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MARIAPOLI

Newsletter of the Focolare Movement

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Inculturation
Africa
teaches us

Family
focolares
At the service
of humanity

In dialogue
With our friends
of non-religious
convictions

The most profound way of «making yourself one»

Dearest, one of the many graces that Our Lady gave us in this month of May, during our stay in Africa, was that of understanding a new dimension of «making yourself one», an attitude that is well-known and quite familiar to us, an expression of our charism of unity. We have gone in depth on how to «make yourself one» with our brothers, with our neighbors so as to love them and thus express concretely our love for God.

And we also saw our neighbor himself in a new light.

Saint Vincent de Paul defined the poor that he benefited as his masters. And so he served them.

We have understood that we must see not only the poor as our masters, but also all our neighbors. In fact, if Jesus said that he did not come to be served but to serve (and we must be able to say the same thing), we are the servants and the others are the masters.

As such it is him, our neighbor, who must have the first word, who must be honored, obeyed, because it is he who commands.

So then what must our attitude be with regards to him?

We must put him in the condition of being the first to act, to take the initiative, we could say to be the first to love. And for this to be so, we must place ourselves



Fontem, may 2000

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at his disposition, to go to him completely empty of ourselves and to put aside for him also the most beautiful and greatest things that we possess: our very own charism, our spirituality, our Opera, so as to be «nothing» in front of him like Jesus Forsaken, like Mary Desolate. To be «nothing» which is then, paradoxically, to be the most authentic Ideal, the Opera personified.

In such a way our neighbor can manifest himself because he finds someone who accepts him; he can give himself.

But, for the «nothingness» in us to be a «nothingness of love», and not certainly a nothing that is synonymous to inexistence, the Holy Spirit, who is vigilantly present in us, enlightens us and allows us to guide the conversation, in a certain sense,

so that our neighbor can open himself up completely. Not only this, but we are also able to find the way to grasp that something which is «alive» in the heart of our brother, «alive» in the supernatural sense, a small flame of the divine life in him; or «alive» simply in the human sense, an expression of those values that the Lord, in creating us, had sown in every human soul.

And on that something which is «alive» we can – by serving – graft with gentleness, with love, with unlimited discretion, those aspects of the truth, of the evangelical message that we bring in us and which give fullness and completeness to that which our neighbor already believes in and which are often what he has been waiting for, yearned for almost: aspects which then draw with it all the truth.

Or better still, if we think that it is something he could desire, we can offer him politely, without ever imposing, the possibility of entering that door of the Opera (her various structured and non-structured parts) which we think Mary has prepared for him, up until also this person can join our communion, the community of our Movement, which is one of the communities of the Church.

So our brother gave first and we, then, did likewise, and so the flame of our Ideal can benefit many.

This is an excellent way for the continents where the Church (and in Her we too) can take advantage of the seeds of the Word existing in the various cultures, to graft the Life (Jesus) onto something that is already alive, just as every tree is alive, even if it is wild and not yet grafted.

But it is a sublime way also for those so-called civilized lands, where theoretical or practical atheism or indifference, secu-

larism or materialism predominate. There, when there are not only the lower values (such as power, money, prestige, personal wealth, etc.), at times, though not rarely, a more or less elevated idealism and often a lot of good will come to light.

All these must also be given value and considered as the foundation on which to build universal brotherhood.

It is, as what I have explained, the most profound, most intimate «making yourself one», which certainly implies giving food to the hungry, building hospitals for those who are sick, that is, it implies concrete works. But this is not all, as they are just the more external aspects of «making yourself one».

The first work that we must build up is Christ in us and Mary in us. And they are precisely who they are when they are «nothing», in the abandonment and in the desolation. And thus they become «everything», fullness: Jesus in the resurrection and Mary, by participation in the divine life, in her glorification.

Let us try then in this month of June, dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, to the very ardent love of Christ, to live His way of loving, that of «making yourself one» just as He did, when as God he made himself like us, he made himself man.

Let us remember, then, «the most profound way of «making yourself one».



From the spiritual thought of the Conference Call dated May 28, 1992, published in *Saints together*, Città Nuova, Rome, February 2005, p.105

Going in depth

Inculturation, Africa teaches us

New ways of announcing the Gospel emerge from the meeting of different cultures

In the Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelii nuntiandi*, Paul VI expressed his preoccupation regarding the split between Gospel and culture, seeing in this the drama of our times. He thus hoped that this gap could be filled up by approaching the various cultures with a greater interest and attention. The evangelization of cultures – that is, of the peoples' way of living and thinking– is, as John Paul II underlined, «the most profound and complete way to evangelize society because through it the message of Christ enters into the consciences and penetrates into the customs of the people, into their activities, institutions and structures». In the Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Africa* (87) he did not hesitate to define inculturation as «a way to sanctity».

In tune with the thought of the Popes and due to an intuition derived from love, Chiara – during her trip to Nairobi, Kenya, in May, 1992 – founded the School for Inculturation inspired by the spirituality of unity, so as to study the values and qualities of the African cultures.



Fontem, maggio 2000

Thus, years after the presence of the Movement in Africa since 1963, they were now able to gather the many fruits of living the Gospel, which flourished again and again in many communities in the nations of the Continent, and a new stage also began. To the members of the Movement who came together to Nairobi from all over Africa, Chiara suggested that they highlight their wisdom, the patrimony of their own cultures, as understood also in the light of the life of the spirituality of unity, stimulating in everyone a commitment to inculturation.

An interesting process began of discovering the other, of inculturation and of inter-culturation also among the various African cultures, given the specific characteristics of the different ethnic groups. Every year the fruits of *making yourself one in a deeper way*¹, which Chiara immediately pointed out as the principal way for our work, grew in number. «We realized that we have an extra powerful weapon for in-



Mariapoli Piero (Kenya), maggio 1992

culturation— she said in Nairobi – which I would say is ours alone, because we have the charism of unity... “making yourself one”. Making yourself one, do you know what it means? It means to cut completely the roots of your culture and to enter into the culture of the other and to understand it and allow it to express itself, until you have welcomed it into yourself, and when you have taken it in, then you can start a dialogue with the other and pass on also the evangelical message through the riches that he already possesses»².

In fact Chiara explains, «You cannot enter into the soul of a brother, so as to comprehend him, to understand him... if your soul is rich with a worry, a judgement ...», «to make yourself one means to put yourself in front of everyone with an attitude of learning, because we truly have something to learn»³.

With these words of Chiara a permanent center for inculturation was set up in the newly born Mariapolis Piero, close to Nairobi, and for these past 20 years it has given life to Pan-African conventions on important themes, as evidenced by the books that have already been published.

Bishops and theologians have expressed appreciation for the work that has been accomplished in all these years: «In the phase we are now living – prof. Maviiri, Rector at the Catholic University of East Africa, writes – it is all the more opportune and appropriate that such work be published, not only to underline the necessity and the urgency for inculturation, but also to bear witness to the joy of discovering the gift that each one is, in response to the love of God for everyone. This is the normal procedure of the School of Inculturation of the Focolare Movement».

Maria Magnolfi

- 1 C. Lubich, *The most profound «making yourself one»*, Collegamento, Roma 28.05.1992.
- 2 C. Lubich, to the representatives of the communities of Africa, Nairobi 18.05.1992.
- 3 C. Lubich, *The Art of Loving*, Rome 2005, p.74.

The Person in Sub-saharan Africa

The tenth School of Inculturation at Mariapolis Piero

It was an experience that went beyond the expectations of the 287 participants in the 10th School of Inculturation: volunteers, gen, focolarinos and focolarinas coming from the nations of Africa on the south of the Sahara. It was spontaneous to say that the School was enveloped by a real grace that «made the action of the Holy Spirit visible», Bruna commented.

The theme on «The Person» was stimulating. The zone commissions began by presenting a rich panorama of African anthropological elements according to the specificity of the geographical area from where – as a common undeniable fact – their communitarian roots emerged. This was followed by a presentation of the identity of the human person according to biblical/semitic anthropology and in the writings of the New Testament; in Trinitarian theology and in African philosophy, in the documents of Vatican II and in the light of the spirituality of unity. *The other one another me*, the theme of Emmaus, resonated as if it was written on purpose to allow Chiarà's patrimony on love of neighbor to penetrate.

