



JANUARY
2020

fao Casa gazette

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- FAO STAFF COOP CHRISTMAS CONCERT 2019

- WHAT IS THE KUMON METHOD

- TUSCAN CUISINE

- STEPPING BACK IN TIME



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Typewritten electronic contributions for the FAO CASA Gazette are welcome. These can be articles, poems, drawings, photographs, etc., in fact, anything interesting that staff members and/or their families in Rome or in the field may wish to contribute. These contributions can be in English, French, Italian or Spanish.

No anonymous material will be accepted, and the Editor reserves the right to choose and/or reject material that is not in keeping with the ethics of the Organization. Send contributions electronically to the Editor at fao-staff-coop@fao.org or leave signed copies with the Coop office on the ground floor of building E.

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ALL ACTIVITIES ARE FOR STAFF COOP MEMBERS ONLY



FAO STAFF COOP CHRISTMAS CONCERT 2019

Music is one of the most important factors in the life of a human being of all races and religions. We have to work all together to heal the world and to create a better future...

FAO Staff Coop organizes every year a concert to celebrate Christmas and promote various musical activities in a spirit of sharing and friendship.

During our concert music has been described as a wonderful force capable of getting people together.

We have proposed Christian Hymns and international songs and even African music to represent a world without barriers, borders or religion nor nationalities division.

We have opened the concert with the performance of the seven years old **Berber Wang** who has played on piano

HARK THE HERALD ANGELS SING of Felix Mendelssohn and the Christmas Song and **WE WISH YOU A MERRY CHRISTMAS** under the guidance of maestro Orhan Memed. We have celebrated the power of love through the amazing vocal performances of **Dalila Spagnolo** and the musical arrangements of **Luigi Russo**.

A special thanks to **Dalila and Luigi** who have come from Lecce to enrich our concert with their enchanting melodies, to our pop singing teacher **Karin Giola** who has sung **SHALLOW**, the leader single of the romantic movie **A STAR IS BORN**, and to **THE FAO STAFF COOP ENSEMBLE** directed by maestro **Alessandro Severa** that have accompanied the songs performed by **Wulian Weng** and **Gianluca Romanazzo**.

Most of the song's lyrics and contents were addressed to the dreamers... to keep the listeners focused on moving forward in only one direction: towards the future which belongs only to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams.



"A winner is a dreamer who never gives up." (Nelson Mandela)

We have to work all together to heal the world and to create a better future.



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Dear coop members,

While approaching the end of 2019, we would like to share with you some insights. We have been hearing a lot about climate change and we certainly can agree that protecting nature today means a better planet for future generations. We also understand the importance of conducting our life in a sustainable and responsible manner.

To this extent, in 2020 we are planning to organize activities and events in line with this philosophy.

We will continue proposing many interesting tours in cooperation with STARTREKK, both in Italy and abroad, to admire natural landscapes and romantic old villages... to let you discover the trekker that is in you!!!

We are also planning new eno-gastronomic activities aimed at sharing the pleasure of tasting good cuisine and learning how to cook healthy food by using biological products.

In addition, we are thinking of setting up a Roster (to be put at disposal of our Coop members) of assistants (caregivers), drivers (to help people with disabilities or who have difficulty in moving around on their own), care homes (for the elderly), domestic help and babysitters.

In this regard, we would like to invite FAO STAFF COOP members to provide contact details of some RELIABLE persons they may know who can be recommended to other colleagues or retirees.

This information will allow us to include in our Roster only people who are referenced and can be trusted.

For the rest, we will continue increasing the number of activities offered so as to better respond to the evolving needs of our members, also by listening to their invaluable suggestions.

We look forward to continue receiving your support while working with enthusiasm to find new ways to care for your well-being and enjoyment.
Season's Greetings from all the staff of the FAO Staff Coop.



BREAKING NEWS

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WHAT IS THE KUMON METHOD?

