

**Giovanni Palazzotto**  
**“A Poet of Poggioreale, Tapani, Sicily”**

As Told by Daughter Angelina Krolczyk

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Giovanni Palazzotto (John) was born in Poggioreale, Sicily on December 4, 1884. His parents were Mariano and Vincenza (Salvato) Palazzotto. He was named after his maternal grandfather, Giovanni Salvato. Like so many Italian immigrants, the spelling of his last name was changed at some point while living and working in America.

As a boy his education was limited to the fourth grade. His father would not let him continue his education because he was needed to help with family needs. He was known as a poet and story teller in Poggioreale. When he was able, he would write his poems in ledgers. He had many poems published while in Poggioreale. Mariano and Vincenza had three sons: Pietro, Giovanni and Salvatore Antonina. They also had a daughter (who was considered deaf) named Filippa. The three sons were able to come to America. Since Antonina had a health problem, she was not allowed to travel to America, so Mariano, Vicenza, Antonina and Filippa stayed in Poggioreale to live out their lives.

Giovanni Palazzotto boarded the Italian Passenger Ship “S.S. Liguria” September 18, 1910 in Palermo Sicily, Italy with his destination for the Port of New Orleans. The S.S. Liguria Immigrant Ships Transcribers Guild states he was 26 years of age, a male, single, farm laborer and able to read. Destination was to join his brother Pietro Palazzotto in Navasota, Texas. He had a ticket, and passage was paid by himself. He had in his possession \$47.00 when he arrived at the Port of New Orleans, October 7, 1910. Older brother Pietro had made the trip a few years earlier on the S.S Nord America. He arrived at Ellis Island on November 10, 1906.

While in New Orleans, in order to earn money, he worked at unloading ships. He was a very hard worker. Not being able to understand English, it was a hardship for him at the beginning. One story that he told was when he was unloading bananas, his boss would tell him to slow down and take his time unloading the ships. Not understanding what was being said, he thought that they wanted him to work faster. And so he did!

He later journeyed to Dinkins (Navasota), Texas to join Pietro. He and his brother cotton farmed there until the Flood of 1913, which destroyed all their possessions. They then moved to Bryan. On October 24 1913, Salvatore (Sam) Palazzotto (the younger brother) came to America on the S.S. San Guglielmo, through Ellis Island, to join his brothers in Bryan. With limited education, John and Sam became carpenters. They went into the construction business and many neighbors hired them to build their homes. This was an outstanding accomplishment for both of these men, since they had no prior training for this type of work.

Giovanni's first wife was Antonina "Lena" Fazzino Rissotto and they had no children between themselves. Lena had a daughter by her first marriage – Elizabeth Rissotto. When Lena passed away, he married Annie Stratta Saladino, April 24, 1937. They had two daughters – Vancie and Angelina. Giovanni supported his family by being a well-known building contractor. He was always available to write letters in Italian for people to send to their family members still in Sicily or transcribe letters received.

Giovanni was a very religious person who dedicated his life to Saint Anthony and Saint Joseph. He had a major part in the building and naming of the current St. Anthony's Catholic Church and working with Fr. Basil Bravi, the Italian priest from 1922-1960. He was the organizer and president of the Men's Holy Name Society and an honorary member of the Knights of Columbus. For the Feast of St. Anthony, he would order statues and holy cards for the feast day. At the celebration of mass, he would have the religious items to be offered to the people for contributions to the church. For the Feast of St. Joseph, he was known for leading the novena rosary for St. Joseph Altars. Sometimes he could have up to three novena rosaries in

one night. Vancie and Angelina were fortunate to be able to learn the novena rosary and prayers from their father and mother. They still carry on his tradition today for families that have St. Joseph Altars.

