

Don Sebastiano Mrulli

Duke of Ascoli, Naples Italy



- Don Sebastiano Marulli was the Pritano or life-long high priest and supreme head of the Order of Demeter.
- This Order secretly continued the celebration of the Eleusinian Mysteries sacred to the Goddess, from ancient times into the modern era.
- Don Sebastiano Marulli was born on August 8, 1793, son of Don Trojano Marulli, duke of Ascoli and neapolitan patrician and Donna Maria Gratimola Filomarino, daughter of Don Pasquale, duke of Torre di Teverolaccio, neapolitan patrician and of the princess of the Holy Roman Empire, the Nobilis Domina Donna Maria Maddalena Rospigliosi of the dukes of Zagarolo, roman noble, venetian patrician, noble and patrician of Pistoia.
- As part of this very ancient aristocratic family, he was bestowed numerous titles and honors, including: prince of Sant'Angelo dei Lombardi, prince of Faggiano, duke of Carosino, marquess of Salza, count, etc., Knight of the Illustrious Royal Order of Saint Januarius, Knight Grand Cross of the Order of Pope Pius IX, Knight of Honor and Devotion of the [Sovereign Military Order of Malta](#), Knight Grand Cross of the Royal Order of Isabella the Catholic, Knight of the Imperial Order of the White Eagle, Knight 1st Class of the Order of St. Anne, Knight 1st Class of the Imperial Order of St. Stanislaus, Knight of Grand Cross of the Order of the Immaculate Conception of Vila Viçosa, Knight Grand Cross of the [Royal Order of Francis I](#), Knight Grand Cross of the Order of Merit of Saint Lodovico etc., and was an honorary member of the Academy of Sciences, Letters and Arts of Palermo.
- In addition, later in life the Duke of Ascoli held the high position of Somigliere to His Majesty King Ferdinand II, King of the Two Sicilies: the third most important rank in the whole Kingdom.
- In the 1850's, Francis McDowell, an American from upstate New York, visited Europe in search of capital for a railroad project. There, in his travels he met Pritano Don Sebastiano Marulli, who invited Francis to be initiated into the

Eleusinian Mysteries in 1857, and subsequently made him a priest in the Order in 1859. It was Don Sebastiano Marulli's wish and gift, that the sacred rights his family had kindled for hundreds of years would be shared with the people of the United States of America.

- He admonished Francis McDowell to return home and initiate others. The Duke provided written instructions for conferring the Degree of Demeter as well as a Priests cap embroidered with fine needlework - the handiwork of a Nun, plus vestments of heavy silk and gold cord. The Duke also provided portraits of himself as well as his wife.
- Tensions in the United States were high upon Francis returned. Then the American Civil war broke out and there was no opportunity to honor Don Sebastiano's wishes during the Duke's lifetime. Duke of Ascoli, Don Sebastiano Marulli passed away on August 13, 1866.
- A fortuitous meeting occurred a year later. In August 1867, William Saunders visited an agricultural fair in central New York where he and Francis met. William had consented to make inquiries as he traveled across the United States concerning Oliver H. Kelley's new idea for a secret American Order for Agriculture. Oliver and Francis soon began corresponding via letter, with Francis proposing to visit Washington in January 1868.
- Francis, Oliver, William and several others met starting on January 9, 1868, and lasting several days afterward. As a result of this meeting, the Order of Patrons of Husbandry formally adopted the rites and ceremonies of the European Order of Demeter as the basis for its highest controlling body, with Francis McDowell as its High Priest and presiding officer. The mysteries were then conferred by Francis McDowell upon nine individuals. Thus, the Order of Patrons of Husbandry can legitimately trace its lineage back to the ancient Eleusinian mysteries of old.
- The Order of Patrons of Husbandry grew from here. In the Grange's 150+ year lifetime, over 200,000 individuals have chosen to be initiated into this highest degree, celebrating these ancient mysteries due to the generosity of this one man.
- The duke of Ascoli Don Sebastiano Marulli's gift to the people of the United States and especially to the Order of Patrons of Husbandry is gratefully acknowledged and his place eternally secured in the National Grange Hall of Fame.

