

Palermo, honorary citizenship to Rev. Peter Ciaccio

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Rome (NEV), 20 October 2020 - **Leoluca Orlando**, mayor of Palermo, has decided to confer to the Methodist pastor Peter Ciaccio the honorary citizenship of the city. The official ceremony will take place next Monday, October 26, at 11 am at the *Palazzo delle Aquile*. *"I'm very happy, I didn't expect - says Peter Ciaccio -. I am very pleased, I think it is not a personal but collective recognition to our church, to our testimony, for the good of the city, to the social work we did in Palermo, to the many initiatives in which we were involved, also thanks to the Methodist and Waldensian Otto per mille. Important was also the ecumenical work done in these years in the Sicilian capital. We have tried to rebuild a social framework where there are many reasons for laceration".*

Pastor Ciaccio in Palermo served the Methodist and Waldensian church of "La Noce" from 2011 to 2013 and the Waldensian church of via Spezio from 2013 to 2020. He currently carries out his ministry in Trieste.

"And I am particularly happy that this recognition comes from the Mayor Orlando, because I know that it is not a matter of whining, but of a real affirmation of esteem for what we have done together", he adds.

An important recognition that Ciaccio commented, in the www.chiesavalde.org: *"The conferral of the honorary citizenship of the City of Palermo was for me an unexpected event and, above all, not sought. All citizens should be committed to the good of the city where they live without seeking recognition. This is why I lived my nine years of service in the Methodist and Waldensian churches of Palermo as an opportunity to be at the service of the city as well. I believe it is a fundamental Protestant principle: to integrate (without confusing) in the public and private dimensions, the dimensions of faith and civil commitment. This is why I believe that the conferral of honorary citizenship is also an acknowledgement to the contribution that Methodists and Waldensians have given to the city of Palermo since 1861"*

The Waldensian presence in the city of Palermo has ancient roots: the foundation of the Waldensian Institute in 1863, the first school for all, had allowed the poorest to be educated, even before the onset of the public education.

In 1963 Revd. **Pietro Valdo Panascia** was the first exponent of a Christian church to denounce the crimes of the Mafia. In the seventies, then, Rev. Panascia himself had renewed the Waldensian Institute by creating the current Diaconal Center "La Noce", one

of the most important work of the Waldensian church at the national level. At the same time, it is good to remember the activity of the late Methodist Revd. **Alfonso Manocchio** who, in the eighties, had understood how Italy had changed and how the mission of the church would be to assist not (or not only) the emigrants, but the immigrants.

Alongside this commitment, mention should be made of the intuition of the Methodist **Vivian Wiwoloku**, Nigerian and Palermitan, who first took to heart the trafficking of human beings starting from work on the streets where many, too many sex slaves are forced to prostitute themselves. Native of Palermo, finally, is also the deacon **Alessandra Trotta**, current moderator of the *Tavola Valdese*.