

VareseNews

“The poor are among us”

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The location is the “San Carlo” quarter, Viale Borri, near the centre of Varese. The people that come to the parish’s listening centre are “normal”, heads of families made redundant from one day to the next, with a baby on the way, and the mortgage to pay. Many are separated fathers who do not know where to sleep, because all of their money goes to pay the support for their ex-wives and children, and there is nothing left for the rent: it is for them that the parish is looking to open “a dormitory”.

This is the testimony of a Caritas volunteer, who can relate to the situation described by **Don Alberto Dell’Orto**, of the Saint Christopher pastoral community, in Gallarate. “There are poor people among us, in our communities, in our parishes, and they’re not only foreigners”.

With these words, the priest opened the proceedings of the congress “**Poverty, a challenge calling**”, organised on Saturday 12 March, in the crypt of the church in Masnago, coordinated by **Don Favio Speroni**, the area manager for the Caritas, in the presence of **Don Roberto Davanzo**, the director of Ambrosian Caritas. According to the Episcopal Vicar **Monsignor Luigi Stucchi**, “The day served to increase awareness of the time and of the complexity in which we are living. Otherwise, we, too, become squashed by individualism and by the crisis.”

According to the economist **Enrico Brigli**, “There is no relationship between income trend and happiness; we live worse if incomes are distributed unequally. There are lifestyles that can contribute to giving an economic answer to poverty; in particular, those based on human relationships, which,” says the economist, “we should consider a new item on which to rebase the economic sciences.”

Human relationships are at the centre of the everyday experiences of Caritas workers. On the immigration and asylum fronts, there are cooperatives that operate in **Malpensa**, and the association “Farsi prossimo”, who work first to welcome, and then to integrate newcomers, and this is primarily through social relationships. In the **Turate** Caritas listening centre, the projects “Families taking care of themselves” and “If I ask, I feel better; if I give, I receive” have started, both concentrate on networks of family friendships. In **Gallarate**, there is “Il ristoro del Buon Samaritano”, a support centre that provides food for the poor; here, too, there are a lot of families that ask for food, but the workers say, “It’s true that they’re hungry, but they’d find something to eat somehow. In fact, **they’re looking for a smile, a welcome, to be called by their name and to identify with someone else**: the hot meal just provides the opportunity.”

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