



Up Front & Personal

President Obama Was Only Five Feet Away

▲ by Marika Fraser

My school, Cristo Rey Brooklyn H.S. in Bushwick, has a work-study program, which allows me to work one day each school week to help pay my tuition. I have been working at the DeSales Media Group, which produces NET-TV and The Tablet, for almost three years.

DeSales recently offered me a once in a lifetime opportunity to attend the Alfred E. Smith Memorial Foundation Dinner held every year at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel located in Manhattan. This event supports charities in the Archdiocese of New York. This year, President Barack Obama and Gov. Mitt Romney attended the dinner dressed in white tie and were the main speakers. This event made them put aside their differences for charity and attend the dinner in good spirit.

My expectations were the complete opposite of what actually took place. I was thankful. I was expecting a boring war battle filled with speeches between the two men. However, I was wrong. President Obama and Gov. Romney were the total opposite. The air was filled with laughter, comic relief and no tension whatsoever. It was very delightful that I had such a wonderful opportunity to attend this event.

The night started with a meet-and-greet cocktail hour, then we transferred into the main ballroom. Candles were lit at every table, and fresh white roses sat at the center of each table to give it an elegant feel. President Obama and Gov. Romney told lighthearted jokes, which were the priceless highlight of that evening.

Can you imagine me, a 17-year-old high school senior, attending this? People say that I seemed calm, but I was extremely nervous. My hands were ice cold and shaking a bit – just to be present in that room, knowing that the people standing next to me have accomplished so much and that I can also accomplish the same or even more. That gives me encouragement, hope and inspiration for my future and what it holds for me.

Although I was extremely nervous and shaking in my shoes to be in the same room as the President of the United States, his warm, welcoming smile had a calming effect on me. At one point, I was standing only about five feet away from the president and Gov. Romney. I took lots of pictures of them. My heart filled with glee and excitement.

It was a night that I will never forget and a memory I will share with my family and friends. That evening is one of the best things that has ever happened to me, thanks to Msgr. Kieran Harrington, the vicar for communications of the diocese, and the DeSales Media Group.

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Bishop DiMarzio's Calendar

Sunday, Nov. 11

- 8:30 a.m., CLINIC Board Meeting, Baltimore, Md.
- 11:30 a.m., USCCB Migration Committee Board Meeting, Baltimore
- 4 p.m. - Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception Board Meeting, Baltimore

Monday, Nov. 12 to Thursday, Nov. 15

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' General Meeting, Baltimore

Friday, Nov. 16

- 4 p.m., Confirmation, St. Mary Mother of Jesus Church, Bensonhurst

Saturday, Nov. 17

- 10 a.m., Memorial Mass, Cathedral Club of Brooklyn, Visitation Monastery, Bay Ridge. Communion-breakfast to follow.

Help from Bright Christmas

If you are the head of a parish or church-related group and would like to receive financial assistance to purchase gifts for Christmas, help is available from The Tablet's Bright Christmas Fund. For more than 40 years, The Tablet has been helping parishes and diocesan agencies brighten Christmas for those who need help. To assure that assistance is getting to the right places, we ask that you request help from the Fund by sending an e-mail or letter, stating the group's name and how the money will be spent, to ewilkinson@diobrook.org or Bright Christmas, c/o The Tablet, 1712 Tenth Ave., Brooklyn, NY 11215.

Frances Xavier Cabrini

1850 - 1917

Feast: Nov. 13



In 1946, Mother Cabrini was the first U.S. citizen to be canonized; she is the universal patron of immigrants. She was born in Italy, the youngest of 13 children, and became a schoolteacher. Denied admission to two religious orders because of frail health, she was given charge of an orphanage in Codogno. In 1880, she founded the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart with seven of her former orphans. The order spread rapidly from northern Italy to Rome, and then in 1889 to New York City, where Mother Cabrini became famous for her work among Italian immigrants. Before dying of malaria in Chicago, she had opened schools, orphanages and hospitals around the U.S., South America and Europe.