Our children and youth live in an age whereby they are continually distracted by new technologies: the Kumon learning method helps them regain lost attention



by Elisabetta Parise

*Head of Kumon Roma Portuense - Gianicolense
"The first Kumon Center born in Rome"*

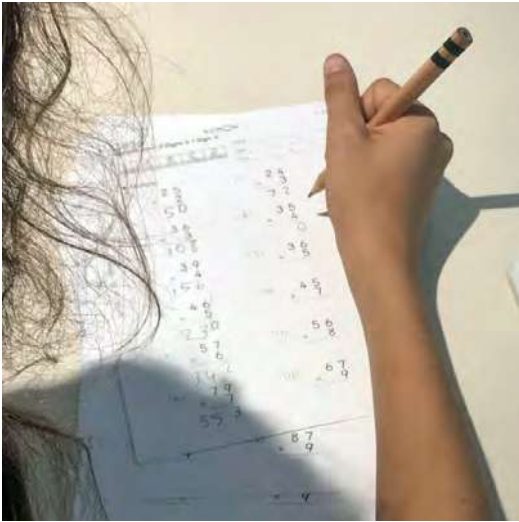
In just a few years we have witnessed the exponential development of social networks and the consequential use of smartphones by children and adolescents to connect to the Internet, virtual reality and chat groups.

Of course, it would be excessive to demonize the technology and the excellent tools available to us, but it is essential to protect the concentration skills and development of learning for our children who now live in an "increasingly social" generation, often unable to pay attention and to listen to who is speaking or - worse still - to disconnect even for a moment from digital platforms and video games.



I am convinced that an excellent education is the best gift we can give our children. This firm conviction led me to investigate the Kumon Method, gather a team of experts and open the first Kumon Center in Rome.

A careful approach precisely catered to the needs of the youngest, the Kumon Method has its roots in a distant era: in 1954, Toru Kumon, parent and brilliant Japanese mathematics teacher discovered that his son Takeshi could not express his potential in mathematics class at school, so he created a series of work schedules and exercises for him to do at home, every day.



Instead of allowing the school's maths program from restricting his son, Toru Kumon made sure that Takeshi could develop a solid foundation for learning and created an opportunity for his son to progress as much as possible. This ensured that Takeshi was developing into his best abilities.

In over 60 years, the Kumon Method has supported more than 4 million students worldwide.

Through investing in the student's maximum potential and developing

trust, Kumon has succeeded in creating lifelong independent learners who face obstacles directly, in both academic and non-academic contexts.

Thanks to the skills developed through the Kumon Method students are empowered to achieve their goals and dreams. I analyzed the Kumon-based philosophy on individualized learning in order to learn the researched methodology that guarantees academic achievement while respecting individual needs (student's learning pace and capabilities).

"I believe that this method teaches you to study independently from a young age: it is much more than an after-school service or help with homework and it differs from traditional school teaching." Instead of preparing children to face a specific task in class or exam, the Kumon Method allows students to study alone based on a personalized program.

The Kumon Center Rome Portuense-Gianicolense is the first center born in Rome and employs a team of professors that stands out for a professional path up to the task.

WHAT IS KUMON?



**EXPERT
INSTRUCTION**



**ESTABLISHED
PROGRAMME**



**SELF-
LEARNING**



**LONG-TERM
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ROME SWEET HOME



by **Jamie Kidd**

My name is Jamie Kidd. I am a senior journalism student at Temple University in Philadelphia, PA. I recently switched my major from Psychology to Journalism because I realized I should be doing what I love and not what is expected from society. I want to live a happy, fulfilling life where I can share my thoughts and experiences through my work. I have always loved writing, so I am excited to be able to do it for the rest of my life

I'm not going to lie, traveling around Europe for four months gets exhausting. I feel bad saying this, even to myself, because I am truly trying my best to not take it for granted. As someone who has never traveled out of my home country before

coming to Rome, it has taken me a lot of time to adjust, and I still am adjusting. Since arriving in Rome, there have been quite a number of excursions I have gone on, including Paris, Prague, Munich, Nice, Monaco and Florence.



