

A farewell to Giacomo Rallo delivered by Baldo Palermo on behalf of the Donnafugata family

“Chiesa Madre” church, Marsala - 11th May 2016

On behalf of the family and staff, I would like to thank everyone who has shared their feelings of respect and affection for Giacomo Rallo, his relatives and all of us at this time.

We have received many tributes from the “world of wine”: institutions, associations, producers, workers, journalists, customers, wine lovers and many, many more, all of whom simply grateful that they had been able to meet him at least once in their lives.

We have been inundated with messages, memories, articles, from Italy and abroad...a true vocabulary of love. The impression given is of a relationship that went beyond expectations, enduring the test of time and establishing genuine bonds.

Two telegrams.

To Antonio and José Rallo

Deeply saddened for your tragic loss, my thoughts are with you and all of your family in this time of grief. Please accept my heartfelt condolences.

Maurizio Martina, Minister of Agriculture

To Gabriella Anca

I learned with deep sorrow of the sudden loss of Giacomo Rallo. I remember his personal friendship and his outstanding work as a successful and highly regarded entrepreneur. My heartfelt condolences go out to you and your sons, with deepest sympathy and warm wishes.

Sergio Mattarella, President of the Italian Republic

Today, this wealth of gratitude endures in poignant remembrance and will not be forgotten.

Men of faith observe the works of man. We have been privileged to witness the creation of something wonderful, the fruit of hard work combined with joy and that mysterious element that makes a man unique and one-of-a-kind.

Giacomo Rallo was exactly that.

We called him “DOTTOREGIACOMO”, all joined up. It was not intended as a formal name for “the boss”, it was more a sign of respect for his wisdom and humanity: he always had a word and a smile for everyone

He has passed that humanity on to us and we are proud to say that his family is our family. Their pain is our pain. Many members of staff have received condolences because people who kept in touch with us at the company’s premises (in Via Lipari in Marsala, Contrada Mazzaporro in Contessa Entellina and Kamma on Pantelleria), has been able to recognize our natural sense of belonging.

We cherish his sentiments. Not to mention his principles of legality and merit, his self-sacrifice, imagination, culture and intellectual curiosity (that desk always hidden under a mountain of books and papers).

His realism and idealism. His ability to wonder, develop a passion for something and impassion others.

We entered this world, his world, as young adults, many of us very young, and found in him a friendly, skilful guide. Cola, Giacomino and Angelo worked with him for fifty years, whilst Angela, Mariella and Ignazio were with him for almost thirty years. So many of the staff, agents and consultants retained close ties with him, even when they no longer worked for the company; to name them all would be an impossible task.

That's the pride we want to talk about. He always told us, "Sicily has it all". "It is up to us to make it fairer and more beautiful and present it the world." His plan was strong enough to take root, touching people's hearts, like a gift and a promise that has the ability to become the future.

The plan began to develop outside of the company too, thanks to the teamwork he initiated with other wine-producer colleagues. A combined effort that put a spotlight on Sicily as a producer of quality wines, bringing international acclaim.

His latest important engagements included an event with the *Cavalieri del Lavoro* from the world of wine, held last November. The event went well, very well and he was so pleased, as happy as a little boy. As were we. It made us realise how important it was for him; DOTTOREGIACOMO was aware that it was a once-in-a-lifetime milestone.

On leaving, the guests spoke to members of the family and staff and, in one way or another, they all said pretty much the same thing: Sicily is so beautiful, your wine-estate is wonderful, but above all, you are wonderful people.

That was the key to his plan. A life plan, first and foremost. With Gabriella.

We would not be where we are today without her. Cheerful, a source of great imagination, infectious charm and natural elegance, she has played a starring role.

Gabriella, thank you for all that you have done and all that you will continue to do with us in the future.

Dear José, Antonio, Gabriellina and Ferdinando, during the moment of reflection you spent with our families and us this morning, you reminded us of something: our course remains the same.

We had no doubt about it and we are happy to hear it.

I have a personal memory to share.

Years back, he often said to me, "I haven't got time, do you understand?" He said it when I was slow in following his intuition. He was quick, much quicker than I was, quicker than all of us. He saw things before everyone else. That is the talent of a true entrepreneur. He put his talent to good use, in a Christian way and he helped us, encouraged us, to make use of our talents, however big or small they might be.

In recent years he was calmer, he no longer said "I haven't got time", instead he spoke about "returning to the house of the Father", with a smile on his lips.

He has indeed returned to "the house of the Father" and – I should say – he has done it in a resolute way, as was his manner.

He did not give us time to say goodbye. He did not say a word.

However, what else could he have told us that he had not already said and above all demonstrated?

Thank you DOTTOREGIACOMO. You leave us not with a great void, but a great legacy.