

La Voce della Dante

March, 2026

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Judy Klayman

How many of you watched the February 2026 Winter Olympics on TV? I certainly did and I suspect many of you did as well. They were certainly the most important recent event in Italy and a proud moment for the country and for its athletes. Italy pulled off a feat by hosting events simultaneously in four different locations. And Italian athletes won a record number of medals for the winter games: a total of 30, 10 of which were gold. And 7 of those 10 medals were won by women who are 35! The short track speed skater Arianna Fontana won 2 medals, one gold and two silver. Francesca Lollobrigida, the long track speed skater, won 2 golds. And Federica Brignone, the alpine skier, won two golds in the giant slalom and super G.

In addition to the huge training demands common to all Olympic athletes, these women faced particular challenges of their own. Federica Brignone fractured her leg and tore her ACL in a major crash in April 2025. It took several surgeries, months of rehabilitation, and a great deal of courage for her to decide compete in these games. She made that decision only a few weeks before the games began, but anyone who saw her race could see that she was ready to compete! Francesca Lollobrigida gave birth to a son in May 2023 and took a maternity leave from training for almost 2 years following the 2022 Winter Olympics. Arianna Fontana was competing in her sixth Olympics. Fontana's total Olympics medal haul now stands at 14, making her the most decorated athlete— across winter or summer Games – in Italy's history!

The Italian press has taken note of these women's victories. According to a writer for *La Provincia*, a Cremona newspaper, they demonstrate that:

Women's sport is no longer a 'variant' of men's sport. It is an autonomous space of excellence and narrative. It brings with it stories that intertwine career and motherhood, strength and awareness, talent and time management.

These Olympics deliver a powerful message: age is not a limit, motherhood is not a sacrifice, injuries are not a barrier... These women have redefined what it means to win.

But Italy's success is undoubtedly also due to the national support this nation provides for its Olympic athletes. According to the NY Times, the Italian government spends about 350 million Euro a year to support all Olympic sports!

The government gives cash prizes to its medalists. This winter, athletes who won a Gold Medal are rewarded with 180,000 Euros and Silver Medal winners get 90,000. Each of the three women I have discussed won 360,000 Euro just this winter for their medal hauls.

National and local governments in Italy pay salaries to Olympic athletes so they can focus on training. Italy directly employs many of its athletes in special athletic military and police

squadrons. I take an online Italian conversation class with Serena Piccoli, a woman who lives in Padova. Some of you may have heard her talk about her native city and region at an on-line Italian meeting last winter. Serena did some online research for our class about the number of Italian Olympic athletes who are or have been members of the Italian military or police forces. And although she did not find the figures for the 2026 games, in the 2024 summer games 73% of the Italian delegation were members of an athletic squadron in the military or civil police forces. Participants receive a monthly stipend to train, which is very important in Italy where there are limited opportunities for athletes unless you are a male soccer, cyclist, or basketball player!



So I close with a photo of Federica Brignone, taken last fall when she was promoted to the rank of Vice-Brigadier in the Carabinieri. She stands in front of all the Olympic medals won by Carabinieri in the Olympics over the years. And while you can see this is an impressive total, these medals are only those won by this national police force's "centro sportivo" (athletic squad). According to Wikipedia, the vast majority of Italy's 829+ medals have been won by athletes employed by military or police squadrons. You may recognize the name of another famous Carabiniere who won gold medals in alpine ski events in the Olympics: Alberto Tomba!

March Meetings

DON'T MISS THESE IN-PERSON WINTER GATHERINGS

March 11, 2026 English Meeting

with Pre-Dante Pasta dinner ~ [by reservation](#)

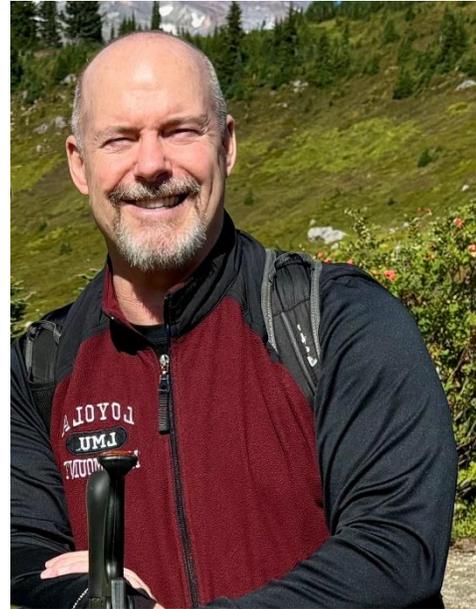
Rome in Second World War: Descent into and Liberation from the Inferno

Rev. Mark McGregor, SJ

This evening will explore how Rome, descended into the inferno of civil war, military war, first against the Allies and then against invading German forces and the Fascists, as Mussolini's rule collapsed in 1943 and rose in Northern Italy. The guides into and out of the infernos of wars come from an array of Italians, international persons trapped in the Eternal City and Vatican City, and military members who played roles in Rome's liberation in June, 1944.

Ordained a Catholic priest in the Jesuit order in Seattle in 1996, Mark has spent the past seven years researching and writing about some of the thousands of Allied prisoners of war who escaped camps in Italy in 1943 and were part of an underground network called the Rome Escape Line.

Mark has an MFA in Screenwriting from Loyola Marymount, taught at Fairfield University and Gonzaga and was a Chaplain in the U.S. Air Force (2011-20), stationed at Aviano Air Base, Italy in 2019). Presently he is a Chaplain at the Veteran Affairs Puget Sound Medical Center, Seattle working in the spinal cord injury unit.