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A fundamental fruit was the new push and enthusiasm to bring the Ideal of unity to the masses, being more aware of one's own roots and Chiara's mandate for evangelization; without fear of the challenges and acting with discernment on the limits that are inherent in the various cultures, but also aware of the values that they contain; with responsibility, to know how to move among one's own people, bearing witness to the radicalism of one's actions. The link with Chiara was strong, understanding through her example how to act in the dialogue with the traditional religions.

Chief Charles Morfaw of Fontem, a volunteer, explained how Chiara made herself one with Fon Defang in such an extraordinary way. He said that this «determined the grafting of the Ideal and the consequent evangelization of the Bangwa people». He constantly repeated to those present that he felt he had to be a «student» of Chiara, not only her «follower», to learn and to make his own her vision, her way of life so as to pass it on to the others through his being. He has been married for ten years, his wife is also a volunteer, and he has openly chosen to remain monogamous, finding the right and wise way to explain his choice to the leaders of his clan and to his people.

Another salient point of this school was the participation of the gen and the Youth for a United World, as part of the Project *Sharing with Africa*, which was launched at the Genfest.

The gen who came to represent the Center, well integrated among the other thirty gen coming from East Africa, followed the program of the



School with great interest, coming into direct contact with the values of society according to the Ubuntu culture, as expressed in a proverb of the Bantu people: «I am because we are» which favors the sociality of the person and the realization of oneself in interaction with the others. «I am what I am because of what we all are».

The reflection on values continued in the groups. Lively and with an open exchange, everyone committed themselves to identifying the values that emerge from the different African contexts and to see to it that they do not remain as symbols of the past but that they become talents to be used in evangelization. They are values which even the young people are eager to preserve in the midst of a globalized world, and which they want to spread and multiply among their peers through their life and all the other means available. At the conclusion, the participants wrote: « Chiara gave us the courage to get to know one another as peoples, to make us discover that we are one and to open our eyes to our own selves so as to be a gift for everyone. Her prophetic words in 1992 is becoming a reality».

Maria Magnolfi



Trip to Germany

Make God shine

Emmaus and Giancarlo visited the four German zones all in one month in the midst of surprises and confirmations

After the meeting with the «family of Chiara» in Ottmaring on Sunday, the 2nd of June, Giancarlo Faletti jokingly said to a focolarino next to him: «Can you please tell me what my name is?». Both he and Emmaus had reason to feel tired.

In two stages – from May 1 to 14 and from May 23 to June 2 – they visited the Focolare Movement in Germany, with a break during the days close to Pentecost when they had to represent the Movement in St. Peter's Square during the big meeting of the Catholic Movements with Pope Francis. The trip to Germany brought them to four territorial sub-divisions of the Movement: the zones of East Germany, Northwest Germany, South Germany and the Ecumenical Little Town of Ottmaring.

They had 61 appointments in 21 days, among which were the big meetings with all the intern members and adherents in Zwochau, Wuppertal, Heilbronn and Ottmaring,

public gatherings such as the convention on the Dialogue of Life in Berlin, receptions, meetings with groups and branches of the Movement, visits to Bishops, preparatory and summarizing talks with the persons in charge of the zones. They needed to have not only a great capacity to listen, but were also asked to address talks and themes, to answer questions, to engage in private conversations, debates, to write messages. It is not surprising then if someone, after such a program, can have the impression of not remembering his own name.

We could also reverse the question and ask the members of the Focolare Movement in Germany if they, after this trip, after so many spiritual and concrete inputs, can still remember who they are. In other words: has this trip – that was supposed to serve as a means for Emmaus and Giancarlo to get to know Germany and the Germans better – brought some fruits or some changes in the persons they visited and not only in the visitors?





From the point of view of someone who had the possibility – I would say the grace – of accompanying the entire trip from beginning to end, it seems to me that I could underline three effects: the trip of Emmaus and Giancarlo gave us value, it united us and elevated us.

It has enhanced our value!

We Germans are sceptical by nature. We have the tendency to question ourselves, the others and even the good God. «If our president were to walk on water – says a typical joke – we would immediately say: surely he is doing it because he doesn't know how to swim!».

Emmaus and Giancarlo – with a great intuition – responded to this characteristic by expressing a sincere appreciation for: the freshness of the Ideal life that they saw coming to light in the zone of East Germany, the completeness of the Opera in Northwest Germany, the big number of talents and initiatives that they found in the zone of South Germany, and the prophetic dimension of the Ecumenical Little Town of Ottmaring.

But they also valued the single initiatives and experiences. It's enough to think of that volunteer who works as an engine-driver in the railroad and who, due to his irregular working hours finds it difficult to meet regularly with the other members of his nucleus, especially with one of them who is a truck driver. So in order to cultivate their relationship and to live «with Jesus in the midst» the only thing he can do is to make a telephone call during his breaktime. Emmaus was truly enthusiastic, just thinking about these two men who go around the streets of Germany and who, by

living the Word, give space for God who is alive in their midst.

Or else I can recall the reaction of the president to the question on what we could

do in Augsburg, so that the commitment to the «Augustinian unity» announced in 1988 by Chiara could have a much stronger influence in the social and political life of the city. Almost surprised, Emmaus said: «What? You want to do something more?». And thus she highlighted all that is already being done in this field.

To the phrases such as «unfortunately we are only...», unfortunately we only have...» she reacted with an exclamation of respect, esteem and acknowledgment. I saw with my own eyes certain moments in which this amazement, this admiration changed the others' way of seeing reality, how it turned something that seemed to be small into something great, something that seemed insignificant into something precious.

It has united us

The trip of the president and of the co-president had a unifying effect on the Movement in Germany, and this is for two reasons: a theme to which Emmaus constantly returned to is the understanding that the Opera is like a «family», referring to that which she considers as the last words of Chiara, or rather the advice of Chiara: «Be a family!». For Emmaus this does not mean a nostalgic return to the early times. She untiringly explained that the Opera had to live that phase of diversification into different groups and branches because each one had to find their proper identity. The «testament» of Chiara – Emmaus said – is in fact directed to the completely developed Opera, which now has to learn once again to put at the center of all its actions the unity of a single spiritual family. This family has and must have its own structure. But

these structures – and this is something that had to be emphasized especially among us here in Germany - , must always serve to realize the great aim for which the Opera was born: «*Ut Omnes*», the unity of the human family, which means nothing other than, as Giancarlo often says, the progress of the Kingdom of God. For this reason no structure must ever be the end in itself.

With this as the background, the other meetings with the Evangelical members in Germany – at times rather exhausting and painful - must be seen from this perspective. The meeting of the big «family» of the Focolare made the diversity more evident and at times highlighted a certain lack of sensitivity from the Catholic majority. Emmaus and Giancarlo did not bring with them presidential solutions to the ecumenical questions. But they grasped with great attention the desire of the Evangelicals to be given more respect in their diversity.

Of great importance were some of the meetings Emmaus and Giancarlo had with persons who, for various reasons, used to be members of the Movement and did not find their place or who have left after being members for a long period of time, often in painful and sometimes also dramatic circumstances. Emmaus went to these meetings with an open heart, listening profoundly, expressing a sincere emotion and gratitude for what these people have given to the Opera, without any hint of wanting to «regain» them.

But there was another unifying dimension in this trip, which was of a national character. Looking closely on how it unfolded, one could say that it was not a trip to the different German zones but rather it was a trip to Germany. From the

beginning it was planned that the conclusions would be drawn only at the end of the trip. And from the first moment one could notice that Emmaus directed her gaze always on Germany. The lively participation of the members of the Movement in all the zones during the entire trip created a sense of belonging that had not been seen maybe since the sub-division of Germany into various zones in 1981.

Maybe what was pointed out regarding the development of the Movement in various branches is also valid in this context: the sub-division of the Opera into various zones was a necessary step which must now flow into a new unity that signifies another step towards maturity and not a regression or going backward.

It has elevated us

I would call the third effect of this trip: elevation. I am referring to the invitation expressed by Emmaus at the end of the «German tour» at Ottmaring, an invitation we could already foresee during the big meeting with the intern members and adherents of the zone of South Germany at Heilbronn. There she was asked to convey a wish for the Germans, and with a certain authority she answered: «Precisely because you are so rich in talents and so perfect, I would like to wish you a more profound relationship with God, a more intense and continuous dialogue with Him, which comes from a new and vital relationship».



