

## Presentation

# *The “Cistercense”*

Nino Galofaro



## *The awareness of existing*

**M**ore or less than eight hundred years ago, in October of 1209 at Vallebona, in the village of Badiavecchia, brizzilija (drizzling). The seventy years old Antoine monk of the Cistercian abbey cloister, searching in a leaden sky which obscures Roccasalvatesta, indulges in memories revisited with a touch of nostalgic irony stages of his life and brings us in its infancy in the early decades of the twelfth century in a spring day in 1137, when Hugone, the monk Monaco and other workers armed with poles and peaks, parchment, rulers and enormous wood compasses, are intent on drawing lines and angles on the ground to mark the cloister, are about to start work after endless obstacles that will lead to the construction of the first Cistercian monastery in Sicily at the behest of St. Bernard and Roger First.

Reading this novel, a family saga in which is reflected the fate of an entire community, the result of meticulous work of archeology and human existence, and years of long-weighted studies, there is a feeling to attend to the screening of a film whose images evoke places, events, names, figures that twist and move as in a continuous flow of life in which everything acquires meaning and value and reflect the mastery and professional competence with which Galofaro built, like a puzzle, his whole work.

And as in a film we witness the stages of whooping hunt wild boar, a real script, with suggestive images of women who went to sea, bringing boxes of fish at the top, and arrived at Novara at dawn and then making the journey back loads of nuts, textiles and other specialties of our mountain. St. Hugh adventurous journey in the

land of France until landing in Citeaux, the cradle of the Cistercian, and finally the last act of his life, the moment in which he expires.

The author, with a fascinating mixture of fantasy and reality, transporting characters of our era, so dear to him, and with a smug narrative game puts them at the time. Also makes us see the endless construction of the monastery, until the day of the inauguration. All through a corrosive irony in reference to our own time, not unlike that time.

For these memories and a thousand other things, the Cistercian, published at the end of 2007, is a novel, intense and gratifying because it answers all questions with clarity that always we are working on our roots and ancient history of our land. Galofaro sketches with rigor and imagination behind the events where you can see the evolution of a society, its customs and its habits. But is not limited to this, and reveals how the events of the "Big Story" force and shake their individual destinies, they undergo giant transformations, reveals how to have an impact on small communities with dialectical response, and telling that replicas of small towns, like our Novara, are not so very insignificant, if you think that the relationship between city and countryside, now overturned by the massive urbanization, a time, especially in the early centuries of the second millennium, it was all for the benefit of the campaign because it represented the productive element in front of the parasitism of the city.

So the author, by an ingenious narrative structure to Chinese boxes, retrace the time, through the fate of individuals, returns the most general and deep sense of the world and history. Beware, The Cistercian despite being a novel "historic", however, is a book firmly connected to current events, anchored to our present and projected into the future, a book in which the memory is pure consciousness and the wish to exist, as suggested times change but the world will always proceed identical to itself, with the stories, problems and dreams that recur almost always equal.

In fact, with grace and simplicity reminds us how our community is the result of a process in which various cultures have found their own living space and express their characteristics up to compose a rich and varied human society, where ethnic diversity becomes added value and not an obstacle to building a culture of peaceful coexistence, as it suggests the message of the beautiful ending of the novel.

As everyone is aware of himself as all his experiences, so a community identifies itself with its own history.

What is the civilization of a community if you do not become aware of itself, its origin and its development, its hard growing and forming?

So who are we?

Where we come from?

Where we go?

*The "Cistercense"* assumes responsibility for fulfilling these immortal questions and is accomplishing this important mission: the attempt to recover in all, especially the "novaresi", in an original and funny way, the deep sense of themselves and to recall the human and spiritual heritage on which to base the heavy hope of rebirth.

At the end of the reading of the book has remained strong feeling that the novel is a Cistercian ethics of universal value that all *novaresi* should know and, as it was conceived and carried out, is a valuable work, a milestone in the story culture of our village.

We believe it is better to conclude this presentation, leaving to Antoine's brilliant opening words:

*"When I was born, January 17th 1139, at the dawn of the Incarnation of Our Lord, in this mountainous area of Demon Valley already snowed heavily the night before.*

*The Demon wooded valley, along with the Noto Valley and the Val di Mazara, is one of the three administrative jurisdictions that were established in Sicily from the Muslims in 965, when Rometta in the Messina area fell..."*

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