for "D'Annibale," and I didn't realize that they were the Leos. I would say, "I can't find it." She said, "It's there." But anyway, the more prominent people of the town would be buried in the basement of the churches.³⁴

Settimia's eldest child, David (G2 - M) Giancini, explained how those in Ceccano switched from burials in the Church's basement to an outdoor cemetery.

That's where [in the Church] they used to be buried before. But then, you know, there ... [was] a lot of disease and everything, and they did away with [that practice]. Then

they have a regular cemetery [outside]. But we do have the ancestors of our family, D’Annibales and others [buried inside].³⁵

The burial that most resonated with the Giancini siblings was that of their grandmother Fausta (Leo) D’Annibale. Beatrice wrote of the sad occasion of her death:

She died at the beginning of August 1920 with pneumonia. She woke me at dawn and said, “Bea [Beatrice], go call your mother. Nonna is very sick.” And then added, “Your *nonna* is going to die Bea, my little Bea.” I did as she asked. She died a week later. How I missed her. I would visit her grave and cry.³⁶

Visiting the site in Italy thirty years later, Flo was impressed by the attractiveness of their grandmother’s gravesite and by the way its features have stood the test of time, providing a powerful continuity.

They have a beautiful cemetery there . . . in Ceccano. . .
Dave [David] planted a rose by her grave. . . It is still
blooming. . . I saw it in December when I was there in 1950.

There it was. It's dark, almost a dark, dark red. There it was blooming. I said to my sister-in-law—she went up with me—I said, “Do you know that my brother planted this [rose] before they came to America?” She says, “You’re kidding.” I said, “No I’m not. Because he talks about planting this rose here.” And it was still there.³⁷

David Giancini filled in the details of her burial in the outdoor cemetery, which he remembered vividly for his entire life.

If I went there, I would find her [my grandmother Fausta] very easily after seventy-five years. I know just where she is. . . We had a stone for her made, and we had her picture. I don’t know how they made it. Now here after seventy-five years, I see them in the cemetery. . . My grandmother has a place with chains around. I remember the chains. Before I left, that’s the only thing [a rose] I ever planted. I didn’t do a garden then because I didn’t garden.³⁸

Similarly, the mausoleums in the cemetery in the Gaudenzi’s ancestral town of Sassoferrato have continued to be

maintained and updated with images of the deceased, flowers, and other iconic items.

In one such mausoleum, two of Giovanna (G1 – G) Emiliani’s siblings and their families were interred. Ten of the twelve available plaques have been filled by deceased family members and their pictures. Among them were Giovanna’s sister Elvira, her husband Lorenzo Tassi, their son Dario Tassi, as well as Dario’s wife, Anna Rossi, and daughter Lorenza Tassi. Giovanna’s brother Alfredo Mercanti also remained in Sassoferrato and was buried in the same mausoleum with his wife Rosa Giovannetti, their son Roberto Mercanti, and Roberto’s wife Teresa Garofoli.

Presumably, the mausoleum was built upon the earliest burial, that of Lorenzo Tassi in 1934, but it has continued to be put to use as recently as Teresa (Garofoli) Mercanti’s death in 2006.³⁹

“You go to Italy, and they have a lot of old cemeteries, and they are very special,” said Paul.

I remember when we were in Genoa on a trip. . . We went to the cemetery. It wasn't a big holiday or anything like that, but there was life. There was a person selling flowers. There was a little stand for this or for that. There were people coming and going. . . It was a living community. It wasn't like "forget about the dead or the cemetery." It was part of the lives of the community.⁴⁰

Cathedral Cemetery in Scranton

When Italians resettled in America, they brought with them their funeral and burial traditions. Interestingly, the practices they chose to follow were adapted to American rather than their own Italian customs. Some family members had moved beyond poverty, so they could and did use funerary practices as a way to raise their social rank. The more expensive and extravagant the ceremony and tombstone, the more esteem and status were implied. Although this mindset of the early generations of Italian Americans has faded, Italian Americans continue to display their respect for the dead in noticeable ways.

Buried at the Cathedral Cemetery in Scranton are the deceased members of the Giancini, Montrone, Emiliani and Gaudenzi families. One of the earliest to be buried in America was a baby, Marie, the daughter of Eugene and Settimia Giancini. Her sister, Flo, related:

[Marie] was nineteen months when she died. . . We were quarantined. . . And see, she got sick. . . We were both quarantined, but my brother and I, we were upstairs, and no one was allowed up there. She wasn't allowed up there, but she'd come to the bottom of the steps and sing a song to us. She wanted to come up, she'd sneak up two or three steps . . . and we'd have to tell my mother that she was coming up. . .

So when she passed, she had been sick. . . Her doctor was away. I don't know what happened about not getting another doctor or what the story was, but she died [of double pneumonia]. We were sick, but we were allowed to come . . . down to see her. Her coffin had a glass cover. We have a picture of her in the coffin. Because my mother didn't have any pictures of her.⁴¹

Flo's oldest brother purchased the plot because the family members were sick. "It was at the bottom of a hill," Flo recalled. "She [Marie] died I think in January. The snow lay there, and when it would start melting, the water would come down the hill."⁴²

Flo's mother, Settimia, felt that Marie could not rest peacefully in the original plot. "My mother used to dream about Marie crying every night because she was wet. This was every night. She said to my father, 'I can't handle this anymore.' She said, 'It's going to drive me crazy. I can't sleep. We have to move her.' . . . So, they got this new plot."⁴³ Flo continues:

Of course it was snowing and everything. So the first sunny day, she said to my father, "We're going to do something." They went to the graveyard. They had her dug up. My father had these humongous keys. . . He opened it up. She was soaking wet up to her waist. Her little doll was in her arms. My father quickly closed [the lid], and he said, "We didn't think. We should have done this long ago." And they moved her.

But after that my mother dreamed of her. She's in a parade of angels. My mother said to her, "Marie . . . come and hug Mum." "Oh Mommy, I can't. I have to go with my friends." She said, "Here is this gang of little angels skipping down the street." And she never dreamed about her again.⁴⁴

Gene Montrone sees this grave when he visits the Cathedral Cemetery routinely.

I have a great circle route. . . It just goes around all of the ones either related to the Montrones or Giancinis. I can do that in about seven stops. . . At the Giancini grave are Mario (G2 - M), who was killed in the war, Uncle Dom [Dominick], and one of his daughters, Catherine Ann, my grandmother and grandfather, of course, Settimia and Eugene. Then a little baby's grave. You see the two-year-old baby, Marie. She died from what was then, I guess, the Spanish flu or whatever. My grandmother got pregnant again after that. She had ten or so total. I could count them up for you. Because of Marie's death, she promised the blessed Virgin that if the child were born healthy and lived, she would name it in honor of her. So she had a son Mario, and another daughter and named her Marie.⁴⁵

The stories of two-year old Marie Giancini's death, burial, and reburial are examples of the Italian concern over souls. Most of the traditions surrounding deaths stem from the wish to help a soul move on to heaven instead of lingering. However, the soul was still honored by the family long after it passed on, as Gene explained:

[My] first name, my mother's father, maternal grandfather. Middle name, my father's uncle, which would be my paternal grandmother's brother. . . Both died before I was born. I didn't learn this until much later in my life, but the tradition in Italian is [that] you find very few juniors. What they do is they name their children after people who have died. . . That way their spirit lives. So, that's what I got. Eugene was dead. Dominick was dead. That's me.⁴⁶

Having grown-up with a high respect for the souls of the departed, Paul and Sandra have made plans to unite their families in a shared final resting place at Cathedral Cemetery in Scranton, Pennsylvania. Sandra said,

We have procured part of the undeveloped land at that cemetery and have built a mausoleum surrounded by a burial area for the family,” The mausoleum won't be huge. But between the mausoleum and surrounding burial sites, there will be enough capacity for family members for several generations who want to get buried there. There will be a spot for them.⁴⁷

The first to be reinterred there were Paul and Sandra’s parents, as well as Gerry’s husband, Frank Colizzo who, sadly, passed away at the age of 39. Unfortunately, in April, 2024, Sylvia (Ware) Montrone died. She was interred in the mausoleum after a beautiful family celebration of her life at The Church of St. Gregory in Clark’s Summit, PA.

Box 6.3: Worldwide Cemeteries

When they travel to various parts of the world, Paul and Sandra make time for visiting cemeteries. The reason is that

they see themselves as a “dying breed” and they yearn for the life standards of earlier times. Paul describes it;

Now look what’s going on in the cemeteries. Flat graves, often nothing even above ground, so that they can mow the lawn more efficiently. . . And, cremation and ashes are another modern phenomena . . . and now you can even choose to dissolve your body with chemicals (as opposed to cremation) . . . I saw a poll done in New Hampshire once (on a social media website called CitizensCount NH) . . . And what were most people’s reactions to the chemical process? Most people didn’t care. . . after all, it is the least expensive way to go. “Let everybody decide they want.” That was basically the attitude.

But, if you accept that attitude about everything . . . all of a sudden there’s no discipline, there is no morality, there's no social capital. When you look at the changes in the cemeteries, it reflects the changes in society. . . respecting your heritage, or respecting the dead, is only one element of this change. That whole celebration [with reverence] of the past, is gone with a lot of other social mores. And I do not

believe this change is a positive for human welfare, fulfillment and happiness.⁴⁸

Altar Servers and Choir Singers

Many family members recalled other religious memories, such as serving on the altar and singing in church choirs.

