



Commemoration of June 26, 2014

Speech of Olgiate Olona Mayor Giovanni Montano

Fifty-five years ago, when the community of Olgiate Olona was struck by the plane crash, those who mattered in this town rushed to the site of the accident: the mayor, the town clerk, the health officer, the parish priest. On June 26, 1959 and on the following days, the town clerk managed an exceptional emergency and coordinated the activities pertaining to the Municipality with competence and lucidity: Giovanni Capozza – this was his name – was used to act this way since 1939, faithful servant of the State all the time, during the World War II and the Resistance, during the Liberation, at the dawn of the Republic, during the reconstruction. Today I remember with emotion: when I was a child the memory of the plane crash of June 26, 1959, was handed over to me right by Giovanni Capozza, my grandfather.

Memory is perpetuated in different ways, but memory is kept alive thanks to the people. The memory of the plane crash is more alive today, thanks to those who care about this story and its protagonists in Olgiate Olona and in different corners of the world, and thanks to the commemorative events promoted by the Municipal Administration: two books, the 50th anniversary and via 26 giugno street, the plaques in memory of the seventy immortal lives and the victims of Milan-Linate, the educational project. The symbols shown here evoke the journey that has re-established the bonds with history and with the people: this commitment was rewarded with the medal of the President of the Italian Republic. I thank you all and in particular the creators and supporters of the events promoted in Olgiate Olona for honouring the seventy immortal lives and those who have been indelibly marked by that tragic event.

Because of bad weather we are not in front of the memorial monument unveiled 50 years ago: it is the sign par excellence of the plane crash of 1959. Paradoxically a sign in the shape of a wing is not a sign of death, but it is a sign of life: it does not remind us the seventy mortal bodies who perished in this place, but it is the memory of the seventy lives made immortal by their spirit which soared from here into eternity, those lives made immortal by their relatives who turned suffering and death into life, those lives who are immortal for the people who care about this story. We are praying for the seventy immortal lives like we do every year on this day; now we know their full identity thanks to the historical research and to their families.

We are praying and we are also experiencing the memory that is being handed down from generation to generation and day by day thanks to the website dedicated to June 26, 1959, and thanks to the educational project for the students in the eighth grade which has involved six hundreds pupils in five years. Today we are rewarding the ten deserving works of 2014, but all the fifty works, as regards to quality and depth of thought, represent a *literature inspired by the seventy immortal lives* made by our young generation: young people are the future that we are all required to invest in, they are the future of Olgiate Olona and we want our town to be the town of the children and young people.

There is another sign next to the monument: it's a holly, an evergreen plant with leaves that sting. It is just like the memory of June 26, 1959: it grows over time but it is painful, as the time goes it makes us reflect about death and evil present in everyday life, where we do projects and dreams and we seek happiness. This plant grows, and our young people grow: they learn from the educational project that love for life is the sap that feeds the tree of memory of June 26, 1959. We are honoured to have among us today the relatives of the immortal lives broken by similar tragedies, they teach us love for life: I thank you in behalf of the people of Olgiate Olona.

Every June the 26th, tomorrow, every day of the year we prove the love for life and the commitment for the good of all the people shown by the community of Olgiate Olona fifty-five years ago. This commitment is renewed every time that the people of Olgiate Olona build the future starting from the new generations and by remembering the past. For many people today building the future means to be able to fill these days marked by the economic crisis with love for life. For me, as mayor, building the future of Olgiate Olona is a challenge that I want to share by working for the good of all the people, as my grandfather Giovanni always did.