

To Ezio Bortolussi

PIERO PITTARO

From bricklayer to builder of buildings. That's how the professional story could be summed up. Let's add: from eighth grade to honorary degree. His story begins like the usual pastor's story.

He emigrates to Canada, his cardboard suitcase tied up with string. First experiences are as a worker in a construction company. That's what he tells me: menial jobs at first. He spends just enough to feed himself but not to get himself a new pair of pants. Then he became a professional, or rather super-professional, bricklayer.

– And then what? I ask!

It follows an immediate and disarming answer: – Why, if my boss can do this job, can't I do it myself? I tried first with small residences of about ten floors. I saw that it worked. From there I went higher and higher and ever more complicated. I used my brain more than my arms. There are many such cases. I succeeded! I always ask myself the same question: if others can do it, why can't I do it too? Now, between Canada and the United States, I build an average of a dozen buildings a year. Average height sixty, eighty floors. About one a month. I started from Arzene, a small village of a few souls, on the right side of the Tagliamento river, then the province of Udine, now Pordenone.

The company, my work, business, family, friends... everything is in North America, but my heart remains firmly chained to Arzene; from the moment my pocket allowed it, I have been giving it my all. I give work to thousands of people, numerous Friulians (who still suffer from *mâl dal clap*), Italians, Canadians and Americans. I'm always among them.

I call everyone by name. I eat with them. We tell our stories and tales together. There's never a shortage of wine, great for getting the tongue to move. There are many, all over the world, like me, like us emigrants from the then miserable land of Friuli. God is everywhere. The Friulians have already been there. With Friuli, we have maintained close relations with the *Ente Friuli nel Mondo*, a further link with our *Piccole Patrie*. I won't name names, but like me and many others, there are numerous Friulians in the world who have done wonderful things. Our motto: work, honesty, respect.

It was once said: "Friuli does not forget, but I would also say that Friulians do not forget Friuli".

To conclude our chat, I would like to relate an anecdote that illustrates the genuineness of Ezio.

One day I received, from Canada, a painting on a thick slice of tree trunk, a modern painting by an Indian.

The accompanying note read: – If you're going to build a building, I'll give you a good price.

My response: – If you're going to build a winery I'll come and make you wine for free.

Piero Pittaro
The President Emeritus
of *Ente Friuli nel Mondo*