

VareseNews

“Denied” blessing, the town is split

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In **Cardano al Campo**, it is market day, and among other chats, people also talk about the **“denied blessing”**, at least because there are television crews that talk about it, and that gather the favourable and the adverse opinions regarding the choice of the school's parent-teacher-student association.

“In the discussion during the meeting on 30 November, the parent-teacher-student association deliberated on the prohibition on giving blessings inside the school, “ says **mayor Mario Aspesi**, who personally asked questions to the chairman of the association, to know how things went. “It is a lawful choice, based on the votes of the school representative body,” says the mayor, “but which, in my opinion, was not made with good sense. **The blessing** has always taken place, with respect for all the children. **It should have taken place this time, as well.** I also spoke with the priest, and he told me that nobody in town has ever objected to the blessings. Maybe, just one person refused it once.”

We leave the town hall to go to the parsonage, and we meet that very person (well, it must be him, if he was the only to refuse the blessing). He tell us “ Priests, blessings, churches, I don't want to hear anything about them. If you're looking for them, they're there, in the house opposite the church.”

The priest is not there, but from the coming and going in the streets, we can understand what people think about the whole matter. Some people wonder, “ **Where will we end up?**”, some others try to water down the controversy. The most frequent word is “**traditions**”.

“I can remember the blessings at school, since I was as tall as him,” says a grandma, while pointing to her small grandson's height. We would stand in a line along the corridor, to listen to the priest's words. I never thought this could be something bad.”

As the school principal explained, the choice was made by the parent-teacher-student association, with 15 people present, 10 of whom were in favour of the abolition of the blessing, 2 against, and 3 abstentions,” and the priest will give the blessing on coming out of the classes, on Tuesday, 21 December.

At the butcher's, some people comment on the matter, a little puzzled, “ Blessings have always taken place, and I can't understand what has changed now...”. “**Traditions! Traditions!** They're taking away even our traditions!” a woman suddenly protests, “ I'm a friend to everybody, the red, the green, the white and the black, but they shouldn't touch our traditions,” and we cannot understand which ethnic group is to blame.

Among the **market stalls**, two women are filling their water bottles with the “**mayor's water**”. We ask questions and listen to them, they are a little bit confused. The first woman says, “ I really can't understand if the priest has something better to do than finding 5 minutes to go and bless the school. It's incredible!”. “ But it's not up to the priest, the others don't let him

enter the school," explains the other woman. "Aha, so the others don't let him in! It's crazy!".

Outside the post office, we heard a sounder opinion, "This morning, I read about the matter. I believe that the school made a mistake, and I think that they should have turned a blind eye, after all. But it was a lawful decision. Maybe, we should learn to respect everybody in public places, and respect also means equal opportunities for all: everyone or nobody. Outside the school, however, everything is allowed."

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