At Ottmaring then, Emmaus developed this thought further, referring to all the gifts that she discovered in the Germans: their faithfulness, their solidity, their capacity for cultural insight, their capacity to look in depth at problems, not to just pass over them superficially but to resolve them. And it was precisely because of all these that the invitation to develop more and more the sense of the supernatural came about: «My wish for you is that you become always more convinced that on this capacity of yours, the greatness of God may shine more brightly, that you become really capable of telling yourselves: who are we? So as to



discover how much God works, who God is for us, what God can do for us, and through our contribution, also cultural, we can make Him shine also for the others. And this, I think, is the great gift that Germany can give, that the entire Germany can give to Europe, and not only Europe, but the whole world: this cultural foundation that makes the greatness of God emerge».

It is an invitation that liberates and challenges us. It frees us from the stress – real or imagined, but which is nevertheless typical of Germans – of the need to do everything. And it challenges us to keep our feet on the ground, but also to raise our head up so as to have it always fixed in heaven, and to bear witness to a greatness and a dignity that is not ours.

Joachim Schwind

Gen3

World, city,

A Supercongress that brought to the streets of Castelgandolfo 1300 gen3, aged 9 to 12, from 33 nations

«I feel an immense joy and I think that I can love everyone! Maybe because there is really the Holy Spirit among us who has opened our hearts». These are the words of one of the 1,300 gen3, aged 9 to 12, from 33 countries of the world, who came together to Castel Gandolfo on Pentecost for their Supercongress.

Games, dances and many experiences came one after another. It has been a year that they had been preparing for this special appointment by “putting the heart into action”, so as to bring the color of love to the many gray corners of their cities. A story presented on stage expressed the certainty of the gen 3 boys and girls: we can give happiness to the world and multiply friendships, sharing and trust around us.



In the afternoon, going out to the streets and in the town square, they involved the residents and passersby in their program. The mayor, who enthusiastically opened the doors of the municipal hall, sent a text mes-

heart in action

sage that evening to all the participants of the Congress: «I am now going to sleep with my mind full of very beautiful images and my heart full of emotions. Thank you to the Focolare Movement. You are marvellous!».

The live internet transmission with the presence of Emmaus, was accessed on the website 12.000 times, and opened the doors of the hall to the whole world. The questions and the experiences gave a description of the life and the problems of teenagers. They all felt that Emmaus welcomed and listened to them, and that she was able to enter into their world. In their message to her they wrote: «Thank you for your teachings, which are precisely what we need for our everyday life. We really liked the way you listened to us and how you understood the problems that we face, giving wise, useful and clear advice to us gen 3. Now we know how to love our “enemies” and to overcome difficult moments. When someone hurts us we can be together with Jesus to save the world, we really liked this a lot. While you were with us, we felt like we were only one person, you brought us your love and also that of Chiara».



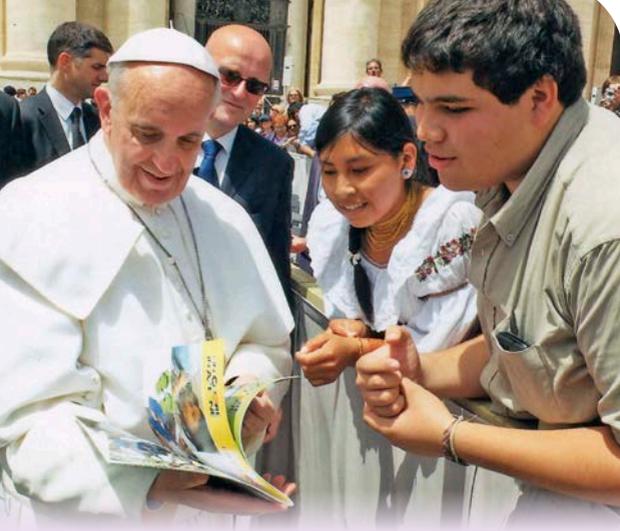
Fly high!

Gen 3 girls Congress

The Congress of the gen 3 girls continued on a high note. «What I liked most of all was when the hall became a big airplane and we boarded the Gen3-Airlines. Destination? Obviously, Paradise!». By following the metaphor of a flight with various stages, from the take-off to moments of turbulence, the gen 3 reached the heart of God.



With the theme of the “Little Flame” they discovered the gifts of the Holy Spirit and welcomed the advice of Chiara and her encouragement to love always. This is what a gen 3 wrote in her letter: «I will try to do what you have taught us, Chiara. Every time I see your great love for God I think that your life has truly improved many things here on earth. I am sure that the gen 3 girls and boys will be a generation of saints!!!». During their visit to the Center of the Opera they found the heart



Family foculares New lights in the cities

Called to be at the service of the entire
Opera, as true focularesi

of Chiara, her presence, which they felt very much alive in her house and in the chapel.

Various stopovers were foreseen in the flight program. These were stopovers in the different continents so as to get to know the “people of Chiara” and the spread of the Ideal in the world, through the stories of many pioneers. Landing in their world, they went in depth into certain topics, so as to be able to face the challenges linked to their age group, such as: the use of mass media, adolescence and emotions, bullying, school, family life. Around a hundred adults gave their contribution of wisdom, making all the participants experience the potentials present in the Opera, Jesus in the midst among generations.

The last destination was St. Peter’s Square, heart of Christianity, for the meeting with Pope Francis. Also present were the gen 3 boys who remained for their school. A group of representatives, greeting the Holy Father personally, showed him in a joyful moment the album “Hearts in action” with photos and experiences from all over the world. The Pope leafed through it together with them, underlining how important it is for «the young people of the Focolare Movement to go ahead with these works». The love for the least, lived intensely by the gen 3 boys and girls, was welcomed in the heart of the Church.

Stella Tomiola



«We are here with the delegates of our zones, awaiting the link-up with you to welcome the message of Emmaus». This is one of the many text messages that came a few hours before the internet link-up with the Mariapolis Center of Castelgandolfo, where the school of the family foculares was being held from May 30 to June 2. It was a very much awaited school which foresaw, just by seeing the title, that something new was about to happen. «New lights in the cities»: a wish and a commitment for the 175 family foculares who came from different parts of the world. It was a truly special school.

It is difficult to describe these days in just a few words: a kind of laboratory guided by Jesus in the midst, which gave rise to new ideas, inflamed hearts, and launched everyone to live for l’Ut Omnes with a renewed enthusiasm so as to reach the «outskirts» and to dialogue with everyone, even with those farthest from our Ideal, in order to be a new light in the environments in which we are immersed.

The central moment of the school was the video message of Emmaus, recorded be-

fore her departure for Germany, wherein she once again put into focus all the values of a family focolare, called to be a true focolare and, as such, linked directly to the President. The words of Emmaus generated a profound conversion in each one of us, leading us with immense love towards placing ourselves at the service of the Opera and her communities, her dialogues and her mass movements, with a renewed responsibility.

There was a special atmosphere in the hall right from the start. Many experiences were shared, among which was that particularly special one of Elide and Gianni Cito, in which they underlined the need to root themselves in Jesus Forsaken, over and beyond their own limitations, personal and social trials, so as to be new focolares in the world. It was important to rediscover the figure of Foco through a video wherein Cosimo Calò spoke of the last and very luminous period of his life.

The experiences of some of the family focolares, among the first to follow this very new way (Zanzucchi, Calò, Mayerhofer, Quartana, Colonnetti), led to a desire for more frequent formation, above all for the younger couples. Someone said: *«They were formed directly by Chiara; we too would like to be guided more...»*.

When we started to prepare this school, we felt the need to go and visit Augustin Kemdjo, the married focolarino of Douala who was gravely ill, so as to entrust it to him. Because of this his funeral, celebrated during

the days of the school, was a moment of great emotion. It seemed to us that this event had put a seal on the words of Emmaus, making us witness personally Augustin's experience of sanctity. He appeared to us as a fulfilled fruit of the vocation of a married focolarino and of a family focolare together with his wife Amata.

At the conclusion of the school we saw once again some of the last answers regarding the family focolare that Emmaus and Giancarlo gave during their recent trip to Germany: that one of being *«Families with a Heart»* so as to generate and accept, going towards the sufferings and the many challenges of humanity today, summed up many of the resolutions that were made.

Everyone left with the awareness of having participated in a historical moment in the life of the Opera. Also many of those who viewed the internet link-up felt a new sense of responsibility, a profound joy, a new commitment to live with radicalism so as to generate the presence of Jesus.

We would like to share with you an impression which we think summarizes the numerous and lively echoes that are continuing to arrive: *«Each of these words of Emmaus were already in our heart; they were the words that we would have wanted so much to express. They were there, but it was as if they were covered by a veil. Emmaus came and she took away this veil. Now we can see more clearly what we are and what we can give and we are happy to be answerable to her, as many focolares at the service of humanity»*.

