

My family is from Muro Lucano which is located about twenty minutes from Potenza in the region of Basilicata, Italy. Although my mother was born here in Winnipeg, her parents, Giuseppe and Rosa Rondinone were born in Muro Lucano. My great grandparents were forced to emigrate from Basilicata in 1958 due to lack of work and a diminishing economic situation. My grandparents were only nineteen years old when they were married in Winnipeg. Although my family made a new life in Canada, their hearts remained in Italy.

My grandparents often speak about their beloved home town of Muro Lucano and how proud they are to be from the Basilicata region. The region is also referred to as Lucania, a name which I am all too familiar with. My family belonged to the Lucania Association of Winnipeg and my grandfather was the president of the Lucania Soccer club. Lucania Soccer Club is a men's premier division soccer team here in Manitoba. In the years 1987 and 2000, the team represented Manitoba in a Canadian soccer tournament and won the Canadian championship. My family and all of the Lucanesi people of Winnipeg were very proud! The club also organized dances and picnics which brought many Lucani together in a social environment and made long, lasting friendships. My mom was crowned Miss Lucania at a club dance when she was seventeen years old. I love listening to the stories told by my mom and my grandparents about the events of those gatherings. It makes me want to be involved as well and really be a part of the Basilucania Association.

My mom has had the opportunity to visit Muro Lucano and certain other areas of the Basilicata region. She has told me about the region and how beautiful it is. The town of Muro Lucano has many narrow, winding roads and long staircases made of stone. As she describes the town to me, I picture myself climbing those stairs and saying "buon giorno" to

little old ladies with handkerchiefs on their heads and sitting on small, wooden chairs. I have seen many pictures of our home town of Muro Lucano. It is a picturesque town built on a mountain. Although the earthquake of November 23, 1980 destroyed much of the town, the scenery is quite breathtaking. Basilicata was one of the regions that was struck the hardest by the earthquake. Some of the towns are still in the process of reconstruction. The region of Basilicata has much to offer in the way of land, people and culinary experiences. It is a region made up of several small historical towns and beautiful landscape. The city of Potenza offers modern city life and historical architecture.

My mother, Maria is an active member of the Basilucania Association of Manitoba. I enjoy attending various functions organized by the association such as the annual Christmas party and summer picnic. At the picnic, we have enjoyed a cheese making demonstration and various foods of our region shared by fellow “paesani.” My grandmother has many recipes from the Lucania region which I hope to pass on to my children one day. Some of my favorite foods from our region are; pizza di cipola, clazoni di ceci, pizza di ricotta, pizza di toma and of course minestra. My grandmother also makes homemade salsicia, ricotta, trece and toma cheese. She was taught by her mother who used to make the salsicia and the cheese in Muro Lucano. My grandmother says that it tastes better in Italy because the milk is different. I am looking forward to that taste test myself one day soon!

The patron saint of Muro Lucano is San Gerardo di Maiella. My family has spoken to me about how San Gerardo became a saint and how he helped different people. I have heard my grandmother pray to San Gerardo for protection and I carry a picture of him in my wallet. A few years ago, the Basilucania people of Winnipeg helped to bring a statue of San Gerardo to our Italian church in Winnipeg. The church is home to statues of various saints

representing different regions of Italy. We are very proud that San Gerardo represents the region of Basilicata. Every year, we participate in a procession of the saints which is organized by the church. I am very proud to follow San Gerardo in the procession as someone with origin roots of the Basilicata. One day, I hope to participate at the “Festa di San Gerardo” in Muro Lucano on September 1<sup>st</sup>. My grandparents told me that it is a beautiful celebration of his life and his sainthood.

The scholarships offered by the Anthony Locilento Memorial and by the Basilicata Cultural Society of Canada are a very generous way of helping a university student. If I were to be awarded the scholarship, it would be used towards my tuition for the upcoming school year at the University of Manitoba. I am enrolled at the university with studies leading towards the medical field. The bursary would help lessen the financial burden so that I could concentrate more on my studies.

My family has instilled a certain pride in me as a “Lucanese” from Basilicata. Some day, I hope to return to Italy with my own husband and children. I would especially like to visit Muro Lucano so that I can see with my own eyes all the things my grandparents told me about the town in which they grew up. I would like to tour the entire region as well so that my children could feel the same ties to the Basilicata region as I do.

I would like to thank the Basilicata Cultural Society of Canada for giving me the opportunity to apply for this scholarship.

Marcella Costantino