Having made their First Holy Communion, Catholic children can then serve on the altar. David Giancini *almost* became an altar server in Italy:

I was practically born in the church. Five minutes [away]. They had a big prairie around it with cows and everything else. That's where we used to play and [do] everything. Ring, ring the bell. I was going to be an altar boy before I came here [to America], but then we gave the server clothes to somebody else.⁴⁹

Many altar boys, or acolytes, had a sense of pride in their involvement with the church when serving at Mass.

Children were scheduled to serve particular Masses, whether weekly or daily. Angelo and Beatrice planned their church attendance based on the schedule for their sons' altar duties. Gene Montrone explained,

After I started going to Saint Patrick's school, [my parents] rarely ever went to [Saint Lucy's] church [their official parish]. They went there for events or to say hello to the priest who they knew very well. But on a weekly basis or even daily depending, since I was an altar boy, they went to Saint Patrick's church because I was serving.⁵⁰

"I liked being an altar boy," Paul recalled. He was an altar boy all through grade school and considered it one of his favorite childhood experiences.⁵¹ But he also remembered the downside to this schedule as well as his reward for taking on the responsibility.

Every altar boy would get assigned to Masses, either Sunday Mass or daily Mass. So every now and then I'd get a week of seven a.m. Masses. A Killer. So my father would take me. And I would serve the seven a.m. Mass. And then, the great thing, talk about childhood memories, the great thing was a

diner called Chick's Diner. It is still there in Scranton. The big reward for doing this eye-opening Mass was that my father would take me to Chick's Diner afterward for a big breakfast.⁵²

This role made Paul feel a close part of the Catholic community. "Our lives were much more integrated with church. I was an altar boy, my brothers were all altar boys, we were always serving Mass, that type of thing, and, of course, there were the ever-present nuns. That's the environment that I grew up in." He and Sandra raised both of their sons to participate as altar boys in the same manner, reinforcing the importance of religion in their lives.⁵³

Before girls and women were allowed to serve at the altar, one way for them to participate during Mass was to sing in the church choir. The young Giancini girls, Marie and her sister Flo, both participated in choir as girls.⁵⁴ One benefit for Marie was that she met her husband, Roger Teot, in the choir.

My sister was in the choir, and I wanted to join. Roger and his buddy had just come out of the military service. . . This is a cute story. The priest always had a banquet for us. So Roger and his buddy decided to join the choir because his buddy's brother was in it because the priest was going to have a banquet. So he did join, and that's where I met him. . . And Roger would tell the couples there that he joined the choir for a banquet and he came away with a feast.⁵⁵

Flo, on the other hand, had a different experience with singing, one that put her at odds with her mother.

The scandal [was] when I was singing next door with the Protestants. That was [the] scandal . . . They were Catholic at one time, but something happened that they changed. . . They had a friend who used to come over and play the piano beautifully. They used to want to practice their songs, but none of them could reach the high notes. So they used to ask me to go over, and I'd say, "I can't. My mother will kill me. . ." See, at that time we were not allowed to go into Protestant churches.

I managed to get over there sometime, and my mother would sit on our front porch and their mother would be on theirs. And we would be singing. I'd be singing, you know? So their mother would go to Mom, "Listen to that voice. Listen to that voice." "Yeah, I know," my mother used to say. So after I had sung my heart out, and I'd go home, [she would ask] "Where were you?" "Up the street." She says, "I heard you up the street. I heard you hit all your high notes. She knew what was going on."⁵⁶

Prayer

Rather than just leading others in prayer, Paul's Aunt Marie (Giancini) Teot found solace in it herself. "If I didn't have my faith after my husband passed away, I don't know what I would have done, really. I do prayer. I have a prayer life that I follow every day and . . . that sustains me to a certain extent . . . along with my friends and family."⁵⁷

In fact, Marie's devoutness is exhibited by the prayer books she has compiled over the years. These homemade books

consist of poems, prayer cards, Mass cards, Saints cards and everyday inspirational sayings that have touched Marie in some way. Her nephew Paul says, “She has over 30 prayer books that she has assembled and created; they are quite the phenomena. She has shared them with Sandra and me; what a blessing.”⁵⁸

Marie’s siblings, Beatrice and David Giacini, also believe in the power of prayer. David’s granddaughter Susan Johnston shared the following story:

When my son was diagnosed with autism it was such a devastating blow. He’s seventeen now. He was two (when diagnosed) . . . [The Giacini family] persistently sent me prayer cards. Aunt Bea [Beatrice] loved the Blessed Mother so much . . . I came out to visit when I was twenty-four and I went to lunch at Aunt Bea’s house, and she was cooking for my grandfather (David) . . .

Well, she was talking to me about the Blessed Mother, and she had one in her living room. She was telling me all these stories about imagery because I wanted to know, and she

was telling me about how her Blessed Mother had glowed. And that she knew they were having like a miracle there. . . When she went to kneel, her knees were killing her, and Aunt Bea said, “When I went to kneel, I was afraid to get on those wooden [pews] . . . and when I went down, it was like two pillows were there.” So she really was a great witness to the Blessed Mother in our lives. . . Aunt Bea was just someone whom we all see . . . as very spiritual. She taught us a great deal about spirituality. And lived it.

Susan continued, speaking about Beatrice’s brother, David Giancini:

Aunt Bea said to my grandfather (David) one day—because he can be kind of tough, and none of us ever talked back to him; he’s had this black and white view on life. He was sitting there, and he said something, and it wasn’t very nice—and she looked at him, [and] she goes, “I’m praying for you, Dave. I’m praying for you, and I want you to get a little nicer about stuff.” I’m like, “Can you actually say that to him, and he will let you?” I think she’s probably the only one, and you know what? He became so gentle.

I did a party for him when he was ninety-one with all the other cousins and relatives. There was an Italian store by where we lived, and I had bought some different things. I brought him the figs because he said he used to climb the trees [in Italy] to get the figs. . . Then I got him San Pellegrino, because he was into all that mineral water. . . He called me up, and I was talking to him, and he goes, “Sue, I was short tempered with you and I’m very sorry because of that very nice thing. . . And I’ll always appreciate it.” It was the only time he ever apologized to me. I was, like, “Wow! Aunt Bea’s prayer is working.”

So I just really appreciated that myself. I know it was Aunt Bea’s prayers. A year before he came into the nursing home, and he called me up, and he said, “I want to tell you, if I ever did anything to offend you, I’m sorry. Because I’m very proud of you.” I said, “Pop, you didn’t do anything that offended me. You’re a great strength in my life.” And he said, “Well, I will see you on the other side (he knew he was dying).” It was very nice.⁵⁹

Beatrice and David came by their faith from their grandparents, Giovanni and Fausta Felicia Maria Angela Leo. As David once said,

I'll tell you who raised me and my sister: it was my grandmother and grandfather. And they were like Joseph and Mary! We never heard 'em curse or anything like that. If they argue or anything, they say—I didn't know there was a saying [like this one]: 'Don't shine my shoes!' or something. That was their curse. That was a curse! It's ridiculous!⁶⁰

His sister Beatrice wrote, “My grandma introduced me to God and Mary and favorite Saints. . . My grandmother was of great influence to me. She was very pious, and it rubbed off on me. From two years old till eight years old, I slept at my grandparents' house. She led me to the Lord.”⁶¹

This piety was also passed down to the couple's daughter, Settimia from her grandfather, Perseo Leo. Her second son, Dominick Giancini, described the importance of religion and prayer in Settimia's life:

My mother was a very staunch, pragmatic Catholic all her life. Nothing in the world would ever make her change. She didn't know how to read or write, but she learned all the prayers, all of them! . . . Mostly from her one grandfather, who was a very great Catholic. . . And she knew them all, Our Padre, Hail Mary, the cradle, the glory be's, and all of them. She knew them in Italian and in Latin.⁶²

Paul relates his experience with her. “I visited my Nonni T (Settimia) on a regular basis as I was growing up, and when I arrived she would be inevitably sitting in the kitchen praying with a rosary in her hand.”⁶³

The sustaining nature of faith has also been experienced by Emanuela Altimari, a member of a younger D'Annibale generation in Italy, who wrote of her experiences in studying the Bible:

Socially, I've always been particularly inclined to put myself in a position where I can serve others, especially if I can help someone who is in trouble. In 2000, following a serious crisis due to the contrast I perceived between what continued to

be the moral principles strongly rooted in my heart and the ways in which society was degrading itself (including even my close relatives), I felt it strongly necessary to search for explanations. At that time, a friend of mine suggested I should try to see what I could find in the Bible.

From that moment, a careful study of Holy Scripture has given me the possibility of finding explanations which have given me the possibility of understanding why we live in such difficult times and what hopes we have for the future—in two words, “God’s purpose” for the earth!!! My joy has motivated me to share our wonderful Creator’s plan with everyone concerned.⁶⁴

Paul and Sandra have always believed in the power of prayer, which has inspired and guided their lives through thick and thin. They pray regularly. They are thankful to God and all the individuals who have helped them have a joyful and fulfilling life together. They often reflect to one another that they have been “truly blessed.” In recent years Paul came across an acronym that he feels is extremely useful in determining when

a prayer for a certain person can feel fulfilled – it is PUSH, Pray Until Something Happens.

Sandra always enjoys hearing about her children's and grandchildren's prayer and religious activities. She says,

In fact, this morning, we got a call from [our daughter] Michele and her young twins. . . I had gotten for them for their First Communion rosary beads and a book that tells them how to say it. Michele said to me that they were learning to say their rosaries. . . She called and said they were doing a decade, which is the ten at a time. They were so excited about having their own rosary beads they had to call. . . But also now, the rosary beads, that is my responsibility, I feel. So I bought them for each of the kids and grandkids. Because to me religion and prayer are very important.⁶⁵

Among Paul and Sandra's favorite prayers are those of St. Francis of Assisi, who lived in the area of Sandra's ancestors, and St. Mother Theresa. Paul even wrote a few prayers for anyone seeking guidance.