Maria e Raimondo Scottò



At Nemi with Città Nuova

6th annual workshop of those in-charge of circulation

It is a surprise every time. But this time it was a double surprise, even triple. Who could have imagined that 180 people, during a time of economic crisis, would have found the possibility and the money to invest in the promotion of an editorial adventure that goes hand in hand with the evolution and incisiveness of the Focolares in their environments?

They are the people in-charge of this aspect in the councils of the zone and small zones and so they come from almost all the regions of Italy. "For a network that is more of an enterprise and an enterprise that is more in a network" was the title of the event which, in certain moments was enriched by the presence of Luisa Gennaro and Mario Ciabattini, together with the delegates of the Italian zones and many of those responsible for the small zones. Also present were some other people called "apassionati", a name that was coined to express the passion that Città Nuova arouses the moment one becomes involved in the network where, as Chiara used to say, "who writes, who reads and who circulates all have the same importance". It was therefore a theoretical and practical workshop, where we had to look at our weak points together so as to transform them into strong points, both in the process of circulation or in proposing publication material,



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in the world of book publishing and marketing wherein sales have gone down frightfully.

Third surprise: the enthusiasm. Enthralling and absorbing were the experiences of this network already operative and competent in many parts of the country. The media sell if they give prominence to the 5 "kings": money, sex, blood, scandal, success. Città Nuova proposes a 6th: hope, because the aim is not to sell Città Nuova but to spread the new culture that is born from the Ideal. The next appointment is: "Città Nuova Day" to be held on the 5th of October in the different cities of Italy, so as to start all together. "This congress is a workshop of creativity which the Opera needs" Antonella and Dimitri concluded in their final greeting. They recalled the words of Emmaus when she said not to be afraid of losing our identity when we go out because we don't lose it if we give it: each one of us is the first means of communication to spread the experience that we have made.

Marta Chierico



The Fourth Dialogue

Towards a «healthy normality»

The relationship of friendship and collaboration with friends of non-religious convictions is growing locally

A new step in the history of the Center of Dialogue with persons of non-religious convictions began this year with a series of meetings among regional groups which, held right in the area, aimed at getting to know one another more, at strengthening relationships and circulating the experiences among those involved in this dialogue in the same country or region.

Also in the past, trips were made to nations outside Italy, but now it deals with making «our friends» true protagonists and builders of dialogue wherever they are, bringing their specific contribution to the Movement.

More than twenty friends from Russia, the Slovak Republic, Austria, Germany, Serbia, Croatia and Slovenia came last February for a two-day meeting in Vienna.

There was a strong awareness that in the

Opera every reality was born and could develop by living love of neighbor and that we have now entered into a new era in which each one, working together, is more than ever a first-hand builder of it.

There were moments of updating, in which eve-



ryone was able to participate with an open heart in the latest realities of the Movement and to initiate a profound communion.

The evening was dedicated to meeting a group belonging to the Communist Party of Austria and numerous participants were attracted to the exhibit

prepared by one of them, Walter Filip. His photographs had an unusual theme: covers of sewerage all over Europe, but which reveal his interest in discovering these humble artworks.

The dialogue between the Communist party and the Focolare Movement in Autria has by now become part of that «healthy normality», as underlined by the economist of the party, Michael Graber, adding that recently even the women members of the Communist party and the Focolare Movement have started to meet so as to tackle themes of common interest.





The same mark of profound collaboration and serious commitment on the part of our «friends» was evident also at Castell d'Aro, along the Costa Brava in Spain, where some people in-charge of the Center for dialogue met a good group coming from the countries of Western Europe.

For the first time the group from Florence organized a convention open to all with the theme «The responsibility of the other», proposing to the almost 150 people present, among whom 100 were our «friends», a reflection on the relationship between people in society. Guest of honor was Doni Fratta who shared how within the Focolare there has always been the attention for those who didn't share a religious conviction. As a living witness to the early times of this dialogue, Piero Taiti spoke about his meeting with Chiara Lubich, underlining what he had discovered about being secular and lay,

about respect and dialogue, through his relationship with her.

The many experiences offered by the youth who collaborate to spread fraternity in the most varied environments, as

shared by the two schools for political involvement held in Prato and Pisa, were very encouraging.

The wealth of this dialogue came to light in all its dynamism and diffusion during the Third Course on the Word of Life and human wisdom, which was held at the beginning of April in Castelgandolfo. The participants came not only from European countries but also from New Zealand and Argentina. The presence and the contribution of the young people was significant.

The presence of Emmaus and Giancarlo was a confirmation that the steps we were taking were in line with «ut omnes». A phase stage for our «friends» with non-religious convictions who are linked to the Opera emerged when Emmaus defined their role: «*What do I expect from our friends of the 4th dialogue? I expect them to bring to those farthest away, out-*

side the Movement, the ideals that animate it. I expect them to be precisely what Chiara used to say to Foco: which is, to be the skin of this body, the external part that is visible and can therefore serve as a bridge with humanity. (...)

What can our friends expect from the Movement? I think that they can expect what all of us desire: which is to feel welcomed and accepted..

Vida Rus, Franz Kronreif

The moment to live dialogue

The experiences of our friends with non-religious convictions were so rich and made us foresee a world that is changing because of a new commitment in building relationships with those near us

Three years ago I started to engage in volunteer work in a Community of Rome that takes care of drug addicts.

The Center, which was set up in 1978 as a support for drug addicts, has now become a center which ta-

kes care of a wider range of problems not just limited to drug addiction.

The programme of the people within the community interests not only those who have a problem but also their families or relatives who are involved in situations that at times can reach the limits of human endurance.

It is precisely towards these people that I direct my actions as a volunteer worker.

During the course of my formation within the community, I learned two indispensable elements needed to carry out my duties in a suitable manner; and these are communication and listening.

Even though I shared with my colleagues the various elements that make dialogue easier such as attention, acceptance of the other, absence of criticism, of judgement etc., I tried to go a step further. I tried to concretely make use of the instruments given to us by dialogue.

Here is one small experience. One morning, while I was working in the secretariat of the community where I work as a volunteer, a lady arrived asking to speak with a worker.

Even before she sat down, in an arrogant and

even aggressive manner, she dictated how our conversation should go: our meeting must remain secret (if her son will know that she came to the community he will beat her to death); she will not tell me her name nor even that of her son; I cannot inform the police or even file a case (the lady is convinced that the Community and the police are in contact).



My first reaction was that of surprise, and then anger. I told her in a polite way that her attitude is quite wrong, and I told her that she was the one who approached me and not vice-versa.

There were just the two of us, and I was able to detach myself from my role, to see two people who are certainly not in dialogue: one who is weak and full of suffering, suffering and fear, while the other is strong, but closed up in his role of saviour. I was so disappointed with myself.

I felt the impossibility of taking action and my incapacity to put into practice the theories I had learned in my three years of service in the community. The technical instruments in this situation were useless.

I invited the lady to take a seat and I put myself and my technical skills, but above all my person, at her disposition, forgetting about the various bureaucratic procedures.

She burst into tears and joy at the same time, and as she sat down she apologized for her tears and started to share her story with me. The need to share the tragedy that she was going through had finally found a space where she could be freed from it without shame or fear of being judged.

My openness towards the other had finally become a form of listening capable of accepting her suffering, of building on it, making it mine and then giving it back to her with my contribution, a reciprocal enrichment.

This for me is just one story, and I have listened to many, but this time it is with something more: the attention for the other.

Piero Nuzzo

Towards the International Meeting on Education

To learn fraternity

«Learning Fraternity», the International Meeting on Education, will be held from September 6 to 8 at the Mariapolis Center of Castelgandolfo



Tom Masters will come from the United States with a workshop on the dice of love, while the team of PuntoLab in Rome is proposing another one on education and social networking. The stands of the families, the youth, teens, catechists, and educators in general will all be there too.

The program «Learning Fraternity», the International Meeting on Education to be held from September 6 to 8 at the Mariapolis Center of Castelgandolfo, is developing rapidly. It is a "landing" and at the same time the launching of a journey whose strong point is the synergy among the various educational agencies of the Opera.

New Humanity, Teens for Unity, EDU (Education and Unity) and AMU (Azione Mondo Unito) came to work together, gathering the life that exists in the field of education throughout the world and understanding together how to make them a gift for everyone.