In America, he still wrote many poems and was known for storytelling. People would come to visit him just to listen to his stories. One of his major poems, “Versi di Giovanni Palazzotto supra lu PATRIARCA SAN GIUSEPPI,” is still recited at St. Joseph Altars in Poggioreale today. The original hand-written copy was owned by Giovanni Maniscalco, Poggioreale, Sicily. Mr. Maniscalco transcribed the poem into a typewritten version and dedicated the poem at Parrocchia Maria SS Immacolata, Pizza Papa Giovanni XXIII, Poggioreale (TP) 19 Marzo 2010.\*

Giovanni lived a long and happy life in America. He and wife Annie had two daughters, Vancie Palasata (Todaro) and Angelina Palasota (Krolczyck). His family thrived in the Bryan, Texas. He enjoyed sharing his life and love with his wife of 52 years, two daughters and grandchildren. He is still known today for his many accomplishments, his poems and stories. He went to be with Our Lord on July 6, 1978, at the age of 94.

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\*A copy of Giovanni’s original poem is included at the end of the photo pages.



Photo taken in Poggioreale, Sicily  
Left to right:  
Vincenza Salvato, Mariano Palazzotto,  
Antonina Palazzotta



Giovanni Palazotto  
(Palasota) in Bryan, Texas



Giovanni Palasota and Wife  
Annie Stratta Palasota

Giovanni Palasota's Daughters,  
Vancie Palasota Todaro  
And  
Angelina Palasota Krolczyk



Vancie and Angelina  
on a trip to Sicily



Vancie and Angelina still following  
their father's many St. Joseph Traditions  
brought from Poggioreale

# VIVA, VIVA, LU PATRIARCHA DI SAN GIUSEPPI

Giovanni Palazzotto wrote this prayer (poem) in the early 1900s  
when he was a young man growing up in Poggioreale, Sicily.

He is still remembered as their poet laureate.

This poem is still recited by the Sicilians who are in Poggioreale today.

It is said annually over their own community St. Joseph Altar.

His daughters, with their family members, were all lucky enough to witness this event  
on their visit to Poggioreale in March of 2014.

Even though John Palasota wrote many poems,  
this prayer is most special to his family because it continues to  
powerfully link their communities in Texas and Sicily together.

O Summu Patriaréa glur\_iusu,  
specchiu di Sa tfrà d'allegru \_visu;  
Patri di l'ami nostri ginirusu...  
patruni siti di lu Paraddisu!  
Lu peccaturi mi mori cunfusu,  
chi si mi penti d'aviriVi offisu:  
pirdunatilu Vu', Patri amurusu,  
chi di tuttu l'Arcanu siti 'ntisu.

E siti 'ntisu pi tuttu l'Arcanu,  
chi siti Patri di lu Nazzarenu  
e Patri ancora d'ogni 'ncristianu  
e d'ogni peccaturi c'havi frenu.  
L'aviti fottu 'stu viaggiu luntanu  
cu Maria Santa c'havia a Cristu 'nsenu:  
'resta ammiratu ogni cristianu;  
Gesù Cristu nascì 'ntra pagghia e fenu!

Nascì Gesù Cristu e l'aduramu  
e tutti quanti a liso pedi semu ...  
cu fidi pura mi cc'addinucchiamu,  
di linostri piccati mi pintemu.  
Perdunu, miu Gesù, Vi 'dumannamu:  
Vu' siti Patri e ru' lifigghi semu;  
d'accantu Vostru cchiù 'un mi distaccamu,  
picchè lu Paraddisu prutinnemu.

Patri di Pruvidenza Vi chiamamu  
e in tutti libisogni a Vu' curremu;  
'nfini di morti tutti Vi priamu:  
"assistitini Vu' ogni 'npunto ..estremu!"  
Di lipocu pitanzi chi truvamu,  
ru' oggi a pranzu Vostru limittemu;  
a d' 19 marzu V'ammitamu,  
picchè a 'stu jornu gran fidi CC vemu!