Box 6.4: Some of Paul & Sandra's Prayers

Catholic Education

Parochial School

The American Catholic Church has always had the most visible presence in religious education of any denomination. In fact, educating second-generation Italian Americans was one of the proposed solutions to correcting a perceived “Italian Problem.”⁶⁶ By sending these children to parochial schools (especially as led by American nuns with Italian training), it was hoped that they could be “saved” from their parents’ old traditions and, in the process, made into good American citizens.

It was not possible, however, to create as many schools as the Italian Americans would have needed. By 1924, only one in six Italian churches had a parochial school.⁶⁷ To obtain the best Catholic education, Italian American children had to attend parochial schools attached to other parishes. For the Montrone brothers, this school was the Irish-led Saint Patrick’s Elementary School.

According to her daughter-in-law, Sylvia (Ware) Montrone, Beatrice chose to send her three sons to the parochial school at St. Pat's, run by the Immaculate Heart of Mary (IHM) nuns, and she became involved there herself. Sylvia said,

Although the family remained members of Saint Lucy's Church where Beatrice was married, because the school at St. Lucy's was not walk-able, she sent the boys, including Tony, born in 1951, to Saint Patrick's Grade School about four blocks away. Bea [Beatrice] insisted her sons all take piano lessons [there], and they played other instruments as well. Bea was active in the school's various fund raisers. One year she made and organized all the costumes for Saint Pat's Irish Minstrel--no small task. . . Gene at one point came home from Saint Patrick's School and informed his mother he had said she would make pasta and meatballs for the twenty nuns at the convent that night! She did!⁶⁸

Even while attending St. Patrick's school, Paul explained the unshakable allegiance that the family had to St. Lucy's:

When I was growing up, I went to Saint Patrick's grade school . . . the Irish parish . . . even though we were Italians. . . We could go to the public school or the Catholic school.

Naturally, we went to the Catholic school. But my parents would not change parishes. They were still members of Saint Lucy's. If you had a kid going to Saint Patrick's grade school and you were a member of the parish, it was free. If you were not a member of the parish, you had to pay tuition. And the tuition, to my recollection, was ten dollars a year. So my parents would rather pay the ten dollars a year to Saint Patrick's than be disloyal to their ethnic roots, which tells you something.⁶⁹

On the whole, the Montrone brothers found it rewarding to attend Saint Patrick's, though not without some occasional problems, as Paul recalled:

I was in grade school, probably fifth grade and I remember getting in trouble with a priest. . . I don't know what I did that triggered him, but he didn't like what I did. He gave me like a hammerlock or something, and I got mad at him, and I punched him. That was like a crisis of crises. . . on hearing this, my mom said, "You've got to go . . . and you have to apologize to Father Egan." And I was crying. I had to apologize. Today you wouldn't apologize, you'd sue Father Egan claiming he abused me.⁷⁰

Despite that experience, Paul said,

That whole church thing, and the nuns and the priests, it was really a positive period for that [type of education]. . . Sort of like at its peak, in terms of the religious and personal impact on people. It was the foundation on which I built my life's values. I took piano lessons from the nuns, played clarinet in the band, and was an altar boy. The nuns and priests were great examples of caring and giving. . . Nothing ever really bad happened. It was an excellent environment. I am saddened that it has all but disappeared.⁷¹

Confraternity of Christian Doctrine (CCD)

Regardless of whether a Catholic attends public or private school, every Catholic is required to have instruction in the faith. Typically, school-aged children who are not in parochial schools are taught the essential basics of the Catholic faith through CCD classes. Teaching these classes has been one of Sandra's most rewarding activities. She began teaching when she was in high school in Scranton.

I always taught CCD. I was a teacher at heart and taught CCD. And I had this wonderful nun . . . the two of us liked each other. And so, she would have me teaching CCD. [I have] a lot of good memories with nice people.”⁷² I taught the little tiny kids “in the front pew, [at] the church where we studied -- that little Immaculate Conception chapel near the cemetery.”⁷³

Interestingly, Sandra’s future brother-in-law, Tony Montrone, became one of her CCD students that she was preparing for First Communion. “I thought, “Oh my God, not only teaching a CCD class [but] teaching Tony. . . He was young.”⁷⁴

As an adult, when her children were attending CCD, Sandra once again re-engaged in this rewarding work and taught CCD at St. Michael’s parish in Exeter, New Hampshire.

Religious Ministries

Sometimes expressions of faith go beyond church attendance and religious education.

In the Catholic church, laypersons can also take other religious ministries and join numerous religious orders. Beatrice did take on additional responsibilities in the church, as described by her daughter-in-law, Sylvia (Ware) Montrone.

Bea [Beatrice] floundered a bit after [her husband] Angelo's death, and she prayed constantly for a mission. In mid-summer the call came from Monsignor Louis at St. Gregory's asking her to become an Extraordinary Minister of the Eucharist! This meant she would distribute Communion on Sundays and bring the Eucharist to Abington Manor [elderly care] residents on a rotating schedule as well as to shut-ins. She'd found her mission.⁷⁵

Beatrice performed this service for twenty-five years. She also became a member of the Third Order of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel taking the name Sister Bridget of the Sorrowful Mother OCDS (Order of Discalced Carmelites).⁷⁶
Sylvia continues,

Bea, with members of her prayer group (all a generation her junior), began making monthly sojourns to the Annunciation Monastery in Sugar Loaf, PA. She skirted all

age restrictions (claiming always to be 33, as was Jesus) and embarked on several years of study, ultimately taking vows as an auxiliary member of the order. A humble calling— a proud accomplishment.⁷⁷

Beatrice's son Gene Montrone spoke with admiration for his mother's work:

That was her generosity, and her devotion to God unparalleled. She worked for, depending on where she lived, four different churches. In her older age she was taking trips to the Holy Land, and cathedral touring around the world. Those would be the two things that the people who knew her remember her most for.⁷⁸

Tony Montrone, her youngest son, noted:

My mother reverted back to the things that she was always doing [and] got back involved with the church. I would say that's the other thing about my mother. Especially after my father died, she got very, very involved in the church, church activities . . . which was good because it really took her mind off of my father.⁷⁹

Tony himself admitted he wasn't very active in church as a young adult, when he constantly traveled for work. However, when he had been able to more-or-less stay put, he became very involved, as did his wife, Lisa (Chew) Montrone. Tony said,

Until last year [2010], in Princeton, we were very active with the Vincentian Renewal Center, which is a center that the Vincentian priests had in Princeton, which they closed within the last year. We were very involved in there. When I lived in Washington [in the 1980s], I was actually president of the parish council at one of the churches where I was a member. So it depends. . . Now in Princeton, we're involved in that because I do less business. I've kind of semi-retired now. I do my own consulting and pick what I want, and I don't do a lot of traveling.⁸⁰

In recent years, Tony and Lisa have also taken on the sick and bereavement ministeries of their parish. Tony's aunt, Marie (Giancini) Teot, said proudly, "I have been Catholic my whole

entire life.” Because of her strong convictions, she agreed to lead prayers.

I belong to an Apostle group . . . not at my church, it’s at another church and . . . and the two men who were running it died. I was asked to take it over. So I like to start the prayer and lead the prayer . . . There are not a whole lot of people, maybe fourteen people who come. But I try to be very dedicated to that. I don’t make any plans for that time. And I really would like to see it keep going because it’s important to me.⁸¹

Marie’s husband, Roger, shared her faith. Together as Eucharistic Ministers they distributed Holy Communion to shut-ins as well as teaching Pre-Cana, required marriage preparation for couples planning to take the Sacrament of Marriage. For 25 years they guided young couples during marriage encounters, and Marie tells the story of when she and Roger reached their 50th wedding anniversary he suggested “...they bow out, because he wasn’t sure kids could relate to someone who’s been married for 50 years.”

Catholic Colleges

In Scranton, Paul and Sandra found their experiences in Catholic higher education to be very worthwhile, and with a positive impact throughout their lives.

Paul attended the University of Scranton. From an earlier generation both Frank and John (G2 - G) Gaudenzi also attended “da U” (Scranton slang). It was an all-boys (at the time) Jesuit school “dedicated to the freedom of inquiry and personal development fundamental to the growth in wisdom and integrity of all who share its life.”⁸²

Paul describes the educational experience:

The Jesuit philosophy on education, essentially, is that “We the Jesuits are here to make you a whole and worthwhile person, and we know how to do that. And you teenager, you don’t know what that means, so therefore, we are going to tell you what courses to take as opposed to you going through the catalog and picking things that you think you might be interested in.” So our curriculum was thoroughly

defined. You had a major [and mine was] accounting. . . And I would say in my junior and senior year that I might have had one elective or two electives, but other than that, there were no electives. The Jesuits would say here's what you take to become a whole person. And that meant everybody was a philosophy and theology minor. You had no choice.