No matter where I was going, I was always so excited to pack my bags and head on over to Fiumicino airport in Rome. I love walking into an Airbnb in an unfamiliar place to see where I will be living for the next few days. I love going out to the first meal in an unfamiliar city and allowing that to set the tone for the rest of my trip, because, you know, the level of food is a big deal. As my time in Europe is coming to an end, I look back on my travels and I am proud of how I spread them out. I traveled out of Rome every few weeks rather than weekly, which is more than

enough for me. To be honest, when I think about traveling out of one country to another every few weeks, I realize how lucky I am. It is definitely not that easy when in the United States. Even traveling nationally in the States is considerably more expensive than from, say, Rome to London. Anyway, I get exhausted even after a weekend out of Rome.

So, traveling every few weeks allows me to relax in my temporary Roman home while focusing on my studies, and therefore looking forward to my next excursion a few weeks later. I can appreciate people who have the “travel bug”, who cannot stop exploring, pursuing excursions around Europe every week. I strongly believe there is a type of person for this kind of travel. However, I would not be able to keep up. Maybe one day I will, but as a kind of inexperienced traveler, I need to adjust.

As I have traveled the past few months, I have learned what kind of excursions I like to go on. Specifically, when my mom came to Rome for a week to visit me, I took her around to all of the famous monuments in Rome including the Trevi Fountain, the Vatican museums, the Colosseum, etc. You name it – we did it. During this week, I realized that I am a much more adventurous traveler, looking for interactive, heart-racing fun, rather than learning about history and artifacts. I never knew before what I liked because



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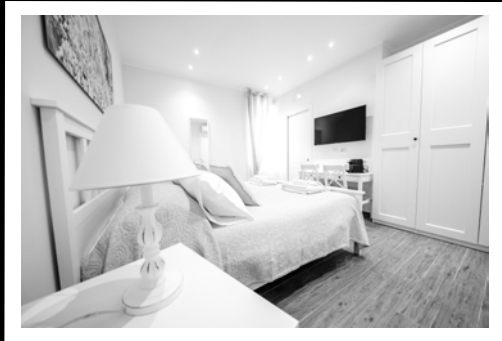
I hadn't really traveled much. But I guess, looking back, history of my traveling says something considering my furthest vacation from home before Rome was to Florida, where we would go to the beach and go to Disney World – vacations full of adventure.

Before deciding to study abroad, I would be upset with my lack of traveling throughout my life. My mother always told me that my time would come, that I would be able to go anywhere in the world one day. This was very valuable advice for me. However, I did not expect that once I started traveling internationally, it would be this much in this short of a time. I find it much more valuable to travel sporadically rather than often because it takes time to take in the experience around you and to really understand the culture and the completely different world that you are temporarily immersed in. Regardless of what type of travel one may prefer, every week, every month or every year, it is important to find your preference of travel style and where you would get the most out of your experience. Studying in Europe has not only offered me a different perspective of the world, but it has taught me a lot about myself and has set the tone for the way I want to explore the rest of the world as I grow, and for that, I am forever grateful.



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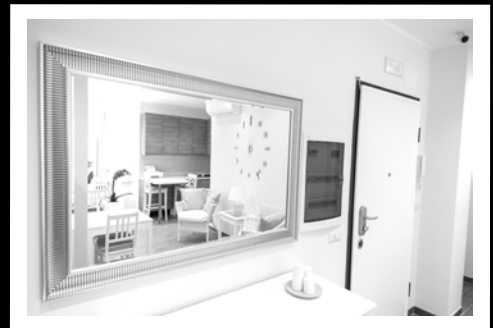
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TUSCAN CUISINE



RUBRICA DI CUCINA A CURATA
DA ROSSO DI SERA CHEF



by Debora Messina

Following the degree in Political Science at the University of Florence, she started her professional experience in the field of international cooperation. Her deep interest and passion for Italian cuisine orientated her career towards the food and education sector.

