

VareseNews

Don Luigi, a priest, who has walked for 75 years

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“I’m sorry, Your Excellency, if I make you walk.” The church, the venue for the solemn mass, which celebrated his 75 years of priesthood, is almost 100 metres from the restaurant where a little party was to be held. But Don Luigi was genuinely concerned that his bishop, Monsignor **Diego Coletti**, might get tired, even though he is almost thirty years older than his superior.

Don Luigi Curti, 97, has always been used to walking, and has never wanted a car for himself; and it is this simplicity, which he does not want to be a burden for anyone, that is the power of the man who, today, 22 November 2011, celebrates such an extraordinary anniversary in the village near Varese, where he is the priest.

Don Luigi has been the priest in Marzio since 1936, a record period, during which he was even made a Bishop, even though he always wanted to be just “Don”. In fact, his parishioners only heard about his appointment, which he had never mentioned, by chance, also because it did not fit his vows of poverty and moderation, which he has strenuously defended over the years.

Thus, the mass, which was **jointly celebrated by almost 30 priests** on this anniversary, became the big party for Marzio, a village that lies between Valganna and the Lugano basin.

In the front row, there was the bishop of Como, **Diego Coletti**, who is the vicar also of that part of Varese Province. He had decided that it would be from that very special party that he would begin his pastoral visit to the valleys around Lake Lugano.

Of course, the church was bursting with people, emotion and memories of the three generations that Don Luigi has accompanied as they were growing: there was **an 80-year-old man, who had been the first to greet him to the parish** (“I was 5, and I took him to the shrine,” he remembered). There was the parishioner who remembered that, **“He christened my son. And, to tell the truth, he christened me, too,”** she said. There was the young Major of Marzio, who remembered many stages in his life as a priest. “I particularly remember **the parish house**, where he lived for years, before we managed to convince him to renovate it. **He lived there in conditions of extreme poverty, but he wanted nothing more.**”

A coach of worshipers from Vercea, in Val Chiavenna, where Don Luigi was born, had also come to celebrate him. Although he has not been a resident of Vercea for two generations, the village has never forgotten him.

Redazione VareseNews
redazione@varesenews.it