I must say, it was a phenomenal education. . . and when added to my earlier Catholic grade school, it's been the most fundamental part of my life, my entire life. And what they teach you, especially the philosophy and the theology, gives you a perspective on life that kind of anchors you in a way—and I discovered as life went on, that other people do not have this anchor. . . And I owe that to the Jesuits.⁸³

Paul's wife, Sandra, attended Marywood College (now University), an all-girls (at the time) school with the core values of Catholic identity, respect for everyone, empowerment, service, and excellence led by the Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary (IHM).⁸⁴ Sandra said,

I went to Marywood. Loved the nuns, loved them. I felt it was a great place. You feel when you enter the gates that it's holy. Maybe I'm naïve, but I just feel very special there. . . I've always felt that Marywood had something to offer deeper than education. I think it teaches you a way to live. [And that it is] very important to do things you believe are right.⁸⁵

One of the special teachers who encouraged Sandra's love of teaching was an important part of Marywood College. She continued,

I had the most precious, little, tiny nun as my first teacher in theology. Her name was Sister St. Mary. She was formerly the president of Marywood, and when I attended she was teaching freshman religion. Just a precious lady. In fact, when Paul and I married, she gave me a plaque with the prayer of St. Francis of Assisi (coincidentally, St. Francis was from the Perugian province of Italy, where I also have roots). I have it hanging over there. It is a prayer of peace but it also espouses the giving of oneself to meet the needs of others. Sister St. Mary embodied and instilled these ideals in us. Lovely, lovely lady. I've had a lot of very fine

relationships with people. . . Can you imagine [teaching] freshman religion after having been the president? It teaches humility. She was a lovely person.⁸⁶

Pilgrimages

Visiting the site of a miracle or a sacred location can be a way for a devout worshiper to give thanks, ask for help, pray with renewed concentration, and connect more closely with God. Remembering a place near the town of Ceccano, Italy, where he was raised, David Giancini described the shrine of a saint that would often be visited by those with special devotion to her and prayers to offer. The place he spoke of is almost certainly the church Santa Maria del Fiume, built right by the site of the ancient pagan temple dedicated to Faustina, wife of Antoninus Pius. David added,

There was a temple and it was named what my mother named my sister. That was her mother's name, Faustina. That was a big stop there. It was there, near the river, the temple. . .

Then we went to this [shrine to a] saint, near Rome, just

below Rome. . . There was a [story about] a girl [who] was mute. One day she ran down [from there] talking fifty miles an hour. I say [and everyone wonders and marvels], “What happened to her?” They thought she was crazy [but something happened there that gave her a voice]. . . That’s the legend now.

I went up there and there she was in a frame, you know, on top of the street. There was this [image of Madonna] they put right on the temple. This actually I saw, myself. They built the church around the tree. So the tree still comes right out of the church, and the frame with this Madonna is there. [It sits] up on this big mound [that is difficult] to go up. We had to get up the horses, and that’s all we had, four horses. It took two or three days to go to the shrine and three to come from Ceccano.⁸⁷

His sister Flo clearly remembered that her grandparents in Italy had made pilgrimages. For example: “They used to walk to the site with the Madonna because it was the Feast of the Assumption, August 15.”⁸⁸

David’s sister Beatrice also made notable pilgrimages. Her obituary contained a mention of these spiritual journeys, which she took as an extension of her devotion: “In 1980, Bea [Beatrice] moved to Clarks Summit where she spent the next 25 years maintaining a very active life revolving around family, church, and mostly religious travel. Bea's devotion to the Blessed Mother during this period took her throughout the United States and to 10 countries.”⁸⁹ Beatrice’s daughter-in-law, Sylvia, wrote of two such experiences:

April 1992—Bea [Beatrice] celebrated her 80th birthday with family at Paul’s home in New Hampshire. A trip with a Church Group going to the Holy Land was her gift from the family. She walked where Jesus walked—a dream come true. . .

In 2000—Bea joined hundreds of pilgrims with the “101 Foundation” touring twelve countries including miracle sites such as Lourdes and Russia, newly opened to [Catholic] Christians. With her she carried bags filled with rosary beads (made by a friend) to hand out along the way. This was an extremely important, but exhausting, trip for her.”⁹⁰

Always strapped for time, Sandra and Paul were not known to go on pilgrimages, but they give priority to visiting religious sites in their many travels around the world. Besides the Vatican and the cathedrals in Rome, they have visited many holy sites in Italy, as well as Our Lady of Lourdes in France, Our Lady of Fatima in Portugal, Medjugorje in Croatia and St. James' Camino de Santiago in Spain. Paul especially remembers their visit to the latter which had the largest incense burner he had ever seen. "It hung down from the ceiling of the church and swung over the attendees for virtually the entire length of the church."

Giving Back

Appreciating and valuing all that the Church has done for them, many of the faithful find the means to give back to Catholic organizations, with their time, efforts, and financial assistance. Paul and Sandra stand as a testament to this generous tradition. As one example, Sandra reflected on how meaningful it can be to help in situations where help is needed.

I don't think in terms of me giving back, but I think in terms of what we can project and what we can do to make a difference. That to me is what's important. Jerome, my youngest, and I had seen an article in the newspaper about this place, Saint Charles Children's Home. It is run by nuns. It is very simple. It is a place where children are placed while the parents are getting their lives together. It is an orphanage basically, but the kids have disrupted parents – so it is technically a foster home. Each of the kid's beds have their own toys, and it's just very, very heartwarming. And I've been involved in helping them for twenty-five years. Just because it was so real.⁹¹

Sandra and Paul have been supporters of Marywood University, Sandra's alma mater. One such donation was for a permanent campus chapel, the Marian Chapel, in memory of Sandra's mother, Olga.⁹² The couple discussed the process of helping to have the chapel built, and Paul explained:

At Saint Patrick's where I attended grade school there was a convent there at the time, with a lot of IHM nuns. Fast-forward years later, everything was demolished.

The beautiful stained-glass windows from the convent

chapel wound up in the hands of some restorer in Scranton. . . The church parish still owned the windows. They were the only things that got salvaged from the convent. They called me wondering if I wanted to buy them for some reason. The money would go to St. Patrick's and that would be great. So Sandra and I went and looked at them.

They were beautiful, but they weren't really worth a lot. They weren't like antiques. They were just really done well. I said, "Why don't you just give them to the nuns. That's who they belong to. Why are you trying to sell these? Those nuns were here at the parish for decades. Give them to the nuns." They didn't want to do it.

Anyway, fast forward, so Marywood then builds a chapel to be dedicated to Sandra's mother, Olga. . . we said to the President, Sister Mary, "You know, those windows from St. Patrick's convent are sitting there. Why don't you ask for the windows?" . . . The long and short of it was when they opened the chapel and we visited, lo and behold Sister Mary surprised us. She had gotten the windows. So, there they are, right near the picture of Sandra's mom. How

touching.”⁹³

Later, Sandra commented:

“We spent years working on the chapel just to get that chapel put together, and it was all over the place. . . But we finally got it done, and it’s absolutely beautiful. And made in honor of my mom. It’s just gorgeous. You feel her presence by a beautiful photograph of her right at the entrance. My heart rules me, and I feel very comfortable there. I think it’s the right place to be. And it serves the students.”⁹⁴

Because of their appreciation for Catholic education, Paul and Sandra also contributed to help support Catholic schools in the areas where they have resided. These have included, for example, the Catholic School Foundation’s Inner-City Scholarship Fund in Boston and similarly the Partnership for Inner-City Education in New York City, as well as individual schools in New Hampshire.

Importance of Religion

In summary, regardless of how past and present members of the family have kept the faith—through school and church attendance, prayer, pilgrimage, good works, giving back, and other means—Catholic beliefs based on the teachings of Jesus have been central to their lives. These beliefs have guided those of past generations and sustained distant ancestors and forebears. They continue to provide comfort and meaning to those in the present day. And they will inspire and enrich the lives of future descendants.

This process can be as simple as wanting to be remembered for the fact “that I love God and my fellow man.” Those are the words of Gene Montrone, a man descended from a woman (Beatrice) for whom “her religion and her family were the center of her life.”⁹⁵

Paul and Sandra believe that a strong religious life and a firm belief in God are the most important elements of one’s life. Also, they have studied many religions and have found some good in all of them, that is, assuming people follow the

principles of their religion – and not be driven by the distractions of the humans that “lead” them. But they have not found a religion yet, that despite its flaws, has better guidance for one’s life than the Roman Catholic religion – and especially its core – the teachings of Jesus Christ, anchored by faith, hope and love.

With the Catholic church facing many challenges (which it has on and off for centuries) Paul and Sandra have tried to help in their own way. They were among the founders of the National Leadership Roundtable on Church Management, an entity that works with priests, bishops, nuns, and religious leaders and organizations across the U.S. to promote best practices in church management. This includes areas like human resources, finance and education. The goal is to establish a co-responsible servant leadership program for a healthy and thriving Catholic Church in the U.S.

Paul continues:

The idea that people reject the Catholic religion because of the flaws of an imperfect ministry by its human leaders, ignoring what it stands for and the ensuing good it has done for people the world over for thousands of years is almost a joke. As a test, just look to the teachings of Jesus Christ and tell me where he gives us the wrong guidance for our lives. Over thousands of years, He has never provided anything but loving guidance for us.

As we look back over the many generations of our family, the importance of religion is very evident and that has been the foundation on which the values imbedded in our family have been built. But beyond that, over our lifetime, it has been discouraging to see the rise of secularism and the decline of religious life in our communities. Churches are being closed and converted into condominiums, and religious vocations have been shrinking across our nation.

Looking back, one reason secularism was triggered was the discoveries of modern science that attempted to explain in scientific terms what religion had explored for thousands of years, giving people an excuse to reject religion. But now we

realize that the deeper our scientists probe, the more complex walls they face. For example, now we know that over 90 percent of our universe is dark matter and dark energy we cannot observe or explain. Could this be the residence of the spiritual universe? The same is true of biology – beyond a certain point in microbiology, science has found chaos that cannot be explained.