She acted as Academic Coordinator at an international Hospitality Institute in Florence, where she was in charge of food & culture programs. At present, she is a collaborator of Loretta Cavallaro, Manager of Mind - culinary school for amateurs, and a tasting lab open to producers and food lovers

The term “Italian food” has little meaning in Italy: to an Italian, there is Florentine, Venetian, Neapolitan, Bolognese and Genoese cuisines, as well as the typical dishes of Latium, Piedmont, Lombardy or Sicily. Each region of Italy has a different history and geography, upon which their cooking methods and ingredients are based. Common to all the regions is the use of good quality and fresh ingredients, that is the main feature of Italian cuisine.



Italy is distinguished by strong regional, historical and cultural differences. Its 20 regions (former independent states) are strongly individualistic. These regional divisions are especially evident in food preparation.

Tuscan cuisine is an ancient and skilled cuisine made up of tasty ingredients and never excessively elaborate; the dominant character is certainly its simplicity. This simplicity is however more apparent than real, in that each dish is made up of well-balanced portions, never inspired by haste, but by patient attention to the choice and the amalgamation of the ingredients.

The classical French cuisine, admired all over the world, has part of its origins in Florence: its culinary knowledge was, in fact, exported by the chefs who followed the French court of Caterina de' Medici in the 1500s.



Tuscany is the heartland of Italy, with its foods reflecting the very best of Italy's home cooking, its roots originating from “cucina povera”, or peasant cookery. The Tuscans are well known for their superior yet simple dishes, which arise from using the freshest available products. They believe in enhancing the purity and natural flavor of ingredients, rather than trying to camouflage with excess sauces and seasonings.

Tuscan cuisine is said to go back thousands of years, and even today it sets the standards other areas of Italy strive to meet. Simply put, the Tuscans approach to food is based on a love of wine, fresh pressed olive oil, bread, as well as the freshest produce, seafood and meats of the season.

THE RECIPE

RAVIOLI MAREMMANI (SPINACH AND RICOTTA CHEESE RAVIOLI)

FOR THE FILLING:

- 400 G FRESH SPINACH
- 300 G RICOTTA CHEESE
- 1 EGG
- 50 G GRATED PARMIGIANO REGGIANO CHEESE
- SALT TO TASTE
- NUTMEG

Wash the spinach, steam them and leave to cool. Squeeze them to remove excess water, then roughly chop them and blend with the ricotta, egg, grated parmigiano and nutmeg.

FRESH PASTA

- FRESH PASTA:
- 2 EGGS
- 200 G FLOUR
- A PINCH OF SALT

Arrange the flour on a flat surface with a crater in the middle. Sprinkle a pinch of salt and add the eggs. First use a fork to beat up the egg and mix the flour, then mix with the hands until the dough is smooth and even. Allow the dough to sit for 20-30 minutes. Sprinkle some flour on the working board, roll the pasta with a rolling pin into very thin sheets, and cut in squares for ravioli. Fill each square with the spinach and ricotta mixture, then cover with another square, and press the edges to seal them.



ROSSO DI SERA HAS CHOSEN THIS SCHOOL

Mind - Food for the Soul is an open space, a think-tank dedicated to the knowledge and sharing of food culture. It consists of a culinary school for amateurs, and a tasting lab open to producers and food lovers.

The school is located in Rome, in the area of Piramide/Ostiense, an eclectic district which is becoming one of the most dynamic places to live like a local in the Eternal City.



Do you want learn how to make home made pasta?

Come at our course and learn how to make tortellini and ravioli. At the end we will taste the cooked dishes together with a good wine.



Event of 24 January 2020 at 7:00 p.m.



