

St. Anthony of Padua R.C. Church

160 Court Street, Buffalo, New York

Traditionally Speaking by S. Casarotto, cs 11/23/08

ST. ANTHONY'S PIG - Until a few years ago, in many towns in central and southern Italy there was an interesting custom: on the feast of St. Anthony, abbot, (*feast day: Jan. 17*) a piglet was blessed and let loose to roam the streets of the village. Everybody fed the animal which was eventually slaughtered to feed the poor of the village at Christmas time. From this custom comes the Italian saying: *"Three creatures are always well fed: the single lady's cat, the nuns' chaplain and St. Anthony's piglet."*

In 2002, the old custom of raising a piglet for the poor was revived in St. Anthony's Parish. The first year, Prosciutto - that was its name - was raised in a farm in Lancaster. One day, however, sensing its fate, our piglet managed to dig himself out under the fence, only to be captured a few days later in a nearby farm by the firemen. On the feast day, beside a special mass, parishioners hold a pig roast and venison dinner. (Italians always celebrate the proper way). The proceeds are offered to the Scalabrinian missions. Other donations are always welcome. Our piglets' names have been *Prosciutto, Salciccia, Capocollo, Salamino, Pancetta* and *Cotechino*. This year, our piglet is called *Zampone* (a salame-like produce in the Bologna area which includes a boned pig's leg - *zampa*, in Italian).

You may place your donations in the special piggy in church or send them through the mail. **Note:** Don't forget that, as it grows, our pig, being raised for charity, feeds also on paper money and checks!

MOTHER CABRINI used this tradition to support a good number of her institutions. In 1904, she wrote to one of her sisters from New Orleans: *"I took many money boxes shaped like a pig, which Italians here call St. Anthony's Pig and the people compete to see who is able to fatten it, that is fill it up with nickels. In three days the sisters gave out 150 and I want them to give out one thousand. There are various sizes, the smallest which we give to the more trustworthy schoolchildren, can hold \$5, others \$10, others \$20. Can you imagine what a fine collection? You should do the same thing right away, and if you do not find the pigs, take some boxes, but do it immediately for the month of St. Anthony. Set your wits to work!"* In a postscript to the same letter, Cabrini suggested: *"It would even be better to give the money boxes also to the grocery stores and bars."* However, a few days later she advised against entering the saloons. *"Call the proprietor outside and give him the money box to fill up and later go back and collect them."* Saints are always very smart and very prudent!

ITALIAN DIPLOMACY -

Msgr. Nicola Bux, a professor at the Theological Faculty of Apulia, Italy, recently joined the Ecclesia Dei Commission. Asked what can lay people do when bishops and priests are dead set against the new provisions of Pope Benedict's on the Latin Mass, he replied: "When bishops and priests go off the rails, pray to St. Joseph. He is the Patron of the Universal Church. Pray to him so that he may open their eyes or close them forever."