E V'ammitamu cu pani ed aranci,  
cu pugnulati, cu cassati e sfinci,  
cu diversi pitanzi ed atri ranci ...  
c'ogni poviru divotu si custrinci;  
quali armonia chi portanu !'aranci,  
chi ci nesci lu sucu si listrinci:  
chistu è lu peccaturi chi mi chianci;  
cu lipiccati so l'arma si tinci!

L'addavuru Vi l'offrinu pi amuri  
e lu truvati 'nta qualsiasi artari:  
balicu binidittu e atri ciuri,  
chi su lamaraviggghia di guardari;  
mennuli e nuci cu liscorci duri,  
sulu lipetri liponnu scacciari:  
chistu è lu cori di lu peccaturi;  
Vuì sulu lu putiti arrimuddari.

A tavula Vi offrinu lu vinu  
e di pani di cena unu sanu,  
unni si cunsagrau Cristu Divinu:  
p'alimentu lu lassà a ogni cristianu.  
O peccaturi, lassa lu caminu,  
di lu piccatu statti luntanu ...  
cerca d'aviri a Cristu vicinu,  
a lu Re di li Re, nostru Suvranu!

Cerca di fari tu la via ghiusta,  
lassa lu munnu iri... ch'è 'ntimpesta:  
dispisati di la terra e di la frusta,  
picchi a la morti nenti ti n'arresta!  
Anzi !'affari cacchi opra giusta,  
chi San Micheli la valanza presta:  
ti pisa l'arma e si 'un si trova ghiusta...  
a Satana la duna a fari festa!

Vu' , Patriarca, quant'atu suffrutu,  
pi libbirari a nu' di lu piccatu;  
d'Agittu a Nazzari Vi n'aviti iutu,  
dunni pi strata fustimrrubbatu!  
Nni fustivu di l'Ancilu avvirtutu  
di essiri d'Erode ricircatu,  
e Maria Santa a Cristu ha scumparutu ...  
Cristu un mazzu di ciuri ha riturnatu! (divintatu)

Cristu turnau un ciuri assai galanti  
quannu vitti ad Erodi ddà presentu;  
prestu calaru l'Ancili e li Santi  
p'adurari a Cristu Onnipotenti!  
Erode ch'era lu cchiù prutistanti  
di la fidi di Diu 'un mi cridia nenti:  
cummertiri 'un si vosi lu birbanti,  
fici fari la scanna di li 'nuccenti.

O Vergini Maria Immacolata,  
assistiri aviti a nu' 'npuntu di vita;  
lu cori Vi fu trafittu cu 'na spata,  
gran sangu Vi niscì di la firita.  
Matri di peccatura ed avvucata<sup>1</sup>  
di grazzi, di buntà, Matri 'nfinita ...  
dati a lu vostru mantu 'na sparmata,  
sarvati cacchi anima (pecura) smarrita!

Ed ora Patriarca a Vu' ritornu,  
chi lume' sintimentu è cchiù 'ncusternu ...  
quali alligrizza ju provu 'stu jornu  
di parlari cu Vu', Munti Supernu!  
O peccaturi di tutto cc'attornu,  
tu chi bbistemi d'estati e di 'mmernu:  
cu 'mmita a San Giuseppi lu so jornu  
havi lu Paraddisu pi n'Eternu!

Eternu lu Paraddisu a tutti duna,  
lassannu 'ni la paci e l'amunia,  
sciogghi la lingua, grida ogni pirsuna:  
"e viva Gesù, Giuseppi e Maria!"

Profonda, devota e toccante Orazione  
del nostro grande Poeta estemporaneo  
Giovanni Palazzotto, nato a Poggioreale  
ilquattro dicembre 1884 ed emigrato  
a New Orleans nel 1910, e trascritta  
da Giovanni Maniscalco.

Orazione di cui abbiamo l'originale cartaceo,  
risalente ai primi anni del 1900,  
e su supporto fonico recitata dall'autore<sup>9</sup>.e41.-c:?