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RETIRED OR RETIRING SOON? DON'T WORRY, IT'S NOT THE END OF THE ROAD

I am writing this article here in the FAO CASA magazine to tell you that retirement is not the end of the road, but the start of a new one. All the knowledge and experience we have accumulated over the years should not and must not go to waste



by Dr. Mohammed Saker

FAO retiree 2002. Lives in Rome

When I retired from FAO in 2002, I wanted to do something meaningful and symbolic of capping my career working for a humanitarian organization. After much thought, I decided the best thing to do was to build a community clinic in the village of my birth, Al-Kroom in the coastal region of Syria. The notion of a clinic was a symbol of gratitude to my homeland but also a response to the dire needs of the inhabitants of both my village and the surrounding areas for a viable and easily accessible health facility.



Around 2005, I began funding the construction of a building that conformed to the regulations of a health facility. Upon completion two years later, I presented a proposal to the health unit of the governorate. I would bequeath the land and the building to the local government to launch a local health center to serve the more than 3,000 inhabitants of

that areas. The health services graciously accepted. Today the clinic that I funded serves as the beating heart of that community, provides primary

health care for the community, staffed by a full-time dentist, physicians and nurses. Previously lacking health services like family planning, care for pregnant women, and childhood immunization are now a staple for that community. The center is equipped with a dental clinic, a family planning and reproductive health room, an emergency room, ambulatory equipment, an electrocardiograph, and a general clinic. While the clinic is funded and managed by the local government, often I continue to fund the purchase of required equipment or supplies, that are beyond the available budget.

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While the clinic satisfied my immediate philanthropic instincts, I felt there was more I wanted to give back. I felt I needed to share the experience and knowledge I had amassed working for FAO as professional for many years.

With my background as an economist, as well as my editorial and language experience at FAO, I published an English/Arabic dictionary of developmental, economic and sociopolitical terms. The dictionary is distributed now in the Arab world by a local NGO in Cairo, which uses the proceeds of the sales of the dictionary to fund its humanitarian projects across Egypt.

Retirement is often overwhelming for UN professionals in general. After a life of intellectual fulfillment and productivity working for FAO, the prospect of going back home and having nothing to do is daunting, if not downright terrifying for most of us. But I am writing this article here in the FAO CASA magazine to tell you that retirement is not the end of the road, but the start of a new one. All the knowledge and experience we have accumulated over the years should not and must not go to waste. The possibilities of how you can stay engaged, stay



productive, stay a net giver in your community are endless, and only limited by your imagination. For me the choice was clear, I went back to my roots and identified a few vacuums that needed to be filled. Both the clinic and my dictionary are life-long projects that have given me back more than the time and resources I have

invested in them. You too can identify projects, passions, or pursuits that can successfully connect your past career at FAO, with a rewarding, enriching and intellectually engaging future in retirement.

MY “NONNO”

My nonno Francesco is one of the biggest sources of pride in my Italian heritage



by Michael Bruschi

Is a PhD student of Music Theory at Yale University. The following essay was written while in high school in response to an assignment asking him to reflect on a source of pride in his Italian heritage

I can still see him there. He would come home at four in the afternoon every day, still in his work clothes and work boots, and go straight to the garden. No matter how difficult, how tedious, or how busy his day might have been, he would always make time to tend to that garden. No matter what. This is my nonno Francesco, and he is one of the biggest sources of pride in my Italian heritage. He would often take me back and show me around the garden when I came on my weekly visits to his house, which was just a twenty-minute drive from where I lived on Long Island, New York. Of all the things I remember from my childhood, that garden may be the most vivid memory of all. I would often literally get lost among the neatly manicured rows of eggplant, peppers, zucchini and tomatoes. No weed would stand a chance of sneaking in; no amount of unrelenting, sun-scorching days would cause the plants to droop on his watch. I would sit under the fig tree, nibbling on the fruits of his labor, taking it all in. I remember saying “what’s the point of going to the supermarket when you can grow it all at home and have it taste even better?” I was only a young child, but I was beginning to grasp how lucky I was to be raised in an Italian environment.

