 Reading time: 4 min.

Fr. Peter Ricaldone (Mirabello Monferrato, 27 April 1870 – Rome, 25 November 1951) was the fourth successor of Don Bosco as leader of the Salesians, a man of vast culture, deep spirituality, and great love for young people. Born and raised amidst the Monferrato hills, he always carried the spirit of that land with him, translating it into a pastoral and educational commitment that would make him a figure of international standing. Today, the people of Mirabello Monferrato wish to bring him back to their lands.

The Don Pietro Ricaldone Committee: Revival of a Legacy (2019)
In 2019, a group of past pupils, historians, and enthusiasts of local traditions formed the **Don Pietro Ricaldone Committee** in Mirabello Monferrato. The objective – simple yet ambitious – has been from the outset, to restore Don Pietro's figure to the heart of the town and its young people, so that his story and spiritual legacy will not be lost.

To prepare for the 150th anniversary of his birth (1870–2020), the Committee searched the Mirabello Municipal Historical Archive and the Salesian Historical Archive, uncovering letters, notes, and old volumes. From this work, an illustrated biography was created, designed for readers of all ages, in which Ricaldone's personality emerges clearly and engagingly. Collaboration with Fr. Egidio Deiana, a scholar of Salesian history, was fundamental during this phase.

In 2020, a series of events was planned – photographic exhibits, concerts, theatre and circus performances – all centred on remembering Fr. Peter. Although the pandemic forced the rescheduling of many of the celebrations, in July of that year a commemorative event took place, featuring a photographic exhibit on the stages of Ricaldone's life, children's entertainment with creative workshops, and a solemn celebration attended by several Salesian Superiors.
That gathering marked the beginning of a new period of focus on the Mirabello area.

Beyond the 150th: The Concert for the 70th Anniversary of His Death
The enthusiasm for reviving the figure of Don Pietro Ricaldone led the Committee to extend its activities beyond the 150th anniversary.
Ahead of the 70th anniversary of his death (25 November 1951), the Committee organised a concert titled "Hasten the radiant dawn of the longed-for day", a phrase

taken from Fr. Peter's 1942 circular on Gregorian Chant.
At the height of the Second World War, Fr. Peter – then Rector Major – wrote a famous circular on Gregorian Chant in which he stressed the importance of music as a special way to lead human hearts back to charity, gentleness, and above all, to God: *'It may surprise some that, amidst such a clamour of arms, I invite you to engage with music. Yet I believe, even setting aside mythological allusions, that this theme fully meets the needs of the present hour. Everything that can exert an educative influence and lead people back to feelings of charity and gentleness, and above all to God, must be practised by us, diligently and without delay, to hasten the radiant dawn of the longed-for day.'*

Salesian Walks and Roots: The "Don Bosco Walk"
Although established as a tribute to Fr. Ricaldone, the Committee has also ended up promoting the figure of Don Bosco and the entire Salesian tradition, of which Fr. Peter was both an heir and a protagonist.
Since 2021, every second Sunday of October, the Committee has promoted the "Don Bosco Walk", re-enacting the pilgrimage Don Bosco undertook with the boys from Mirabello to Lu Monferrato between 12th–17th October 1861. During those five days, the details of the first Salesian school outside Turin were planned, entrusted to Blessed Michael Rua, with Fr. Albera among the teachers. Although the initiative does not directly involve Fr. Peter, it highlights his roots and connection to the local Salesian tradition that he himself carried forward.

Hospitality and Cultural Exchanges
The Committee facilitated the welcoming of groups of young people, vocational schools, and Salesian clerics from around the world. Some families offer free hospitality, renewing the fraternity characteristic of Don Bosco and Fr. Peter. In 2023, a large group from the Crocetta visited Mirabello, while every summer, international groups arrive, accompanied by Fr. Egidio Deiana. Each visit is a dialogue between historical memory and the joy of youth.

On 30 March 2025, nearly one hundred Salesian chapter members stopped in Mirabello, visiting the places where Don Bosco opened his first school outside Turin and where Fr. Peter spent his formative years. The Committee, together with the Parish and the *Pro Loco* (local community association), organised the reception and created an informative video about local Salesian history, which was appreciated by all participants.
The initiatives continue, and today the Committee, led by its president, is

collaborating on the creation of *Don Bosco's Monferrato Walk*, a spiritual route of approximately 200 km following the autumn paths walked by the Saint. The aim is to obtain official regional recognition, but also to offer pilgrims an experience of formation and evangelisation. Indeed, Don Bosco's youth walks were experiences of formation and evangelisation: the same spirit that Fr. Peter Ricaldone would later defend and promote throughout his time as Rector Major.

The Committee's Mission: Keeping Fr. Peter's Memory Alive

Behind every initiative lies the desire to highlight the educative, pastoral, and cultural work of Fr. Peter Ricaldone. The Committee's founders cherish personal childhood memories and wish to pass on to new generations the values of faith, culture, and solidarity that inspired the priest from Mirabello. In an era when many points of reference are faltering, rediscovering Fr. Peter's path means offering a life model capable of illuminating the present, 'Where Saints pass, God walks with them, and nothing is ever the same again' (Saint John Paul II).

The Fr. Peter Ricaldone Committee acts as a custodian of this legacy, trusting that the memory of a great son of Mirabello will continue to light the way for generations to come, charting a steady path built on faith, culture, and solidarity.