

The mountain we have in our hearts

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Every year, on **11th August**, a whole community meets up at the foot of the mountains surrounding the Ayas Valley, **to remember Father Carlo Gerosa and Brother Sebastiano Gennero, who died on that day in 1978**, in a mountain accident, after celebrating mass. There are a lot of families from Angera, children that were members of the parish youth club at the time, who are now parents themselves, and children and young people of today, who have their **first group experience, on holiday without their mums and dads** in that very valley, guarded by snow-covered giants (even though, year after year, rocks are taking the place of the snow). For those who pass through here, **Pian di Verra** is something exceptional, not just the destination for a pleasant walk surrounded by nature.

And this is one of the qualities of mountains, their ability to touch deeply. As **Mauro Corona** said, “Mountains attract, capture, fascinate precisely because they do nothing to attract, capture or fascinate. They’re just there. If someone climbs them, fine, if not, that’s fine too. Nature doesn’t ask for anything, it doesn’t play tricks, or complain. It’s just there, unperturbed, leading a life that is marked by the seasons.”

At the foot of these giants, thoughts are deeper. This was the experience, step by step, of the actors **involved, by director Emanuele Caruso, in the project “A riveder le stelle”**, a docufilm that celebrates the beautiful and wild **Grande Valley**, which is being released in cinemas in March. The goal is to remind us of the need to turn the tide, to save this planet, which, between by those quiet giants of this valley, shows off its impressive beauty and vulnerability.

And it is precisely **in the mountains that climate change appears so mercilessness**. The photo of the disturbing melting of the **Grand Etret in Valsavarenche**, showing the glacier giving way to exposed rocks year after year, made news some time ago, with dozens of comparisons.

In a recent interview, the **meteorologist Luca Mercalli spoke about a new migration**, which will force us to head for the mountains, to a place of safety, from an urban life made increasingly tougher by choices that impact the environment, pollution and the climate.

People will not only head for the mountains, but they will also flee them; this is well known by the many communities and authorities that, **today, are working to create new opportunities**, especially for young people, in territories that are slowly emptying out. In a lovely book about the **National Parks of Italy**, the WWF Oasi President, **Antonio Canu**, writes about the importance of protected areas as “a necessary alternative, a continuity with the past and a prospect for the future,” as people increasingly abandon villages and farming at high altitudes.

Those who love mountains know that sometimes miracles can happen, and they want to share them. This is the case of a wonderful project by the National Park of Gran Paradiso, where park wardens managed to install a webcam in **the nest of a bearded vulture in Valsavarenche**. This was a way to show, live, the return of this animal, which had been thought to be extinct in those areas since the beginning of the twentieth century.

Thanks to a recent measure by the Regional Council, in Lombardy, the first Sunday in July **will be the Day of the Mountain**. We asked **our readers** to tell us which mountain they loved the most, and the result is a journey from North to South Italy, from Devero to Livigno, from the Dolomites to Spain, through uncontaminated valleys and well-known tourist resorts, which you can take by reading the comments section below.

di [Translated by Alessia Nuzzi](#) (Reviewed by Prof. Rolf Cook)