Although scientists cannot admit it, modern science has certainly validated some religious beliefs. One example is the Virgin Birth of Jesus. With today’s reproductive technology, it is easy for a virgin to have a baby. In fact, as the next scientific step in this regard, women will not even be necessary for babies to be born.

Will science delve deeper and offer more theoretical answers – certainly, but although they may be able to knock a wall down, there is always another that cannot be explained. Scientists can explain how things work but struggle with the answer to “why” scientific equations work. It is not explained and never will be – it is beyond human

comprehension. Paul expands on this subject further in his essay “Religion and Scientific Progress”.

One rather satisfying validation on the limits of science is in the book, “The Language of God,” written by Francis Collins. He was the head of the human genome project and a highly respected scientist who later became the head of the National Institutes of Health. After validating all the factors involved in genetic evolution, Dr. Collins concluded with his belief in God because science cannot explain the human “spirit”.

But secularism moves on nonetheless. Why? Because it allows us to destroy the moral compass of religion. It takes the guidance of our life and values out of the hands of God and turns it over to us humans, frail and otherwise exceedingly self-centered beings. This lets us do whatever we want. We can set our own moral standards which we mistakenly believe will bring us happiness.

But time and again over the ages, this philosophy has proven to be destructive to the human race. Science (psychology)

now has established that religious people live happier and more fulfilling lives being better prepared to deal with the many difficulties that life may send their way. Fortunately, this religious foundation has been the strength of our family heritage which we hope, with God’s blessing, will continue for future generations.⁹⁶

If you wish to more fully understand the importance and value of religion, you can read Paul’s treatise “Religion in Your Life”.

¹ Olga (Emiliani) Gaudenzi, daughter of Iginio Emiliani, interview by Brian O’Connell, 21 August 1995, transcript held by Paul Montrone.

² Emanuela (Lalia) Altimare, granddaughter of Luigi and Erminia (D’Annibale) Fratangeli, response to interview questions provided by Rhonda McClure, English translation held by Paul Montrone.

³ Anna (Buontempo) Battista, niece of Antonio Montrone, interview by Rhonda R. McClure, 2 October 2011, transcript held by Paul Montrone.

⁴ Helen (Montrone) Mastro, daughter of Antonio and Maria Carmina Vincenza (De Cristofaro) Montrone, interview by Brian O’Connell, 25 July 1995, transcript held by Paul Montrone.

⁵ Fausta (Giancini) D’Annibale and Marie (Giancini) Teot, children of Eugenio Giancini, interview by Brian O’Connell, transcribed between 10 December 1996 and 21 April 1997, transcript held by Paul Montrone.

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- ⁶ Frank Thomas Gaudenzi, son of Francesco and Mary (Cavagnaro) Gaudenzi, interview by Brian O’Connell, transcribed 5 August 1996, transcript held by Paul Montrone.
- ⁷ Olga (Emiliani) Gaudenzi, daughter-in-law of Francesco and Mary (Cavagnaro) Gaudenzi, interview by Brian O’Connell, 21 August 1995, transcript held by Paul Montrone.
- ⁸ Sylvia (Ware) Montrone, *Bea’s History*, written as Beatrice (Giancini) Montrone’s introduction for the Elmcroft Staff.
- ⁹ As related by Denise (Giancini) Piepoli, daughter of Dominick Giancini on 14 August 2020 via email.
- ¹⁰ Olga (Emiliani) Gaudenzi, daughter of Iginio and Giovanna (Mercanti) Gaudenzi, interview by Brian O’Connell, 21 August 1995, transcript held by Paul Montrone.
- ¹¹ Anna (Buontempo) Battista, daughter of Maria Incoronata Filomena (Montrone) Buontempo, interview by Rhonda R. McClure, 2 October 2011, transcript held by Paul Montrone.
- ¹² Jean (Miles) Gaudenzi, wife of Frank T. Gaudenzi, interview by Rhonda McClure, 24 July 2011, transcript held by Paul Montrone.
- ¹³ Eugene Montrone, son of Angelo and Beatrice (Giancini) Montrone, interview by Rhonda McClure, 13 January 2013, transcript held by Paul Montrone.
- ¹⁴ “History,” Saint Lucy’s Church (<http://www.stlucy-church.org/history.html>); Longo, *Italians of Northeastern Pennsylvania*, 61, 63.
- ¹⁵ Fausta (Giancini) D’Annibale, daughter of Eugenio Giancini, interview by Rhonda McClure, 23 July 2011, transcript held by Paul Montrone.
- ¹⁶ Paul Montrone, interview by Rhonda R. McClure, 30 January 2014, transcript held by Paul Montrone.
- ¹⁷ Geraldine (Gaudenzi) Colizzo, interview by Mary Tedesco, 12 February 2014, transcript held by Paul Montrone, and as further relayed by Geraldine Colizzo 3 January 2019.
- ¹⁸ As related by Paul Montrone 10 March 2018
- ¹⁹ Anna (Buontempo) Battista, niece of Antonio Montrone, interview by Rhonda R. McClure, 2 October 2011, transcript held by Paul Montrone.
- ²⁰ Marie (Giancini) Teot, daughter of Eugenio Giancini, interview by Rhonda McClure, 23 July 2011, transcript held by Paul Montrone.
- ²¹ Malpezzi and Clements, *Italian-American Folklore*, 64-65.
- ²² Domenico Giancini, Beatrice (Giancini) Montrone, and Marie (Giancini) Teot, children of Eugenio Giancini, interview by Brian O’Connell, transcribed 30 September 1996, transcript held by Paul Montrone.
- ²³ Paul Montrone, interview by Rhonda R. McClure, 30 January 2014, transcript held by Paul Montrone.
- ²⁴ Marie (Giancini) Teot, daughter of Eugenio Giancini, interview by Rhonda McClure, 23 July 2011, transcript held by Paul Montrone.
- ²⁵ Olga (Emiliani) Gaudenzi, daughter of Giovanna (Mercanti) Emiliani, interview by Brian O’Connell, 21 August 1995, transcript held by Paul Montrone.
- ²⁶ As related by Paul Montrone 7 March 2018
- ²⁷ Marie (Giancini) Teot, wife of Roger Teot, interview by Rhonda McClure, 23 July 2011, transcript held by Paul Montrone.
- ²⁸ Marie (Giancini) Teot, wife of Roger Teot, interview by Rhonda McClure, 23 July 2011, transcript held by Paul Montrone.
- ²⁹ Sylvia (Ware) Montrone, *Bea’s History*, written as Beatrice (Giancini) Montrone’s introduction for the Elmcroft Staff.
- ³⁰ As relayed by Paul Montrone 7 March 2018
- ³¹ <http://www.econdolence.com/learn/articles/catholic-periods-of-mourning>
- ³² Fausta (Giancini) D’Annibale and Marie (Giancini) Teot, sisters of Mario J. Giancini, interview by Brian O’Connell, transcribed between 10 December 1996 and 21 April 1997, transcript held by Paul Montrone.
- ³³ As relayed by Tony Montrone (Paul M. Montrone’s brother) on 18 February 2019.
- ³⁴ Beatrice (Giancini) Montrone, daughter of Settimia (D’Annibale) Giancini, interview by Brian O’Connell, undated, transcript held by Paul Montrone.
- ³⁵ David/Diodata Giancini, interview by Brian O’Connell, 25 July 1995, transcript held by Paul Montrone.
- ³⁶ *My Memories: A Written Record of My Life and Times to Hand Down to My Family* (Metropolitan Museum of Art); completed by Beatrice M. Giancini Montrone in 1985, held by Paul Montrone.
- ³⁷ Fausta (Giancini) D’Annibale and Marie (Giancini) Teot, grandchildren of Fausta (Leo) D’Annibale, interview by Brian O’Connell, transcribed between 10 December 1996 and 21 April 1997, transcript held by Paul Montrone.