But was it really just a garden? Or was it more like the ultimate microcosm of the Italian way of life? I’d go with the latter. My nonno was always doing for others, and it all started with his garden - I’d call him to tell him we were on our way to visit and, somehow, in all of twenty minutes, he and my nonna would have a feast waiting for us on the kitchen table when we walked in. In my naïveté, I used to think he was a magician. But even now, I’m not so sure if that’s completely false. No one was a stranger in that house. My nonno knew everyone within a ten-block radius, and at some point had invited them all over for an award-winning meal. I used to think that house was the center of Long Island. It really might have been. It embodied a spirit, an atmosphere, that is genuinely Italian, along with a warmth, comfort, cordiality, security and compassion only paralleled by one’s own home. They were all just a part of his extended family, and he cared for them as he would his true kin. He didn’t see any other way to live. I still remember the times he packed his lawnmower into the trunk of his car and drove over to the house of a neighbor whose wife was in the hospital after suffering a stroke. He proceeded to mow his lawn for weeks, unasked,

just for the privilege of helping a friend in a time of need. That spirit of giving, selflessness and unconditional support is one of the most important traits of his Italian heritage that he embodied and passed on to his family.

That was many years ago. Since then, the house has been sold, the garden has slowly been converted back into a plain patch of grass, and he has moved back to his homeland. Instead of the usual weekly visits, we have to settle for weekly phone calls. Yet still, now that I think of it, I am finally able to grasp the significance of what my nonno did for me. He managed to take all of Italy, all things Italian, and plant it right in his backyard. For me.

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STEPPING BACK IN TIME

with StarTrek, 28-29 March 2020



by Terry De Simone

Neapolitan origins, has lived around Europe for many years and settled in Rome. Financial consultant, trainer, writer, mother, sportswoman and excursion guide, cooperates with StarTrek as event creator and tour leader

Leave your agendas and duties for a weekend and step back in the Middle Ages for a unique hiking experience and much more in Abruzzo.

Exclusively for FAO Staff Coop members, here is an absolute preview of **STEPPING BACK IN TIME with StarTrek on 28/29 March, 2020**: an amazing weekend in Abruzzo, visiting three magical places, as coming out of fairy tales:

1. The medieval village of **Santo Stefano di Sessanio** with overnight stay at the “scattered hotel” Sextantio.
2. The incredible underground world of the **Stiffe Caves**.
3. The fascinating **Castle of Rocca Calascio**.



1. Leaving on Saturday morning from Rome by private coach, you will reach the heart of the **Gran Sasso and Monti della Laga National Park** and get to **Santo Stefano di Sessanio**, a Middle Ages jewel perched at 1,251 meters, considered one of the most beautiful villages in Italy. A local guide will take you around the old village inhabited by 120 people only, developed with the wool economy and reborn thanks to tourism.

Here your time will start to slow down as a soundless stillness lingers among stone alleys and porches, while snow may be falling and chimneys smoking. Maybe it was this picture that, at the beginning of the new millenium, caught

the attention of Daniel Kihlgren, a young, visionary Swedish entrepreneur. Kihlgren, fascinated, bought part of the abandoned houses of the historic center, restructured them and, preserving their old style, transformed them into a project of “scattered hotel” in a timeless space, which launched Santo Stefano as a destination for unconventional tourism.

Well, it will be right at this unique hotel, the **Sextantio**, that you will dine and spend the night. Here guest rooms, taverns, reception area and restaurant all use original buildings restored. Yet, not restored to look like a modern hotel,

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as Kihlgren was a purist and was determined to stay as close to medieval history, traditions and culture as possible and went to enormous lengths to do so: beds are covered in locally made blankets, using materials and techniques that have been part of Abruzzo life for centuries; furniture was procured from galleries, private collections, abandoned properties. Even the food served in the restaurant, the tavern and the tea and liquor rooms use ingredients and cooking methods that would have been used in medieval times. The modern technology and comforts are hidden or blend in so beautifully they somehow don't seem out of place. The walls have been stripped back of any modern decoration to show the smoke-stained original stone or plaster. So, once assigned one of these authentic rooms, you will have some free time to have lunch in one of the village taverns and then move on by coach with destination *Caves of Stiffe*.

