VareseNews

A foundation to support the “Circolo” Hospital

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A foundation dedicated to the “Friends of the Circolo”. This is the proposal made by the general manager of the Varese hospital, Walter Bergamaschi, to re-establish and strengthen the relations between the hospital and the area it serves. This was the objective, or rather, the topic presented forcefully during the night at the “De Filippi” theatre, which included film clips, speeches and testimonies. “The greatest assets are the people, the staff and the volunteers” said Bergamaschi, whose opening speech was intended to heal some wounds. “I won’t deny that the staff is dissatisfied with the management, who are seen as indifferent; I know that it’s not moments like these that manage to change a deep-rooted feeling of alienation, but tonight, we’re making up for a shortfall, we’re expressing our gratitude to the people who work.” According to Bergamaschi, “a public hospital is not a company, but a social service.”
“We need people who can create an environment that encourages the ethics of responsibility, at all the levels and in all sectors. Let’s throw down the gauntlet, through the “Friends of the Circolo” foundation, which is open to the lively efforts of the city, to renew support of the hospital, with deeds and donations.”

Renzo Dionigi, the chancellor of Insubria University, described how the relationship between the University and the Hospital began, the decision that made the distant Varese satellite site of the historic University of Pavia, an educational body in its own right. There is also space for some self-criticism. “We played up, we missed some opening ceremonies, and we’re sorry, because we were wrong; but now we’re proud, because even foreigners recognise this hospital as one of the best.” Dionigi mentioned three, key people: Dante Trombetta, who welcomed him to Varese in 1986, Carlo Lucchina, who is now the regional health director, and Walter Bergamaschi, “who helped us by establishing a method of dialogue, and by calming the atmosphere between the hospital and the university.”

Also the mayor, Attilio Fontana, and Raffaele Cattaneo were present; but, above all, there were those involved in the life of the Varese hospital, yesterday and today, doctors, surgeons, managers and staff, who were publicly rewarded, because the intention was to acknowledge their work publicly, and to admit that it is necessary to help each other to reinforce the local roots and the human side of the hospital. “The hospital is one of the best symbols of our city,” Fontana said. “As the mayor, I receive lots of criticisms, but everyone says great things about the hospital.”
“There is a road that we have to continue down,” Raffaele Cattaneo added.

“The core of the hospital is its people,” said Carlo Lucchina, regional health director, and past general manager in Varese. “I know the effort made by those who work in health, there are those who, in winter, never see the sun in winter, working from the first light of dawn well into the night.” Lucchina referred to the controversies in the press, to the moment of “great legal contentiousness” between patients and the medical staff, and he invited everyone to return to the basic values of the profession, and of the relationship with the patients, which should be founded on mutual respect, also of the roles.

The evening also included numerous testimonies. The journalist and friend of the hospital, Pierfausto Vedani, who held out the classic olive branch to Bergamaschi, acknowledged him as a citizen of Varese by adoption. “You have given us important signs: we shall return to the old spirit.” Vedani thanked the physicians, volunteers and employees of yesterday, today, tomorrow.
Professor Giuseppe Armocida spoke about the eight centuries of the health system in Varese, from the 12th century Nifontano Hospital, to the single-building hospital, saying that, in the latest conception of a hospital, history is being made today, day by day, as medicine pursues illnesses that seem to have come from the novels of Italo Calvino: “rampant”, “weakened”, and “inexistent” illnesses. We must keep everything, because although, some day, the citadel hospital may be thought of as a dinosaur, today, patients have to make a pilgrimage among the structures, like in the medieval xenodochia …
Of the anecdotes and guests who made contributions, in person, and by video link, we remember the testimony, beside doctor Ermanno Montoli, of a real protagonist of history, albeit against his will: the teacher Nelson Cenci. He was once Lieutenant Cenci, a surviving alpine soldier in Russia, a recipient of the Silver Medal for Military Valour, praised by Mario Rigoni Stern in “The sergeant in the snow”, and his clear, simple words about the meaning of the medical profession, which were discovered and renewed more than ever in the horrors of war, are the best “memento” of its values, which become stronger wherever man is suffering.
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