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- ³⁸ David/Diodata Giancini, grandson of Giovannia and Fausta (Leo) D'Annibale, interview by Brian O'Connell, 25 July 1995, transcript held by Paul Montrone.
- ³⁹ Photo of Famiglie Mercanti E Tassi mausoleum, Sassoferrato Cemetery, taken by Rhonda M. McClure, 12 October 2011.
- ⁴⁰ Paul and Sandra (Gaudenzi) Montrone, interview by Rhonda R. McClure, 23 March 2013, transcript held by Paul Montrone.
- ⁴¹ Fausta (Giancini) D'Annibale, interview by Rhonda McClure, 23 July 2011, transcript held by Paul Montrone.
- ⁴² Fausta (Giancini) D'Annibale and Marie (Giancini) Teot, interview by Brian O'Connell, transcribed between 10 December 1996 and 21 April 1997, transcript held by Paul Montrone.
- ⁴³ Fausta (Giancini) D'Annibale and Marie (Giancini) Teot, interview by Brian O'Connell, transcribed between 10 December 1996 and 21 April 1997, transcript held by Paul Montrone.
- ⁴⁴ Fausta (Giancini) D'Annibale, interview by Rhonda McClure, 23 July 2011, transcript held by Paul Montrone.
- ⁴⁵ Eugene Montrone, interview by Rhonda R. McClure, 13 January 2013, transcript held by Paul Montrone, and as further edited by Gene on 12 December 2018.
- ⁴⁶ Eugene Montrone, interview by Rhonda R. McClure, 13 January 2013, transcript held by Paul Montrone.
- ⁴⁷ Paul and Sandra (Gaudenzi) Montrone, interview by Rhonda R. McClure, 23 March 2013, transcript held by Paul Montrone.
- ⁴⁹ David/Diodata Giancini, son of Eugenio Giancini, interview by Brian O'Connell, 25 July 1995, transcript held by Paul Montrone.
- ⁵⁰ Eugene Montrone, son of Angelo and Beatrice (Giancini) Montrone, interview by Rhonda McClure, 13 January 2013, transcript held by Paul Montrone.
- ⁵¹ Paul Montrone, interview by Rhonda R. McClure, 30 January 2014, transcript held by Paul Montrone.
- ⁵² Paul and Sandra (Gaudenzi) Montrone, interview by Rhonda R. McClure, 23 March 2013, transcript held by Paul Montrone.
- ⁵³ Paul and Sandra (Gaudenzi) Montrone, interview by Rhonda R. McClure, 23 March 2013, transcript held by Paul Montrone.
- ⁵⁴ Fausta (Giancini) D'Annibale, daughter of Eugenio Giancini, interview by Rhonda McClure, 23 July 2011, transcript held by Paul Montrone.
- ⁵⁵ Marie (Giancini) Teot, wife of Roger Teot, interview by Rhonda McClure, 23 July 2011, transcript held by Paul Montrone.
- ⁵⁶ Fausta (Giancini) D'Annibale and Marie (Giancini) Teot, children of Settimia (D'Annibale) Giancini, interview by Brian O'Connell, transcribed between 10 December 1996 and 21 April 1997, transcript held by Paul Montrone.
- ⁵⁷ Marie (Giancini) Teot, wife of Roger Teot, interview by Rhonda McClure, 23 July 2011, transcript held by Paul Montrone.
- ⁵⁸ As related by Paul Montrone 11 May 2018
- ⁵⁹ Margaret (Corvelli) Giancini, with granddaughter Susan Johnston, interview by Rhonda McClure, 24 July 2011, transcript held by Paul Montrone.
- ⁶⁰ David/Diodata Giancini, son of Eugenio Giancini, interview by Brian O'Connell, 25 July 1995, transcript held by Paul Montrone.
- ⁶¹ *My Memories: A Written Record of My Life and Times to Hand Down to My Family* (Metropolitan Museum of Art); completed by Beatrice M. Giancini Montrone in 1985, held by Paul Montrone.
- ⁶² Domenico Giancini, Beatrice (Giancini) Montrone, and Marie (Giancini) Teot, children of Settimia (D'Annibale) Giancini, interview by Brian O'Connell, transcribed 30 September 1996, transcript held by Paul Montrone.
- ⁶³ As related by Paul Montrone 10 March 2018
- ⁶⁴ Emanuela (Lalia) Altimare, granddaughter of Luigi and Erminia (D'Annibale) Fratangeli, response to interview questions provided by Rhonda McClure, DATE, English translation held by Paul Montrone.
- ⁶⁵ Paul and Sandra (Gaudenzi) Montrone, interview by Rhonda R. McClure, 12 October 2013, transcript held by Paul Montrone.
- ⁶⁶ The established American Catholics could not understand the nature of the Italian Catholicism. Peasants in Italy meshed Christian sacraments with ancient-styled communal rituals and (what was seen as) pagan-like worship of saints and the Madonna. In addition, any antagonism against the Pope (in particular) appalled the Irish-led American Catholic

Church and caused many of the turn-of-the-century Italian immigrants to face prejudice and segregation within the Catholic churches.

⁶⁷ Rudolph J. Vecoli, "Prelates and Peasants: Italian Immigrants and the Catholic Church," *Journal of Social History* 2. 3 (Spring 1969): 217-268. (<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3786488>).

⁶⁸ Sylvia (Ware) Montrone, *Bea's History*, written as Beatrice (Giancini) Montrone's introduction for the Elmcroft Staff.

⁶⁹ Paul Montrone, interview by Rhonda R. McClure, 30 January 2014, transcript held by Paul Montrone.

⁷⁰ Paul and Sandra (Gaudenzi) Montrone, interview by Rhonda R. McClure, 23 March 2013, transcript held by Paul Montrone.

⁷¹ Paul and Sandra (Gaudenzi) Montrone, interview by Rhonda R. McClure, 23 March 2013, transcript held by Paul Montrone.

⁷² Paul and Sandra (Gaudenzi) Montrone, interview by Rhonda R. McClure, 23 March 2013, transcript held by Paul Montrone.

⁷³ Paul and Sandra (Gaudenzi) Montrone, interview by Rhonda R. McClure, 12 October 2013, transcript held by Paul Montrone.

⁷⁴ Paul and Sandra (Gaudenzi) Montrone, interview by Rhonda R. McClure, 23 March 2013, transcript held by Paul Montrone.

⁷⁵ Sylvia (Ware) Montrone, *Bea's History*, written as Beatrice (Giancini) Montrone's introduction for the Elmcroft Staff.

⁷⁶ Beatrice Mary Montrone obituary, *Scranton Times*, 31 January 2013 (<http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/thetimes-tribune/obituary.aspx?page=lifestory&pid=162755689#sthash.fe7uiifa.dpuf>)

⁷⁷ Sylvia (Ware) Montrone, *Bea's History*, written as Beatrice (Giancini) Montrone's introduction for the Elmcroft Staff.

⁷⁸ Eugene Montrone, son of Angelo and Beatrice (Giancini) Montrone, interview by Rhonda McClure, 13 January 2013, transcript held by Paul Montrone.

⁷⁹ Tony Montrone, son of Angelo and Beatrice (Giancini) Montrone, interview by Rhonda McClure, 24 July 2011, transcript held by Paul Montrone.

⁸⁰ Tony Montrone, son of Angelo and Beatrice (Giancini) Montrone, interview by Rhonda McClure, 24 July 2011, transcript held by Paul Montrone.

⁸¹ Marie (Giancini) Teot, sister of Beatrice (Giancini) Montrone, interview by Rhonda McClure, 23 July 2011, transcript held by Paul Montrone.

⁸² Mission and Vision, The University of Scranton: A Jesuit University (<http://www.scranton.edu/about/jesuit-tradition/index.shtml>).

⁸³ Paul Montrone, interview by Rhonda R. McClure, 30 January 2014, transcript held by Paul Montrone.

⁸⁴ Mission, Marywood University (<http://www.marywood.edu/about/mission/>).

⁸⁵ MarywoodU, "2013 Presidential Medalist: Sandra and Paul Montrone," *YouTube*, 19 December 2013 (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AFVKJZRACsc>).

⁸⁶ Paul and Sandra (Gaudenzi) Montrone, interview by Rhonda R. McClure, 12 October 2013, transcript held by Paul Montrone.

⁸⁷ David/Diodata Giancini, interview by Brian O'Connell, 25 July 1995, transcript held by Paul Montrone.

⁸⁸ Fausta (Giancini) D'Annibale and Marie (Giancini) Teot, grandchildren of Fausta (Leo) D'Annibale, interview by Brian O'Connell, transcribed between 10 December 1996 and 21 April 1997, transcript held by Paul Montrone.

⁸⁹ "Beatrice Mary Montrone," *Scranton Times*, 31 January 2013 (<http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/thetimes-tribune/obituary.aspx?page=lifestory&pid=162755689#sthash.fe7uiifa.dpuf>).

⁹⁰ Sylvia (Ware) Montrone, *Bea's History*, written as Beatrice (Giancini) Montrone's introduction for the Elmcroft Staff.

⁹¹ MarywoodU, "2013 Presidential Medalist: Sandra and Paul Montrone," *YouTube*, 19 December 2013 (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AFVKJZRACsc>).

⁹² "Presidential Medals Honor Bold Leaders," *Marywood* (Winter 2013-2014): 20-21.

⁹³ Paul and Sandra (Gaudenzi) Montrone, interview by Rhonda R. McClure, 23 March 2013, transcript held by Paul Montrone.

⁹⁴ MarywoodU, "2013 Presidential Medalist: Sandra and Paul Montrone," *YouTube*, 19 December 2013 (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AFVKJZRACsc>).

⁹⁵ Eugene Montrone interview by Rhonda McClure, 13 January 2013, transcript held by Paul Montrone.