2. Located at the top of the gorge that overlooks the small town of *Stiffe*, the Caves are a spectacular karst phenomenon thanks to the crossing of an underground stream formed by waters coming from the *Altopiano delle Rocche* that sink into the *Pozzo Caldaio* at 2,600 meters from the entrance of the cave. The stream re-emerges inside the cavity originating suggestive rapids and waterfalls.

The guided tour of the Caves, whose internal temperature is 10°C, lasts about an hour and winds along tunnels and walkways through canyons, siphons and large rooms where the roar of the waters is tumultuous. Spectacular are the concretions dating back hundreds of thousands of years, which create evocative drapes while stalactites and stalagmites, formed by water slow dripping, give rise to columns worthy of a temple, up to 3 meters high. Particularly striking is the *Waterfall Room* where the water falls with an over 20-meter high jump, and the 5-meter deep *Black Lake*, near the oldest part of the Caves, which conceals fossil remains of bats enclosed in the concretions.



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Upon return to the hotel for the evening, after dining in the old restaurant, you can lit you room fireplace, enjoy a long bath - using the bubble provided - fall asleep to a crackling fire and wake up to sunrise over the mountains of the **Gran Sasso National Park**, feeling like you have indeed stepped back in time.

3. On Sunday morning, after a rich and 0 km breakfast, you will step out for a 6-km trek going up along panoramic ridges leading up to a castle of ancient charm: **Rocca Calascio**, listed by the **National Geographic** among the 15 most beautiful castles in the world.

The location is so striking that it was chosen to shoot important movie scenes, including “The Name of the Rose”, played by Sean Connery and “Lady Hawke” with a very young Michelle Pfeiffer and a regretted Rutger Hauer. The fortress was built in the 12th century by order of King Roger of Altavilla after the Norman conquest. From the height of its 1,460 meters high, the medieval **Rocca Calascio** allows you to admire, on clear days, three national parks: the **Gran Sasso and Monti della Laga Park, the Majella Park and the Abruzzo National Park of Lazio and Molise**.

Just below the fortress, you will descend to the small octagonal Renaissance church of **Santa Maria della Pietà**, a small temple erected to thank the Madonna for saving the population from a band of brigands.

After visiting the monument, you will continue the descent crossing the built-up area of **Rocca Calascio**, where it will be possible to stop at the Rocca Refuge for some rest and a snack. Afterwards, you will continue to step down along the path to **Castelvecchio Calvisio**, where the StarTrek coach will be waiting for you to return to Rome and take you back to reality.



Reservations deadline: January 31st 2020. More details will be provided by FAO Staff Coop Newsletter. Stay tuned!!

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In ricordo di Patrizia



A quanti l'hanno conosciuta desidero ricordare la nostra grande amica, **Patrizia Bertuzzi**, che ci ha lasciati il 17 novembre scorso, per tornare nel mondo dello Spirito.

Un grande affetto mi ha legata a Lei dal 2007, quando ho cominciato a frequentare le conferenze antroposofiche, che Lei ha tenuto alla FAO per più di 30 anni, nell'ambito delle attività dell'Human Values Group.

Psicologa ed Antroposofa, per anni si è dedicata ad aiutare gli altri dove intravedeva delle difficoltà esteriori ma soprattutto interiori, secondo la Scienza dello Spirito, che aveva incontrato da giovane, e che aveva cambiato la sua vita per sempre. Questa strada, che ha seguito fedelmente per tutto il suo percorso terreno, in una costante ricerca sulla vita dell'anima, l'ha forgiata per sempre, dandole una disciplina interiore che le ha permesso di affrontare sofferenze indicibili, soprattutto nella fase finale della sua vita, senza che mai perdesse di vista il suo obiettivo di aiutare gli altri, restando al servizio di tutti fino all'ultimo giorno, con grande disponibilità e forza d'animo.

Ora ci aiuta da un'altra dimensione spirituale.

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