

Interview Transcript

Questions	
Date of Interview	October 25 th , 2024
Name of Interviewee and Age	Maria D'Alessandro, Born in Naples, 1948.
What First Brought Her to Canada?	<p>Sister Maria: *Answers in Italian*</p> <p>Professor Colella's Translation: So, she came in 2007 and she arrived, she was actually sent her by her order on a mission. It wasn't a personal choice but it was a need that her order saw in this area.</p>
Follow Up	
So, there was something that needed to be done in this specific area and that is why she came over?	<p>Sister Maria: *Answers in Italian*</p> <p>Professor Colella's Translation: So, there – the Holy Rosary Church has a very large, and still has a very large Italian congregation so she was sent here to assist with religious nurturing of the community to assist in education so almost as an Apostille-type mission and what is important to note is that there were other nuns already here in this home that arrived prior to her.</p> <p>Professor Colella: She'll give you a bit of history.</p> <p>Professor Colella Translation: So, the first nuns arrived in Thorold</p> <p>Sister Maria: Three!</p> <p>Professor Colella Translation: Three nuns arrived in Thorold, June 29th 1978. It is important (the three nuns) because they were</p>

	<p>the ones that really established the community before everyone here.</p> <p>Hadiyah Ahsan: Yeah, right. Yeah.</p> <p>Professor Colella Translation: (The following are the names and cities the three nuns are from).</p> <p>Eustella Maglion was also from Naples. Then there was Sister Angela Sassano. She was from an area called Campobasso. Elivra Testa and she was from a town called Benevento.</p> <p>Professor Colella Explanation: So, they were the first to come and they were sent to provide religious support for the congregation and catechism classes and they taught catechism to the children so they weren't doing catechism with just the children but all ages. And even now Sister Maria continues one class, once a month to meet with, to adults so she does catechism with the adults.</p>
<p>How Did She Come to Canada? Means Of Transport?</p>	<p>Sister Maria: *Answers in Italian*</p> <p>Professor Colella Translation: So, she came by plane. So waiting for her at Pearson International was Sister Consolata and Sister Angela were waiting for her at the airport to bring her to Thorold. She said (Sister Maria) was very emotional because it was the first time she was travelling alone.</p>
<p>Follow Up</p> <p>Was She Scared?</p>	<p>Sister Maria: Yeah. *Further Answers in Italian*</p> <p>Professor Colella Translation: So, she was actually very scared and nervous because</p>

	<p>even though she had studies English, you know her whole life at school, when she got here, she felt like it wasn't the same English she had learned in school. So, she felt really overwhelmed.</p> <p>Professor Colella Translation: Sister Consolata was the chef of the school. She was the one that made beautiful little lunches for the children. Sister Consolata was here (at the daycare) for 35 years before she went back to the Mother House.</p> <p>Hadiyah Ahsan: Wow.</p>
<p>Follow Up #2</p> <p>Did She Know Anyone At All Before Coming In?</p>	<p>Sister Maria: *Answers in Italian*</p> <p>Professor Colella Translation: Oh my gosh, So, the only person she knew was Sister Angela because Sister Angela was her (Sister Maria's) daycare teacher when she was little.</p> <p>Sister Maria: Two years.</p> <p>Professor Colella Translation: For two years, when she was two years old. So, she met Sister Consolata as well because she returned to Italy to the Mother House and that is where she met her.</p> <p>Hadiyah Ahsan: Got it.</p> <p>Professor Colella Translation: She had returned to the Mother House on holiday, yeah.</p> <p>Sister Maria: *Shares Information in Italian*</p> <p>Professor Colella Translation: So, it required a lot of sacrifices for them to open up the school, the daycare and they started, as I said, in September with three children. And it has slowly grown since then and I mean, they're at capacity, they've been at capacity even when my child was here so they're always at</p>

	<p>capacity. They've been running a daycare for 46 years. She's counting! 46 years that they've been here.</p> <p>Hadiyah Ahsan: That's amazing. Wow.</p> <p>Professor Colella Translation: Oh so, now they got three different rooms. So, they've got one room where they have children from 1 year to 18-months. They've got a second room where there are children that are 2 years old and the third is four children that are 3. An of course at 4 years they go to school.</p>

What do you remember of your first impressions of Canada? Did You Encounter Any obstacles/barriers as a new immigrant to Canada? What did she like and dislike?

Professor Colella: That might be a little tricky (the question) because their life is so closed.

Hadiyah Ahsan: Right, it's one-way.

