

Sharing What We Have: Our Heritage and Sacrifice

A Series on Giving

In 1906, my 16-year old great grandfather, Ercole, decided to board a ship to America, as the Italian economy was in shambles. He left behind his parents, numerous brothers and sisters, and friends; he landed at New York's Ellis Island and made his way to Philadelphia to begin a new life, asking his fiancée to follow him there a few months later. How brave, how young they were. Many of you may have a similar family story, descendants of strong, proud people, seeking sanctuary or religious freedom, starting a new life in America.

This pandemic may be the biggest life-altering event of our lives. My grandparents had WWI/II; my parents had the Vietnam and Korean Wars; I had 9-11 and the Afghanistan War. And now, this terrible extraordinary event that will not be forgotten. It has made me think about all the sacrifices people have made, and will make during their lives. Ercole Ciarelli took a big chance, gambled on America being the place where he could make a living, raise a family, and begin a new life. Right now, this moment, people in the United States are making great sacrifices.

Members of St. Andrew's are medical professionals, separating themselves from their families to keep them safe. Others are teachers, preparing school lessons for the Fall, knowing some classes may be taught in person. The teacher's entire family will be sacrificing so that other people's children can attend school. Others have elderly parents or grandparents to care for, so siblings take turns living with and caring for them; then, wait a 14-day quarantine period to ensure they are not infected before becoming caretakers again. Many of us cannot be with our loved ones at all, for fear of infecting them and causing their deaths. Others are making sacrifices because the pandemic meant one parent lost his/her job. That loss of salary forced creative cutbacks, narrowed buying decisions to only basic necessities.

Everyone has to make do with what they have. Ercole's daughter, my grandmother Emma, told me stories of her childhood: the closet converted into a smoke "house" for meats, the Victory Garden in the tiny city backyard full of vegetables, canning produce, and eating rather odd Italian recipes utilizing what items her mother could get her hands on ("eggplant" parmigiana made with celery instead of eggplant).

How is the pandemic going to change us and our lives? We cannot predict what those changes will be. One thing we do know, St. Andrew's has heroes of all kinds who are sacrificing so much every day. We support each other, attend to each other's needs with every sacrifice we make; we are One Together.

Karan A. Wright
Stewardship Co-Chair
stewardship@standrews.net