«This synergy, in which also all the mass Movements of the Opera play a leading role, is perhaps one of the fundamental characteristics of the meeting» - Franco Pizzorno, president of New Humanity relates. New Humanity is the ngo of the Opera to which all the organizers refer with regard to relationships with the institutions - «Every subject brings with it a wealth of experiences and methods of work which multiply ideas, strengths, unity». «Certainly, we have worked for many years a bit on our own», relates Cecilia Landucci of the Indigo Commission of the Central Secretariat of New Humanity «this means that we must find new methods, change our mentality, learn to work together, aiming at common objectives».

It is not an easy task but at the same time it is both beautiful and exciting, and has its roots in the experience of a group of Italian educators who since 2010 have

been meeting together in a «National Education Desk». Cecilia Landucci continues: *«Thanks to the network of the "Desk" we can experience a communion of life that has become our way of working. Knowing the various experiences promotes collaboration, it makes us go out of our isolation, favoring the spread of what is already taking place as an experience and as a cultural train of thought in the field of education in the light of the charism of unity».*

The Desk puts on the network (web), educational, didactic and methodological initiatives, such as peace education, education to citizenship, to learning, which show how only an authentic interpersonal relationship can give life to every great educational event.

«And it is thanks to this experience that we are able to see the power of the "network" which will acquire an international dimension with the Meeting».

The Meeting will gather together all those who work in the field of education in various ways: the family, the school, the catechists, the group animators, the intellectuals, the teens.

«Up to now we have seen education from various angles and all of them are important» – Nadia Xodo of the Teens for Unity Center shares – «but our great hope for this meeting is that we may be able to give back to the teens their role as active subjects in education. Thanks to the unity that the young ones experience in their relationship with their teachers and parents, they too become carriers of this new way of doing things among their peers. And so we can have a greater influence on society and hope for real change».

The meeting will begin on Friday, the 6th of September, tackling the theme «Education and Globalization». After a first plenary session, the rest of

the day will be dedicated to visiting the various stands and to participating in different workshops from all over the world, workshops which will be held not only within the confines of the Mariapolis Center, but also in other venues of the «Paul VI» School of Castelgandolfo.

The program will continue on Saturday, 7th of September, and will instead focus on «Education and Relationship».

Angela Luce Silva (AMU) is following the preparation and setting-up of the stands and the workshops: *«The workshops will transmit the knowledge and the good practices that we have experienced in all these years in the educational field. We will understand more how the charism of unity contributes to "educating" when one is in the family, in the parish, when one is working for ecology or in mass media. The stands instead will be national, to show how every culture and*

every people have incarnated the pedagogy of Unity in their own contexts».

A distinctive feature of the day will be its opening up to the public, to all those in the area who would like to know more about the work of the Movement in the field of education. With a live internet broadcast the showcase will truly be interactive and worldwide.

«We will build together a strong and meaningful moment in common,» – concluded Roberto Borri of New Humanity – «which on the international level will have a working foundation in the form of evaluation, listening, exchange of ideas and educational itineraries, the good practices achieved and the projects to be launched».

The meeting ends on the 8th of September. To follow the entire preparatory stage and the live transmission via internet please go to:

<http://www.new-humanity.org/it/learning-fraternity.html>

Paolo Balduzzi



Inundations Highway for l'«*Ut Omnes*»

«Dialogue with culture»: the Central Commissions take stock of the situation

It has been some years now that there have not been any meetings of all the Central Commissions of the Inundations. And so when the approximately 70 participants arrived at the Mariapolis Center of Castelgandolfo on the 31st of May, there was an immediate burst of joy at seeing one another again.

The reason for this meeting was above all to look at the principal structure of the Inundation: the Commission. It dealt with understanding once again and going in depth into the meaning of the Commission, its nature, its *mission*, its being a dialogue, in particular «Dialogue with culture».

We were guided in all this by the «Resurrection of Rome» which, as Chiara told us many times, is the *Magna carta* of the inundations. Her words illuminated, gave meaning, and encouraged

us to work for this reality, to follow the road of this dialogue up to the end; it is not simple but it is truly fascinating, so as to bring the light of the charism to the vast world of culture.

The meeting unfolded in a constant and fruitful dialogue both among everyone and within each Commission. The highest point took place on Sunday morning when, after having listened once more to the «Resurrection of Rome», there was a moment of communion among all regarding the work done by the commissions. It was a very intense moment in which we could admire the beauty of each inundation in its specificity and, together, look at the unique or sole dialogue that they form, like a single garden in which each individual flower is placed.

Every inundation spoke of what they have already

realized in all these years and above all they placed in common their prospects for the future which had matured precisely during these days together in the light of Jesus in the midst. Everyone felt the desire to grow, to find synergies among the inundations, to re-launch themselves outside, to build the future.

For many of the Commissions it was a moment of renewing themselves by including the young people, and also becoming more international by involving people from the various continents.

At the end the joy in each one expressed quite well the experience they lived: seeing themselves once again, in spite of the specificity of each one, as one sole dialogue, the dialogue with culture, this too the «highway» for *Ut Omnes*.

Caterina Mulatero



The «culture of encounter» in action

New encouraging steps for the journey of communion for Together for Europe also in view of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation in 2017



«This meeting of ours which unites so many Communities of different Churches is a gift for me, a concrete experience of the action of the Holy Spirit. It is the fruit of a dialogue opened by our Lord Jesus Christ and which men and women sensitive to his spirit have welcomed and developed. It is a reason to be grateful».

This is how Robert Zollitsch, president of the German Episcopal Conference, began his talk in an ecumenical meeting for bishops and persons in-charge of the Church in Germany who were invited by the German network of *Together for Europe*. On the 23rd of May around twenty representatives of the Church arrived at the Catholic Academy of Stuttgart. Among them there was also the president of the Evangelical Church in Germany, Nikolaus Schneider and the Romanian Orthodox Metropolitan Serafim.

On the German website *Miteinander-wie-sonst* one can read that the bishops encouraged everyone «to contribute to an intense and open exchange on ecumenical questions, particularly relevant today in

view of the 50th anniversary of the Second Vatican Council and the 500th anniversary of the Reformation in 2017. Some elements that emerged were: the return to Christ as the common center; the unanimous re-description of history on the regional and national levels; setting up signs of reconciliation and increasing the awareness of the other's Church and it's viewpoints».

And still more, one can read: «With our great gratitude the day was characterized by an atmosphere of *Togetherness* and by the common effort for unity. All those present expressed their personal commitment (...) We were able to give precisely that which we felt was our specific task: to offer a venue for an encounter and a *Togetherness* wherein all insecurities disappear, wherein trust and the courage to go ahead grow».

Archbishop Zollitsch described the journey of *Together* like «a sketch the Holy Spirit makes of the journey that must be taken by the confessions and the Churches». He then invited everyone to join because «it is an initiative of the Lord himself».

June 4 with the Committee: prospects for the future

The meeting of the Steering Committee at the headquarters of Saint Egidio in Rome last June 4, for a day of reflection, addressed these and other local initiatives of *Together for Europe*.

Andrea Riccardi recalled that – for those who started this journey of commun-



ion – it was an experience of the «Kingdom of Heaven». Emmaus, calling to mind the words of Pope Francis, spoke about the «culture of encounter» which brings about communion –as the experience is in *Together*.

It is a communion that goes ahead in different points in time: in Great Britain, Movements and Communities of various Churches are preparing for the first big meeting in London this coming November 9.

The Committee is gathering to agree on the preparations for the meeting of the «Friends of *Together for Europe*» which will be held this year in November in Paris. The theme is solidarity with the poor, one of the 7 "yeses" in the message of Stuttgart 2007. Jean Vanier, founder of *Arche*, has assured them of his contribution.

Even the youth are moving. The group *face2Faith* – students belonging to Movements and communities of various Churches who want to be part of the journey of *Together for Europe* – are reflecting

on the theme: «*Together for Europe – roots and vision*». They would like to share the goals and the history of many charisms that have met along the journey and to make their own the commitment to contribute and reinforce the Christian soul of Europe.

Christians united for Europe

In the morning of June 5, the persons in-charge present in Rome were received by Cardinal Stanislaw Rylko, president of the Pontifical Council for the Laity. He had followed *Together for Europe* since its birth, bringing a message from John Paul II to Stuttgart in 2004. He was happy to be updated on the steps taken and the future projects, which he encouraged. He underlined the contribution that the communities and the movements can give to reawaken the responsibility for a united Europe. It is God who must return to the center of man's life, and God will return when people allow themselves to be «touched» by God. The Cardinal sees in the charisms, venues in which God «touches» people and transforms them, making them credible witnesses of the Gospel. Referring to what the Cardinal said, Kurt Koch, president of the Pontifical Council for the unity of Christians, reaffirms that Europe needs united Christians!