Sister Maria: *Answers in Italian*

Professor Colella Translation: So, for her it was a real cultural shock. So, she identifies things like the different times that meals were served. So, here lunch is usually at 12:00 p.m. which is not typical in Italy. Dinner is around 5:00 p.m. or 6:00 p.m., also not typical in Italy. But the other challenges are also and was the fact that there wasn't the same notion of sense of community in the evenings so in Italy she would be able to take a walk in the evenings whereas here there's no one around so there was that isolation even though she is living in an area that is very strongly Italian, there is still that isolation.

Sister Maria: *Continues to Answer in Italian*

Professor Colella Translation: She just pretends she doesn't know English. So, one of the things that was asked of her when she first arrived was to attend English language school. So, she was sent to learn English.

Hadiyah Ahsan: Here?

Professor Colella: Here, yes. So, the first few months was problematic but she says after about two or three months she kind of began to get the swing.

Sister Maria: I am happy when the -
Answers the rest in Italian

Professor Colella Translation: She enjoys going to English school.

<p>How did You communicate with Relatives? Did you exchange letters with relatives in Italy?</p>	<p>Sister Maria: *Replies in Italian*</p> <p>Professor Colella Translation: So, typically just by phone. Even with the Mother House.</p> <p>Professor Colella's Son: Mom, she's not that old.</p> <p>Professor Colella: No! But you know what, even in like 78' you could write letters.</p> <p>Professor Colella Translation: She says she has a cellphone but doesn't know how to use it. So, she was gifted a cellphone so she could stay in touch with her sister and her families and she can't figure it out. So, she hears it ring but doesn't know how to turn it off.</p>
<p>Follow Up</p> <p>I also wanted to ask her who was the person she most frequently spoke to? Was her mother still alive at this time? Was it Just her sister?</p>	<p>Professor Colella: In Italy?</p> <p>Hadiyah Ahsan: Mhm.</p> <p>Professor Colella: Probably the Mother House but I will ask.</p> <p>Sister Maria: *Answers in Italian*</p> <p>Professor Colella Translation: At the time, so, when she first arrived, she would have been communicating with her sister, her brother, cousins, aunts, nieces and nephews. So, their Mother House is in a location called Casauria, just outside of Naples, near Naples. And so, there would be constant communication with the Mother House.</p>
<p>Follow Up #2</p> <p>How Often Would They Be Speaking With One Another?</p>	<p>Sister Maria; *Answers in Italian*</p> <p>Professor Colella: Every 2 weeks.</p> <p>Hadiyah Ahsan: Even with the family?</p>

	<p>Professor Colella: With her family, for sure every 2 weeks.</p> <p>Sister Maria: *Answers in Italian*</p> <p>Professor Colella Translation: So, with family every 2 weeks but with the Mother House, ever month.</p> <p>Sister Maria: Yes.</p> <p>Professor Colella: At least once a month.</p>
<p>When you first started working at the daycare, did you speak in Italian or English?</p>	<p>Sister Maria: *Answers in Italian*</p> <p>Professor Colella Translation: So, with the grandparents they would usually speak in Italian but with the children, in class, and with the other teachers that were supporting their work, it would always be in English</p>
<p>What is your role now in the daycare?</p>	<p>Professor Colella: No, she's no longer directly in the daycare.</p> <p>Sister Maria: *Answers in Italian*</p> <p>Professor Colella Translation: She says she's not working anymore. So, she's been a teacher for 40 years.</p> <p>Hadiyah Ahsan 40?</p> <p>Sister Maria: *Answers in Italian*</p> <p>Professor Colella Translation: So, she has 4 degrees from Italy of varying types. So, she has a degree from the Pontifical Institute of Southern Italy in Theology. Then she has diplomas in teaching young children I would imagine comparable to an ECE (Early Childhood Educator), and an elementary school teacher.</p>

<p>Where is “home” for you?</p>	<p>Hadiyah Ahsan: I’ll just do two more questions</p> <p>Professor Colella: Sure.</p> <p>Hadiyah Ahsan: If we were to ask her where her “home”, where she enjoys staying the most, would she consider home in Canada or still Italy? Where is her heart?</p> <p>Professor Colella: That’s an easy one!</p> <p>Professor Colella Translation: Her heart is in Italy but she is happy that she is here doing her job and her mission.</p> <p>Sister Maria: The people like me.</p>
<p>Looking back on this experience, is there anything you would have done differently? In other words, did this experience make you feel more Canadian?</p>	<p>Hadiyah Ahsan: So is there anything that she would have done differently? And did this entire experience of me asking her all these questions, did she feel like a real Canadian today?</p> <p>Professor Colella: So, she also speaks a Neapolitan dialect so she was speaking to me in Neapolitan and so she said, if I were to be born again, I would still become a nun. So, she has no regrets about the path she’s taken, Yes, so, she would always want to be a nun.</p>