Greenwood Senior Center
525 N. 85th St
Seattle WA 98103

[Pre-Dante Pasta Dinner by reservation](#)

please reserve by 5:00 Monday March 9

and bring antipasti or desserts to share

Dinner is \$10/person payable onsite

Doors open 6:00; Presentation 7:30

March 25, 2026 Italian Meeting

Michaela Tartaglia, Presenter

Our Italian Meeting speaker in March is Michaela Tartaglia. We're happy to have her back for another entertaining presentation.

Chef Michaela Tartaglia is an Italian native, born and raised in Turin, Piedmont. She's made Seattle her home for 15 years and opened Pasta Casalinga in 2018 in the iconic Pike Place Market, offering a rotating menu of seasonal dishes.



A linguist by education, she is the author of *Una mela al giorno: Proverbi e modi di dire dal mondo* (*An apple a day: Proverbs and idioms from around the world*) as well as *Pasta for All Seasons: Dishes that Celebrate the Flavors of Italy and the Bounty of the Pacific Northwest*. This cookbook was described by its publisher as: "Authentic Italian flavors and cooking techniques join forces with seasonal, regional ingredients for a stunning yet approachable collection of 50 pasta dishes for vegetarians, meat-lovers, and pescatarians alike."

Formerly she was a beloved Italian teacher for us in Dante's Language School.

Topic: TBA

La nostra relatrice all'Italian Meeting di marzo sarà Michaela Tartaglia. Siamo lieti di riaverla con noi per un'altra interessante presentazione. La chef Michaela Tartaglia è italiana, nata e cresciuta a Torino, in Piemonte. Vive a Seattle da 15 anni e ha aperto Pasta Casalinga nel 2018 nell'iconico Pike Place Market, offrendo un menù a rotazione di piatti stagionali. Linguista di formazione, è autrice di "*Una mela al giorno: Proverbi e modi di dire dal mondo*" (*An apple a day: Proverbs and Idioms from around the World*) e di "*Pasta for All Seasons: Dishes that Celebrate the Flavors of Italy and the Bounty of the Pacific Northwest*". Questo libro di cucina è stato descritto dal suo editore come: "Autentici sapori e tecniche di cottura italiani si uniscono a ingredienti regionali e stagionali per una straordinaria ma accessibile raccolta di 50 piatti di pasta per vegetariani, amanti della carne e pescetariani".

In precedenza ha insegnato italiano per noi alla Dante Language School.

Argomento: da definire

Greenwood Senior Center
525 N. 85 St
Seattle WA 98103

No reservations for Italian meetings, but please bring antipasti or desserts to share

Doors open 6:00; Presentation 7:30

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Thanks to all who have renewed their Dante Membership. If you haven't done so yet, please renew soon. Dues fund all our activities.

\$40/individual, \$60/family. [Renew now!](#)



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"Behind the scenes" at Dante

First, thanks to all our wonderful volunteers, new and old, who have been helping as "crew" with set-up and tear-down of our meetings. It REALLY makes a difference in the workload for each person if the tasks are shared.

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New "crew" helpers welcome at all meetings!! Check those "I can help" check-boxes when you register for the dinner (English) meetings and please consider arriving early or staying to the bitter end to help at Italian meetings. We're all done, usually, within 30 minutes of the end of the presentations; sooner with more folks!

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The May English meeting (May 13, 2026) is still WITHOUT COOKS. Earlier volunteers had to change their plans, and no one has stepped in from solicitations in last month's *La Voce*. At this meeting we will welcome local violinist and conductor ALLION SALVADOR as our presenter, performing flashy works of Paganini and Locatelli. It would be really nice to have a fine Pre-Dante Pasta dinner before his show.

If anyone wants to cook, please email joyce@danteseattle.org

as soon as possible. Cooks are reimbursed and all other details can be provided upon request. If we don't hear from a volunteer cook before the end of April, the May meeting will become a POTLUCK, wherein all attendees will be asked to bring a dish to share

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Don't forget to register for the Spring Quarter Italian Language classes. The registration deadline is March 19! The A1, A2, B1 and B2 classes run from April 7 - June 11. The Advanced Conversation class goes from April 6 - June 10. All the classes are conducted online.

Please visit [the Italian Language Classes](#) page on our website for more information. Please feel free to contact the Language Program Director at tassone@danteseattle.org for guidance about what course is appropriate for your level of Italian or for any questions.

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Looking ahead to spring.....

The Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Dante Alighieri Society of Washington (hey, that's US!) is WEDNESDAY APRIL 8, 2026. This will be an important meeting for discussions of our future programming so PLEASE plan to attend. Dinner is provided that night at no charge – we will be taking reservations as usual when the time comes. Your Board of Directors is already working hard to prepare the slate for next year's board and some important discussion items for all to consider. More will be shared in the weeks ahead.

Save the Date,

Wednesday, April 8, 2026

You can help shape our future and learn ways to become more deeply involved in Dante.

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Seattle-Perugia Sister City Association is proud to announce their 2026 Scholarships! Each year they award up to four (4) scholarships to qualified members to study Italian at the internationally acclaimed Università per Stranieri di Perugia.

THE SCHOLARSHIP PACKAGE INCLUDES:

1. One-month's tuition at the University for Foreigners (Università per Stranieri)
2. A 500-euro stipend to help offset travel / living expenses, which will be distributed to the scholar following completion of the 15th day of classes.

Applications are being accepted March 1st through March 31st. Once received our scholarship committee will review all applications submitted and make a final selection by April 15th.

A copy of the [2026 Application Form](#) is now available at the [Scholarships page](#) on our website along with FAQ and testimonials from our past scholars.