Gabri Fallacara





Venezuela A Biennial of Art dedicated to Chiara

Children, youth and adults. A total of 88 contestants participated in the «*Bienial de Artes Chiara Lubich*» organized and promoted by the Catholic University Cecilio Acosta of Maracaibo (Venezuela). Working with great enthusiasm and concentration, they presented works of art inspired by the theme «to look at all the flowers».

Last May 11, the *Plaza de la Republica* was thus immersed in an atmosphere of joyful and multi-colored creativity, just like what happens in the studio of a great Artist, invisible but very much present, who under the official «patronage» of Chiara, was no less than «Jesus the Artist» in the midst of artists.

An art critic, atheist and member of the panel of judges of the previous biennial, shared the peculiarity of this initiative, which according to him is unique.

The Venezuelan sojourn moved on to Caracas where there was also the possibility of meeting around twenty local artists at the Museum of Modern Art of Petare. In this context I had the confirmation that among artists – even those who are non-believers – it is possible and enriching to dialogue about Chiara and the more intimate experiences of her charism under the aspect of Beauty or of her vision of Harmony and the environment, the «Blue».

An elderly painter, an atheist and a communist, showing me his hearing aid, told me, «I didn't hear everything, but I liked very much what I heard». The directress of the Museum wanted to know everything about Chiara. Daughter of a president of Venezuela, she renounced a political career to dedicate herself to the popular Culture, thinking that maybe this was a more urgent «political» commitment. When I spoke of the «Blue» she listened very attentively and agreed with enthusiasm because she felt that the choice she made in her life was confirmed.

Before returning to Italy I could not miss seeing Angel Lombardi (rector of the University of Maracaibo who in 2006 conferred on Chiara the Doctorate *honoris causa* in Art): I gifted him with my icon of the *Mind of Jesus*, explaining Chiara's profound desire to see a devotion to the «mind of Jesus» arise from her charism. For Professor Lombardi and his wife, she too an intellectual and a poet, it was a fundamental rediscovery, so much so that on the following day Lombardi spoke enthusiastically about this to the Council of the University.

Michel Pochet

Cebu – Philippines

The community flourishes again

In Bacolod, a small city in the north of the island of Negros, west of Cebu (Philippines), where there was once a flourishing community, thanks to the love of a focolarina from that place – who returned to reconnect with the people who knew the Ideal, life has been reborn.

A nice group, lively and close-knit, was able to participate in the Mariapolis of Cebu, sharing their very beautiful experiences. A young man said, «I came back to the Focolare community leaving behind me the burden of the past three years, re-learning and re-living the way of love. I thought that my heart was irreparably empty, and instead God showed me that this was not so. I still had a chance. I could choose. And I chose to love»

Ding Dalisay, Carlo Gentile

Morocco

Mariapolis in Tangiers

The Mariapolis was held for the first time at Tangiers in Morocco. Our small community made up of Moroccans, but also of students from the south of the Sahara and some foreigners, took courage, with the support of Claude and of Gérard, two focolarinos, and also four gen 2 of Turin who gave their time to lend a hand.

There were 60 participants: some of them non-believers, others Muslim, others Christians of different denominations; but all of them welcomed very well the theme of the year on love of neighbor. The main experience they had was that of living concretely universal brotherhood.

This Mariapolis gave courage to our Muslims friends of Tangiers and the preparation was an occasion to make unity grow among everyone. Here is one among the many impressions we received: *«These were the best days I spent here in Morocco or rather in my whole life; for the first time I feel loved, considered, the same as all the others. Age, origin, color of the skin don't matter. I want to be a part of this big family.»*

Nadine Chehab, Didier Lucas

Sydney – Australia

The art of loving in the family

«This is really the new evangelization», a lady commented at the end of the meeting for families that was held in Sydney. There were 75 people present, of which a third were getting to know the Ideal for the first time. After a presentation of the Movement, the day continued with a series of experiences, from adults to the little ones, which showed how the art of loving is lived in the family.

Before this event there was a meeting of the persons in-charge of the New Families of Australia with the intern members of the city. It was a moment to share experiences on the life of unity in the family from different points of view – parents, life as a couple, youth. A gen 2 said, «There were many experiences and they were all sincere, concrete, without too much romanticism and they helped me to see relationship from a more practical and realistic point of view. Even in the family we must practice the art of loving. Shuman (who came for the first time) and I are trying to treasure all these things and to correspond».

Lucia Compostella, Bruno Carrera

Here are the telegrams of Emmaus for the last four focolarini who left for the Heavenly Mariapolis

Rina Borri Volpari

She never let anyone leave without having given them the Ideal

Yesterday afternoon, June 22, Rina Borri Volpari, focolarina at the Mariapolis Center of Castel Gandolfo, left for the Heavenly Mariapolis. She would have turned 101 years old in a few days.

She was born in the province of Cremona on July 13, 1912. She met the Ideal in 1958 and the following year participated in the Mariapolis of Fiera di Primiero together with her husband, Gianni. It was an encounter with God for both but the hour of trial manifested itself precisely in those days through an illness which brought Gianni to Paradise a few months later.

Her daughter, Anna Rita, was already married with two children and so Rina constantly visited the focolare since she was alone. A personal rapport with Chiara started and it was Chiara herself who invited her to spend some time at the Mariapolis Center because Chiara knew how much she had suffered. Rina, who left with an overnight suitcase, never returned home. Her calling to the focolare was consolidated in those years and she put herself at complete disposal in the newly initiated activities of the Mariapolis Center. Sometime after, it was Chiara again who asked her to take care of the house of Don Foresi and the first focolarini. She performed this will of God with love and dedication as long as her health permitted.

From 1990 onward, Rina was in a wheelchair but her life did not stop. She had built relationships with many people who would call her for advice or to share their sufferings in order to receive words which brought them peace. She never let anyone leave without giving the Ideal, also with her concrete love, living faithfully to the very end



the Word of Life that Chiara gave her in 1969: "Those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen." (1 John 4:20).

Many times she told the focolarine who took turns being at her side; "I had everything and I left everything for God. I always served God even while shining shoes."

Rina was deeply grateful to God and to Chiara for the Ideal. She wrote in 1988: "The more time passes, the more I realize how great the Ideal is. How much light! How much strength to do always better the will of God and to always believe in His love. The way of Mary is your life, thus you help us and show us the way. I lack nothing." In another letter she said: "I ask Our Lady everyday to take me by the hand so as not to incur the foolishness of someone who knows and does not act upon it." And in 1990 she confided to Chiara: "In the divine economy, pain is what bears most fruit. It's true; suffering puts all the less important things in the shadows. Only He, with His grace and His love, gives us strength and courage to journey everyday towards sanctity and then to meet Him."

Rina had a special love for Our Lady. We think that Our Lady took Rina with her, specifically on a Saturday, to bring her to Jesus.

Mario Mannillo

«I run towards the goal»

Mario Mannillo, a married focolarino from Grazzanise (Caserta, Italy) left for heaven yesterday, June 6, accompanied by his wife Angela (also a married focolarina) and their three children, and by the close, affectionate presence of the focolare and the local community.

Mario met the Ideal in 1980 through the New Families Movement and then felt called to the focolare. He worked for the Ministry for Cultural Goods and Activities as a technical assistant in archaeological excavations. In his work he often had to go against the current so as to remain within the law. He had a great passion for music and this became a gift for his neighborhood through an association he and some friends founded (as an enterprise of the Economy of Communion), with the aim of attracting youth to music. His characteristic was the simplicity of a child of the Gospel who entrusted himself to God and launched himself in loving. He took Mary as his model and once wrote to Chiara: "I've asked God to become another little Mary, in order to follow you and to work so that the Ut Omnes comes about quickly." On another occasion he wrote: "I'm asking the Eternal Father to give me always more the heart of a mother." Both he and his wife Angela did this together by putting themselves at the service of the Movement as a family focolare for the community around them.

The harmony which existed between the couple was edifying for their relatives and all those whom they had met throughout the years. With Jesus in the Midst they formed and transmitted the Ideal to their three children, to whom Mario gave with tact and dedication his attention and support.