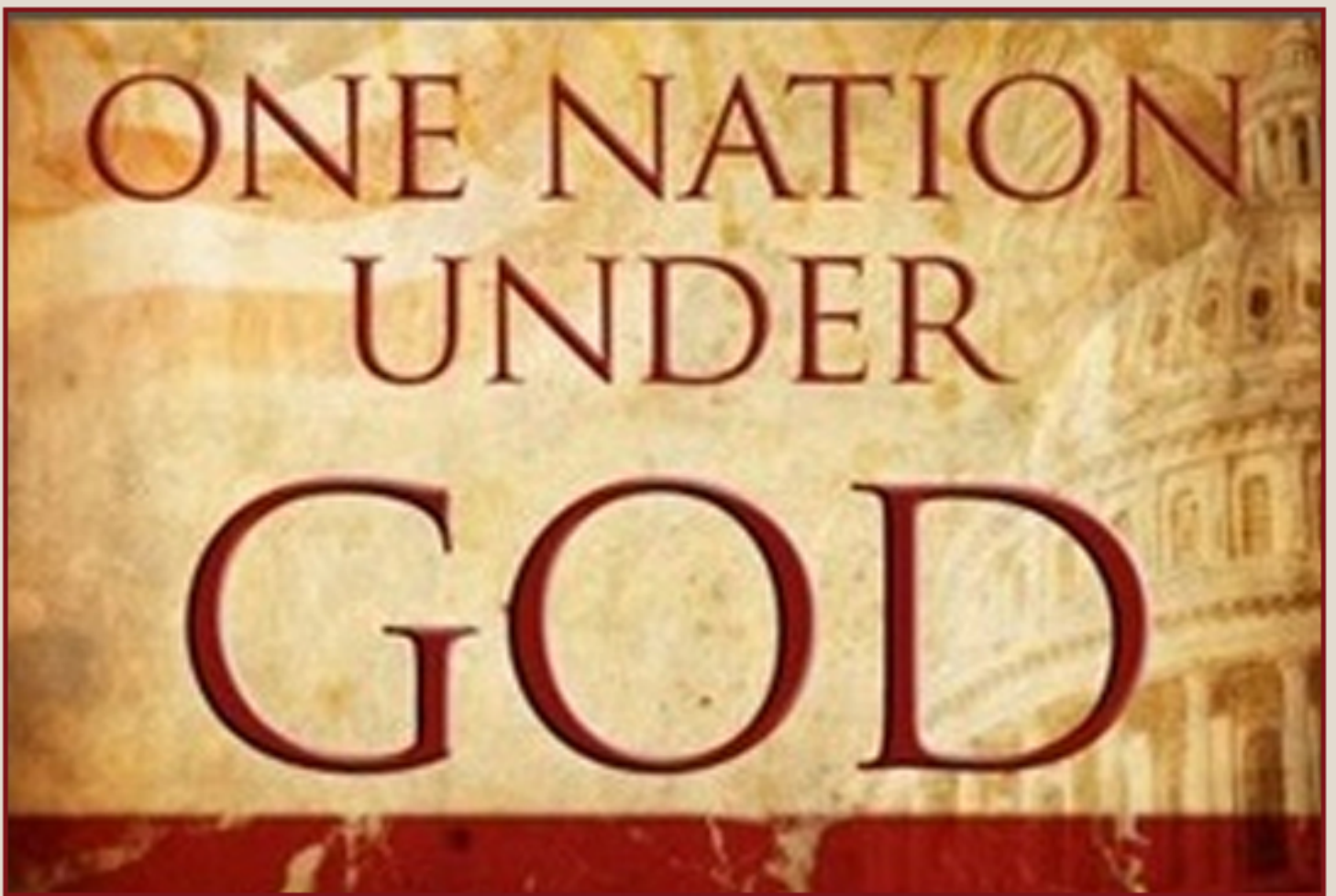
⁹⁶ As related by Paul Montrone 4 May 2019.

The following was removed fr. FN 104 in reference to the quotes “that I love God and my fellow man” and “her religion and her family were the center of her life.” being attributed to Gene Montrone:

Texts referenced for this essay include: Rudolph J. Vecoli, “Prelates and Peasants: Italian Immigrants and the Catholic Church,” *Journal of Social History* 2. 3 (Spring 1969): 217-268. (<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3786488>); Malpezzi and Clements, *Italian-American Folklore*, 113-118; Iorizzo and Mondello, *The Italian Americans*, 216-247; James T. Fisher, *Communion of Immigrants: A History of Catholics in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 73-75; and “Religion” and Women and the Church,” *Italian American Experience: An Encyclopedia* (Routledge, 2000), 538-542 and 681.

Box 6.1

THE CHANGE IN SUNDAY TRADITION



Box 6.1

The Change in Sunday Tradition

One of the major changes that has taken place in American society over the lifetimes of Paul and Sandra was the meaning of Sunday. Paul describes it:

Our United States of America was founded by European Christians who had firm beliefs in God, and this is very evident by the inclusion of “Under God” in our pledge of allegiance “to our flag”, and in the use of the phrase “in God we trust” on our currency, as well as in religious themes (statues, etc.) in our public spaces. What the founders were emphasizing at that time was that God is integral to we humans, so to them atheism was not integral to this new nation.

Despite our constitutional requirement of the “separation of church and state”, these religious themes were upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court even under relatively recent challenges. The required “separation” was really established to make it clear that no one religion, including

the branches of Christianity, would be in a position of dominance.

Given this strong bent toward Christianity, Sunday was the particularly religious day of the week. This practice originates from the Jewish book of Genesis, in which it is related that God worked for six days to create the earth and all its inhabitants and rested on the seventh day. This day became the Jewish “Sabbath” and Moses emphasized this by including “Keep Holy on the Sabbath” as one of his Ten Commandments, which were adopted by Christians.

Since the Jewish people celebrated the Sabbath on Saturday, given Christianity’s deviation from Judaism, Christians made Sunday their Sabbath.

As a result, one of the practices that carried on for many generations was that the work week was closer to God’s, that is, six days of work and a day off, normally Sunday. The five-day, 40-hour work week was not officially established in the U.S. until 1940, so now there were two

days off. Saturday became a day for activities, sports and shopping. Sunday was quite different.

During Sandra and Paul's youth, Sunday was a day to go to church, have a family dinner, and do other family and friend activities. There were "Blue Laws" that prevented alcohol from being sold and retail stores were mostly closed (retail workers also had a day off). It was a unique day emphasizing family and spiritual formation.

That began to change in 1957 when certain Blue Laws were repealed in Arkansas. Eventually other states followed suit (although some blue laws remain in the books today depending on the state); retail malls opened up, alcohol sales were permitted, and sports became more dominant than religion. It was the beginning of secularization, a trend that has continued in the current generations.

In Sandra and Paul's view, having seen and lived through this change, on balance, secularization has had a negative

effect on our society with plenty of evidence of this social devastation – the breakdown of family, increases in crime and violence, addiction, psychological problems, idol worship, etc.

In his book, Bowling Alone, Robert Putnam extensively studies the social capital index that objectively measures community efforts and unity in its many forms, including religious practice, and this index has declined steadily since the 1950s. It saddens Sandra and Paul to witness this change.

Box 6.2

THE MONTRONE BOYS AND THEIR WIVES' PARISHES



St. Cecilia's Church in Boston, MA

Box 6.2

The Montrone Boys and Their Wives' Parishes

As adults, the Montrone boys moved away from Scranton and married, but their Catholic faith never weakened and they always have had a close attachment to a Catholic parish.

Gene Montrone laid out his entire history of church attendance.

I started out being baptized at Saint Lucy's. Then went to Saint Patrick's, which is where I went to school, until I left for Boston to attend MIT. That school built [a] non-denominational chapel while I was there – we used to call it the beer can because of its shape. But we always went to Saint Cecilia's, which is where I married Sylvia. Other times, depending on how late the party went or whether I was going to get up on a Sunday morning, we would go to the Mass at Saint Anthony's at about four a.m. while I was still up, but not always in the most sober of

conditions. I hope the Lord forgives me for that, but I was there. . .

Then Sylvia and I lived in a series of places after that, New Jersey, and a couple of other places. We belonged to a series of churches there, but nothing really as in-depth as these two, until we moved here [near Scranton], which was 1976, when I changed jobs and went with Sandvik. . . Since then, we have belonged to Saint Gregory's, right around the corner where, by the way, the pastor for thirty-five years, up until two years ago, went to the same grade school I went to. So, we had a lot in common. Monsignor John Louis, he was a year ahead of me in Saint Patrick's school. . . So we had a great relationship. He retired, and this new priest arrived, I like him. He's a good guy, but Monsignor and I, we went way back.¹

Sandra and Paul have also always attached themselves to a parish, sometimes nearby, other times more distant. Paul related:

Gene gives a good summary of Scranton church life. After Sandra and I married in 1963, we moved to New York City. While I was at Columbia (in NYC), we joined a beautiful old church [St. Ignatius Loyola] that was within walking distance of our apartment. Michele was christened there.

Then we moved to the Washington, D.C. area, and our parish, Holy Trinity Catholic Church, was in Georgetown, quite a distance from our Arlington, VA apartment. This was because a close friend's (John Gavigan) brother was the pastor there. Our son, Angelo, was christened at Holy Trinity. Jerome was christened at St. Peter, our parish church near our home when we lived in Montclair, NJ. When we moved to New Hampshire, we became very active with St. Michael's in Exeter and later Our Lady of Miraculous Medal in Hampton. We know our fellow parishioners and the priests at Our Lady very well.

In the summer, our church was St. Cecilia's in Wolfeboro with the most entertaining pastor, Father (later

Monsignor) St. Pierre. The church was later consolidated with a church in Alton that had burned down, and a new church, St. Katharine Drexel, was built halfway between Wolfeboro and Alton in a process called ‘twinning’; that is, combining these parishes.

On our frequent trips to New York, we attended the Jesuit parish St. Ignatius Loyola, and again became well acquainted with the parishioners and priests. We became good friends with the pastor, Father Walter Modrys. Our youngest son, Jerome, and Katherine were married in that parish and Father Modrys married both Michele and Angelo in New Hampshire. Our religious life has always been an integral part of our family, and it has been a blessing to all of us.²

Tony Montrone also described his parish attachments,

Myself and my brothers – we all went to St. Patrick’s grade school through 8th grade. It was interesting. Growing up we were always members of Saint Lucy’s Church because that was the Italian church. Having said that, we all went to Saint Patrick’s School, and so most of

my church activities—my First Communion, Confirmation, everything—[were] always done at Saint Patrick’s. I was an altar boy at Saint Patrick’s. And that’s where we basically went to church, Saint Patrick’s. But for family events or special events, we would go to Saint Lucy’s. The churches weren’t that far away, it was just that—I don’t know—that’s just how it was. Then when I got into high school, I went to Jesuit Prep School, so a lot of my church activities revolved around the school. We would have Masses there. When I was in college, [I would go to] the campus church.³

During my time in Washington DC, I was always involved in some way with a parish but moved around quite a bit. With the move to Lexington, MA and upcoming marriage to Lisa, we registered at St. Brigid’s for our marriage preparation, and it was during that program, where we met Father Robert Deeley (later to become Bishop of Portland Maine) who became a lifelong friend.

Because both of us travelled with our jobs, it wasn’t until we moved to Princeton, NJ in 1996, when we joined St

Paul's Parish, that we really became part of a parish life. Now in our retirement, we have had the time and opportunity to give back to the church and are very involved in both the liturgical life of the parish, as well as leading some of the parish outreach ministries.⁴

¹ Eugene Montrone, son of Angelo and Beatrice (Giancini) Montrone, interview by Rhonda McClure, 13 January 2013, transcript held by Paul Montrone.

² As related by Paul Montrone 10 March 2018

³ Tony Montrone, interview by Rhonda McClure, 24 July 2011, transcript held by Paul Montrone.

⁴ As added by Tony Montrone via email 20 March, 2023, email held by Paul Montrone

Box 6.3

WORLDWIDE CEMETERIES



La Recoleta in Buenos Aires

Box 6.3

Worldwide Cemeteries

Cemeteries fascinate Paul and Sandra even when they do not contain the treasured remains of family members. They have made visiting cemeteries a custom when they travel, which they believe gives them insight into the past cultures of the places they are visiting, and their beliefs related to death, which always has a major impact on social and political norms.

According to Paul,

Sandra and I have travelled all over the world. One of the things we always do is look up the cemetery, check out the cemetery. When you go to these places and you see some remarkable things . . . gorgeous monuments and statues that go back to eras when [burial and honoring of the dead] death was looked upon slightly differently. It goes back to the day when death meant something. You didn't celebrate it, but it was important because a person moved on to eternal life. So people would go to the cemetery, and they would bring flowers. You go to Italy, and there's

these huge places where they sell all kinds of mementos on your way into the cemetery.¹

Paul went on to provide several notable examples of cemeteries they have visited.

Given the importance of Memorial Day and honoring the dead in our Scranton upbringing, we always found cemeteries very interesting. In different parts of the world, you could see how they [the dead] were treated. How they respect the dead. What do they do, and how do they do it? It tells you a lot about their culture, an element you don't see in the usual tourist sites. You could see that, in centuries gone by, how much more important it was than today, just because of the size of the monuments. . .

For example, La Recoleta in Buenos Aires. . . people are buried above ground because the water table is high . . . and they have streets, and everybody's got a little house, like a little personal mausoleum. Eva Perón is there, and there's her street. . . Another great one is in Croatia, in Zagreb. There they have a fabulous cemetery with large

scale monuments. Then, you see them in Asia where the monument often has a picture of the deceased. They have a different way of doing it. Then there is the Taj Mahal in India and in Italy of course, you have the catacombs, and the burial sites in the Vatican. And in the Muslim “Jesus Mosque” in Damascus, Syria, you have the burial site of St. John the Baptist.

We even found the location where the blessed Virgin Mary is supposed to be buried. Modern writers hold that Mary died and was buried near Ephesus, Turkey, which is on the road to Jerusalem. The story there is that, while on the Cross, Christ passed responsibility for his mother on to his Apostle John, and it was John that took Mary with him on his apostolic journey to the Gentiles in what is now Turkey, and she died there. When Sandra and I were inside Mary’s home and burial site, Sandra commented that “it was a holy place; and there was no question that Mary’s spirit was there”.²

¹ Paul Montrone, interview by Rhonda R. McClure, 30 January 2014, transcript held by Paul Montrone.

² Paul Montrone, interview by Rhonda R. McClure, 30 January 2014, transcript held by Paul Montrone

Box 6.4

SOME PRAYERS OF PAUL AND SANDRA'S



St. Francis of Assisi

Box 6.4

Some of Paul & Sandra's Prayers

1. WE ARE GUIDED BY OUR FAVORITE PRAYER — THAT OF ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI (WHO LIVED IN THE REGION OF SANDRA'S (G3 - G) ROOTS)

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace
 Where there is hatred, let me sow love
 Where there is injury, pardon
 Where there is doubt, faith
 Where there is despair, hope
 Where there is darkness, light
 And where there is sadness,
 joy

O divine master grant that I may
 not so much seek to be consoled, as to console
 be understood, as to understand
 To be loved, as to love
 For it is in giving that we receive
 it is in pardoning that we are pardoned
 And it's in dying that we are born to eternal life
 Amen

2. IF YOU ARE TROUBLED, FIND COMFORT IN THIS BEAUTIFUL POEM BY ANNIE JOHNSON FLINT

God hath not promised skies always blue,
 Flower strewn pathways, all our lives through;
 God hath not promised sun without rain,
 Joy without sorrow, peace without pain.

But God hath promised strength for the
 day, Rest for the labour, light for the way;
 Grace for the trials, help from
 above, Unfailing sympathy, undying
 love.

3. HERE IS A WONDERFUL LIFETIME GUIDE IN THE WISDOM OF ST. MOTHER THERESA - WHO SET A BEAUTIFUL EXAMPLE FOR ALL OF US IN DEVOTING HER LIFE COMPLETELY TO HELPING THE MOST UNFORTUNATE HUMANS. HERE ARE HER "ANYWAYS":

**People are often unreasonable, illogical and self-centered;
Forgive them anyway.**

**If you are kind, people may accuse you of selfish, ulterior motives;
Be kind anyway.**

**If you are successful, you will win some false friends and some true enemies;
Succeed anyway.**

**If you are honest and frank, people may cheat you;
Be honest and frank anyway.**

**What you spend years building, someone could destroy overnight;
Build anyway.**

**If you find serenity and happiness, they may be jealous;
Be happy anyway.**

**The good you do today, people will often forget tomorrow;
Be good anyway.**

**Give the world the best you have, and it may never be enough;
Give the world the best you have anyway.**

You see, in the final analysis, it is between you and God. It was never between you and them anyway.

4. PAUL (G3 - M) COMPOSED THIS PRAYER TO THE HOLY SPIRIT FOR GUIDANCE

**Come, Holy Spirit, into my heart and soul,
Shed on me your divine light, that I
might clearly see the mission God has
given to me for this life.**

**Bestow on me your divine grace,
that I might receive your seven gifts (wisdom, understanding,
counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety and fear of God),
to guide me on the path for my mission.**

**Renew and energize my spirit, that I
might find peace and joy in serving you,
my loved ones, and my fellow man**

**And when my mission in life is complete,
that I might be worthy of eternal happiness,
through the love of
Jesus Christ, our Lord, Amen.**

HERE'S A BRIEF VERSION OF THIS SAME PRAYER

**Come, Holy Spirit, into my heart and soul,
guide me on the path for my mission in life,
and energize my spirit to pursue this course
with peace and joy, Amen.**

5. PAUL COMPOSED THIS PRAYER TO GOD FOR STRENGTH WHEN CHALLENGED

**Almighty Father,
your humble child stands before you,
burdened by the trials of the life you have given me.**

**In this time of need,
I beseech you to send forth your Holy Spirit
to give me the fortitude
I need to triumph over this challenge.**

**Your divine love is more powerful
than any evil in the universe;
surround and protect me with this love,
so though I may suffer,
my spirit will not be vanquished.**

**Give me the grace to accept this struggle
as a part of my journey back to you,
so that I come forth stronger in spirit,
renewed in faith in your infinite love,
and full of joy over the blessings
you have bestowed on me, Amen.**

HERE'S A BRIEF VERSION OF THE SAME PRAYER

**Almighty Father,
send forth your Holy Spirit
to give me the fortitude I need
to triumph over this challenge.**

**Surround and protect me with your love,
and give me the grace to accept this struggle
as a part of my journey back to you, Amen.**

6. PAUL COMPOSED THIS PRAYER TO JESUS FOR COMFORT WHEN AFFLICTED

**Jesus, Comforter of the afflicted,
embrace me with your divine love,
that I might endure my suffering
with courage and dignity.**

**Give me the grace to use the cross I bear
to grow closer to you
and to better appreciate your sacred passion,
and the hardships of others.**

**And just as you consecrated your suffering
to the cause of our salvation,
let me offer mine for [intention].**

**Bless me with your loving kindness,
and lift my spirit with your infinite compassion,
so my heart will be filled, not with despair,
but with love, hope and promise for the future, Amen.**

HERE'S A BRIEF VERSION OF THE SAME PRAYER

**Jesus, comforter of the afflicted,
embrace me with your divine love,
bless me with your loving kindness,
and lift my spirit with your infinite compassion, Amen.**

7. PAUL COMPOSED THIS PRAYER TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY FOR INSPIRATION WHEN SUFFERING

**Blessed Mary, you humbly accepted
the passion and death of your Son,
and knowing it was the will of God,
you understood its meaning for all humanity.**

**Pray for me, that I may be inspired
to understand the meaning of my own suffering
and how it can deepen
the purpose and direction of my life.**

Through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

8. PAUL COMPOSED THIS PRAYER OF THANKS

Almighty Father, although my life on this earth has not been perfect, I know you have bestowed upon me many blessings and for these I am humbly grateful.

Please help me to understand your purpose in bestowing this grace on me, so I will be driven to pursue my mission to the best of my ability. And send me your Holy Spirit to inspire and guide me on my mission and in serving you.

Make me an example of the love you have for our human souls, and the blessing you can endow upon us during our journey on this earth, as we strive to ultimately enjoy eternal happiness with those we love, in union with your infinite family.

Through Christ our Lord, Amen.