He was an active presence of unity in his focolare and always wanted to take the important decisions in his life with Jesus in the Midst.

Last year, following his first son's marriage, he became ill. His symptoms revealed obvious health problems and he underwent an emergency surgery. His stay in hospital was a dark time for him. He was unable to accept this new



situation but it was through the disinterested love of his hospital roommate that Mario rediscovered the closeness and love of God. Having found once more the light within, he began to give it to all those he met. At the end of April his condition worsened and the

doctors decided to suspend all treatments. He and Angela, on this occasion too, said their Yes to Jesus Forsaken. They immediately informed me of his condition and guaranteed that everything was being offered for the Movement. To those who visited him, Mario never stopped saying how he felt everyone's love in all the acts of love he had been receiving. On Thursday, May 30, the focolare meeting was held in his room. It was truly a moment of God in which Mario invited everyone to love and that was all - without any ifs or buts, without being noticed, without falling into the temptation of 'I did this or that'. The focolarini told me it was like a last will and testament...

Chiara had given him the Word of Life: "Run straight toward the goal" (Phil 3,14) which helped him adhere to the plan of love God had for him.

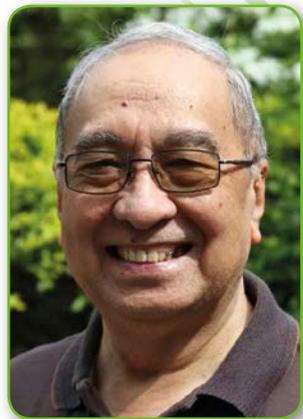
Rufino (Jun) Funk, Jr

A faith more precious than gold

Rufino 'Jun' Funk, Jr. one of the first married focolarini of Manila, left for the house of the Father on June 8, the feast of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. He was 79 years old.

Both he and his wife, Dori, also a focolarina, were pillars of the Movement in the Philippines.

Jun faced his long illness with dignity, wisdom and humility. That last morning in the hospital his eldest son Billy was reciting the



rosary at his bedside. "His departure was very serene," Billy recounted, "... but first he had an intense pain and he was courageously murmuring, 'This is the Will of God ... the only thing that matters!' It was surprising to see how conscious he was up to the end."

His last moments were a clear reflection of a life lived with unfailing faith in the Will of God, even in the hardest times, or in a work environment (he had a big responsibility in a food business) or in facing serious social and labor union issues and in particular when Dori, his wife, left for heaven.

The adventure of the Ideal began when Jun and his family attended the first Mariapolis held in the Philippines in 1966. To have found a Christianity in which the words of Jesus can animate everyday life had a strong impact on Jun. It marked a radical change both in him and in his whole family. His 3 sons, Billy, Beejay and Glenn were among the first 'Gen' in Manila from 1967 on. With time, all 3 sons felt called to become married focolarini thus transmitting to their own families the same treasure that they had received from their parents.

Jun suffered mightily when Glenn, his youngest son concluded his Holy Journey almost two years ago from a brain tumor. It made Jun cry out his own 'WHY?' An echo of the 'WHY?' of Jesus Forsaken to whom he had been consecrated. Not too long after Jun began his last Calvary when he had to face the worsening of an old illness. With the simplicity of a child, of a 'popo', he too recognized in this illness the love of God which radiated in his vivacious eyes and the fullness of his words. He became a true gift for all those he met.

Shortly after meeting the Ideal Jun asked Chiara for a Gospel phrase and a new name to express his being. Chiara chose for him the name, Aureus (golden) and the Word of Life: "Your faith, much more precious than gold, will be tested by fire" (1 Peter 1:7).

In 1980 Jun wrote Chiara these words, "You are calling me to live, to say my yes to the Will of God. In this way when I leave this earth they can say of me: 'He is the Will of God'."

When Jun had surgery in 2009 he offered everything for my intentions, for the entire Movement so that our focolares may become always more 'family' as Chiara had desired and for vocations to the focolare.

Eduardo (Eddie Boy) I. Co Chua

«Edified by God»

Eduardo (Eddie Boy) I. Co Chua, another married focolarino from the Philippines, concluded his Holy Journey last June 13. His passing to the next Life came in

a very solemn and serene way, surrounded by the love of Jan, his wife, also a focolarina, and other members of the family, while they were reciting the rosary. He was ready to «go back home». Eddie Boy was born in 1946 and he became an orphan at 11 years old. As his mother was dying she entrusted him to his elder sister, Dori, wife of Jun Funk (married focolarino who left for Heaven last June 8). They took care of him as their son. Growing up during the years of the protests, Eddie Boy, sensitive and active in society, was the director of the magazine of the university where he studied and he was also an active member of the Catholic Action. It was precisely during this period that he met the Gen in the first Gen Congress held in the Philippines in 1969. Thus he discovered a new and radical way of bringing about a revolution in the world through evangelical love.

Eddie Boy and Jan got married during a meeting of the New Families at the then Mariapolis Center of Rocca di Papa in 1984. They did not have any children, but their home was constantly visited by their nephews and nieces, with whom Eddie Boy was able to establish beautiful and affectionate relationships, becoming a true friend and a model for all of them.

He was fascinated by the light of Chiara's charism and throughout the years he took on



many roles of responsibility: in ecumenism, in interreligious dialogue and in the New Families Movement of his zone. Aside from this he also worked in the editorial board of the Philippine edition of «New City» and was also involved in the world of communication, promoting various initiatives aimed at ut omnes.

Chiara gave him the Word of Life: «For it is God who works in you to will and to act according to His plans» (Phil. 2:13), which he strived to live with great diligence, just as his name too, Eddi = «Edified by God». In 1995 he wrote to Chiara: «I cannot thank you enough for the Ideal I dread to think of what my life would have been if I had not met it». And later he said: «I have no doubts that the focolare is an invention of Mary... the many, many miracles, maybe unnoticed, in my life and in the life of others that I know of, has confirmed to me that this is so».

When he was diagnosed with a serious illness, he continued to live normally without letting himself be conditioned by it, both in the family and in the Opera. Up to his last breath one could feel in him the will to give his whole life for the fulfillment of the testament of Jesus.

Alessandra (Dina) Zenari

«And Mary kept all these things meditating on them in her heart» (Lk. 2:19)

Alessandra was born in Verona. When she was 16 she moved with her family to Rome where she studied philosophy.

In 1949, «by chance» she met Graziella, one of the first companions of Chiara, and she asked to know more. She met the first focolarine: Giosi, Dori, Ginetta. She participated in the life of the early times in Rome, in those moments also of suspension, while awaiting the official approval of the Movement by the Church.

However she remained «looking in through the window», not feeling attracted to enter the focolare, but called by God to remain in the world



so as to serve humanity. Until in 1956, after the Hungarian revolution, when Chiara spoke of the «Volunteers of God», people who dedicate their life to bring God back to society, she said: «Here I understood that this is my vocation, this is the dress that fits me». She became part of one of the first groups which were later called «nucleus», and bore witness to the new life she had found through her many experiences of helping, comforting, assisting whoever was in need. With the first volunteers also came the years of formation in Grottaferrata.

During one of the meetings of women volunteers in 1966, Chiara was invited to participate in an audience of Pope Paul VI. The women volunteers were also present and Chiara called Alessandra to be beside her, to represent all the members of the Opera. A beautiful photo sent to her by Chiara, with her personal dedication, recalls this moment which Alessandra lived with emotion and particular involvement.

In 1968 she was asked to take charge of the women volunteers in Rome and in 1973 she was called to the Center, in Grottaferrata, to collaborate in the growing structure of New Humanity.

It was Chiara herself who indicated Alessandra as the secretary of New Humanity:

«She is suited for this since she is interested in all of these human things». Also when Foco, with whom she had a filial relationship, told her: «When I see you, I see New Humanity», she was happy to be reconfirmed in this task which she had always carried out with passion and diligence. After the event at the Palaeur, in 1983 Dori, who in those years was in charge of the branch of the women

volunteers called her to work full-time at the Center of the Women Volunteers.

She took care of the various aspects that Dori entrusted to her and followed up the many volunteers who came to know her during the various congresses and schools. All of them remained close to her and were grateful for this.

Chiara, through a frequent correspondence with her and in a relationship of respect and trust, encouraged her to go ahead. As the years went by,

her health began to decline, but Alessandra always offered everything actively for the Opera. She was not able to move around on her own and in time she had to use a wheelchair. In June 2008 before the Assembly of the Opera which was held after Chiara's «departure», she wrote: «This is a time of preparation for this event in the Opera. I would like to live for this event (even if I will not be present at the Assembly), by offering everything».

By then the nucleus meetings were held in her house and for her it was always a sacred moment: each time she shared the wisdom that comes from her life rooted in God.

She often repeated: «I don't feel alone and abandoned. If I become worried about something,

by now I have my slogan WT "Worry = Temptation!" and I cast everything into the Father». A reflection of hers in this last period of her life was: «For the glory of God I can say that I feel I am a fulfilled person. Even if I did not have a natural family I found a fullness of life that I have never imagined and also a supernatural family. All the dreams of my youth, my aspirations, my ideals, also the human ones, have been completely fulfilled, much more than I could ever have imagined, because God is infinite and he is Love: the dialogue of today with those "far away", the studies and philosophy (the Abba School), the inundations, the communion of goods, the works of mercy, all these have been given back to me through the charism of Chiara. And everyday I witness all the marvels of God».

Maria Ghislandi



Anna Dal Bon

The first woman volunteer of Luxembourg

Anna Dal Bon, first woman volunteer of Luxembourg, arrived in the Heavenly Mariapolis on the 14th of April at the age of 84. Her childhood years in Italy, in Verona, were difficult since Anna grew up with her grandparents in great poverty. When she migrated to Luxembourg she worked with Caritas, linked to the Italian Mission. She said: «I am grateful to God who gave me a poverty-stricken childhood, because this helps me to understand better the sufferings of the others». She was invited to the Mariapolis in the Dolomites in 1957 and, coming back transformed, she launched herself to love: «I got to know Jesus Forsaken ... and I want to consecrate my life to Him so that the Ideal will reach Luxembourg». In 1958 she welcomed the first focolare there. She received the new name: Pavi, the Word lived (Parola vissuta) from Chiara. She followed God in the vocation of a volunteer, happy of this predilection and aware of the responsibility of keeping the fire of supernatural love alive among the volunteers in her nucleus. During the last period of her life, which she spent in a hospice, Anna entrusted herself completely to

God and grew in her detachment from all material and spiritual goods; she had given away her books which she treasured very much, or the little things that she had received. She concluded all the matters that were still pending and put her room in order... everything was ready.

The newspaper of Verona in Luxembourg wrote: «Anna had consecrated her life totally to the service of the poorest, without any distinction of race or nationality».

Maria Verhegge

d. Piergiacomo Didier

The joy of living the Ideal

Born in 1943 and ordained priest in the diocese of Asti in 1967, Fr. Piergiacomo joined the nucleus of priest volunteers in Piedmont and also participated in the Priests' School at Villa Maria Assunta in Grottaferrata in the '70s.

A good and generous soul, he bore witness to the joy of living the Ideal, giving his contribution through a profound and sincere



communion of his evangelical experiences. When he arrived in the diocese of Tivoli (Rome) in 1991 Fr. Piero immediately joined the nucleus of priest volunteers and entered into the community where he worked and where he was able to easily build profound relationships with many. He lovingly took interest in the people, ready to give his time to them. It was because of this that he was much loved and left a very good impression in the people.

He was first in Tivoli and then, as a parish priest, at Vivaro Romano and at Riofreddo, where he remained up to 2012 when, due to his he-

alth, he had to return to the diocese of Asti. His condition became worse and he reached the Father's house last November 28.

His funeral mass was celebrated by the Bishop of Asti and, in a letter sent to all the priests and to the communities of Vivaro Romano and Riofreddo, the Bishop of Tivoli called him a: «good and faithful servant of the Gospel». On the 5th of December at Riofreddo, at the Special Mass for his eternal repose, there were many people who, in spite of the heavy snowfall, wanted to be present to give a moving witness of the love and attention that Fr. Piero had for each one of them.

Mario Ratini

Giuseppina (Giusy) Porcello Felicetti

«I will walk along my ray of light»



«The Lord has given me many gifts. Now he wants me to be all his, I must detach myself from every gift that he has given me and give them back to Him. I will make mistakes, I will fall down, I will cry but I will go straight ahead on my ray of light», thus Giusy, volunteer of Rome, left for Heaven last March 21, at 72 years old.

She had a sensitive, delicate and positive character in spite of the fact that she had a troubled infancy and adolescence. During a difficult moment in her life Giusy met a focolarina: in her she saw a mother, a sister, a friend, and she felt loved. In focolare, her family, she discovered her vocation as a volunteer. While she worked as a tourist guide in St. Peter's Basilica, she met Alberto: theirs was a marriage lived in total openness to others. Giusy wanted to share all the love that she had received with those who needed it. If someone was in the hospital in the city, she was always the first to offer to go and visit them.

In 2000 she offered to go together with other lay people in her parish, to bring the Gospel house to house and to share the beautiful experiences she made with the families. Then the illness came, which she lived without hiding how diffi-

cult it was for her to place everything in the hands of God and to say her painful yes. One of the last times she said: «I am not able. And I don't understand why I have such little faith: but then I think of what He suffered on the cross and my sufferings seem like a small thing».

Bonaria Gessa

Aldo Trainotti

«I was sick and you came to visit me» (Mt 25,36)

Aldo, volunteer of Ala (zone of Trent), was born in France, where the family had immigrated. In 1948 he returned to Italy. He was 23 years old. He took on various jobs: first in the family business, then in a paper mill, then on the highways in Avellino and finally as a janitor in the high school of Ala. At 25 years old he married Elisa and they had six children.

In 1960 he met the Focolare Movement, which profoundly changed the way he treated others and opened wide his heart. His faith in God Love helped him greatly in overcoming the deep suffering he experienced due to the untimely death of his wife in 1962.

He attended a course in theology and became an extraordinary Eucharistic minister in the parish. He wrote: «When I bring Jesus, from nine in the morning to twelve noon, I feel that I am an



Concetta Antonelli Cerimele

«*SI am Thank You*»

Concetta was born in Agnone (zone of Rome). She had a lively intelligence and was highly respected at her workplace as a teacher. In '1971 she met the Ideal through her daughters Rosa and Maria Rita (now delegate of the zone of Naples). She was fascinated and was among the first volunteers of Molise. At Campobasso, the city where she lived, a community was born around her, and she took care of it together with a long-time volunteer. Her house became a meeting place where countless people passed by and were welcomed with love. The focolarinas, whom she also welcomed in her home. found in Concetta «the

mom, the home, the promised land to those who leave everything for Him» and she was also able to involve Giovanni, her husband, in a race of generous love for everyone. She had the gift of building relationships and of acting «according to the truth, in charity», just as the Word of Life that Chiara gave her suggested. In a matter of a few years she promoted the magazine «Città Nuova», and was able to acquire a hundred subscribers, with whom she maintained relationships of respect and affection. She actively supported a social project that was set up in the city to help people in difficulty and as an occasion to reach out to those who, although far away from the Church, are sensitive to helping the poor concretely. Due to her health she was admitted to a clinic for a month where she lived a fast race towards God.

Lucid up to the end, after a night of suffering she said: «I am anxiously looking forward to go to that much awaited appointment» and then she started to sing «I am Thank You». On the evening of April 29, 2013, she left to meet Jesus.

Bonaria Gessa, Maria Rita Cerimele



instrument of the mercy of God, and I rejoice in bringing him along the streets; I find that it does me more good than it does the sick people». After his retirement he also worked at the Mariapolis Center of Cadine. The focolarinas wrote: « For more than 20 years, Aldo came once a week to help us, ready to

do any kind of job: maintenance, gardening, cleaning the street or the squares and service areas ... he was the earliest example of our voluntary service, a model that encouraged others to imitate him».

Aldo left us on the 24th of April, at the age of 88, after a long period of illness, lived up to the last moment in an extraordinary synthesis of docility and tenacity, accompanied by the love of his dear ones and by many of the Work of Mary.

Roberto Novelli

Our relatives

Those who passed on to the next life: **M. Dionisia, mother of M. Gabriela Melo**, focolarina in the Roman Mariapolis; **Maria, mother of Danilo Virdis**, married focolarino of Rome; **Amparo, sister of Maria Remedios (Reme) Selva**, focolarina in Loppiano; **Maria, mother of Maria Christa (Mill) Zomack**, focolarina in London; **Hans, father of Birgitta Beisser**, focolarina in Buenos Aires; **Kazuo, father of Klesio Hamada**, focolarino in the Roman Mariapolis.

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