

YEAR XXXI N 03 MARCH 2014

MARIAPOLIS

Newsletter of the focolare movement



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of interreligious
dialogue**

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invitation
of Emmaus**
Restore life
to the family

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Dialogue at 360 degrees

[...] La prima forte esperienza da noi fatta è stata quella a contatto con i Bangwa, una tribù radicata nella religione tradizionale, quasi sterminata dalla mortalità infantile, che stavamo iniziando ad assistere. Un giorno il loro capo, il Fon, e le migliaia di membri del suo popolo, si sono radunati per una festa in una grande radura in mezzo alla foresta [...] è stato lì che ho avuto la forte impressione che Dio, come un immenso sole, abbracciasse tutti, noi e loro, con il suo amore [...] ho intuito che avremmo avuto a che fare anche con persone di tradizioni non cristiane.

London 1977, an event of «founding».

Ma l'evento in qualche modo «fondante» di questo nostro dialogo è avvenuto a Londra nel 1977 ad una cerimonia per l'assegnazione del Premio Templeton per il Progresso della Religione. Vi avevo tenuto un discorso e quando stavo uscendo dalla sala i primi venuti a salutarmi sono stati ebrei, musulmani, buddisti, sikhs, indù... Lo spirito cristiano di cui avevo parlato li aveva impressionati, cosicché mi è stato chiaro che avremmo dovuto occuparci non solo della nostra o delle altre Chiese, ma anche di questi fratelli e sorelle di altre fedi. Ha avuto inizio così il nostro dialogo interreligioso.

With the buddhists

Due anni dopo, infatti, è avvenuto l'incontro con una grande personalità buddista, il Rev.

Nikkyo Niwano, fondatore della Rissho Koseikai, che mi ha invitato a Tokyo, a parlare sempre della mia esperienza spirituale a 10.000 buddisti. Da allora fra focalarini e seguaci della Rissho Kosei-



Caux, 29 luglio 2003

On July 29, 2003 Chiara was invited to Caux in Switzerland to attend a Seminar at the Center «Initiative and Change»¹. In her talk she outlined the journey of the Opera in its contacts with the faithful of the great religions. A thrilling story, to go through once again with her on the VI anniversary of her birth into Heaven, and for which she is remembered precisely in this aspect: «Chiara and the religions». Here is an excerpt²

¹ See *Mariapolis* n. 7-8/2003

² From *The spiritual doctrine*, Chiara Lubich, Città Nuova Publishing House, Rome, 2006 pp.471-475

kai è nata una grande fratellanza dovunque nel mondo si incontrano.

Ma gli incontri più sorprendenti con il buddismo sono avvenuti con degli eminenti rappresentanti del monachesimo thailandese.

Durante un loro prolungato soggiorno nella nostra Cittadella internazionale di Loppiano, in Italia, dove i suoi 800 abitanti cercano di vivere con fedeltà il Vangelo, due di loro sono stati profondamente toccati dall'unità fra tutti e dall'amore cristiano che non conoscevano.

E sono venuti meno così pregiudizi che impedivano un vero dialogo fra loro buddisti e noi cristiani. Questi monaci, tornati in Thailandia, non hanno perduto occasione per raccontare, a migliaia di fedeli e a centinaia di monaci, la loro esperienza di incontro col Movimento dei Focolari. È nato così, se si può dire, un Movimento buddista-focolarino e cioè buddista-cristiano che è una delle porzioni di fraternità che stiamo edificando nel mondo. In seguito sono stata invitata in Thailandia in una loro università buddista e in un loro tempio a parlare a monache, a monaci e a molti laici e laiche. Anche qui l'interesse è stato notevole, mentre noi siamo stati edificati da quel distacco da tutto che li distingue, dalla loro ascetica.

With Muslim friends

E il dialogo con l'Islam? Sono ora 6.500 gli amici musulmani che appartengono al nostro Movimento, e ciò che ci lega ad essi è sempre la nostra spiritualità, in cui trovano incentivi e conferme per una più profonda, vissuta aderenza al cuore della spiritualità islamica. Abbiamo tenuto vari incontri degli amici musulmani. E ciò che ha caratterizzato questi convegni è stata anzitutto la presenza di Dio che si avverte specie quando pregano e che dà tanta speranza. Speranza che ho visto divenire realtà personalmente nella Moschea «Malcolm Shabazz» di Harlem (USA), sei anni fa, davanti a 3.000 musulmani afroamericani,

ai quali sono pure stata invitata ad esporre ancora la mia esperienza cristiana. La loro accoglienza, a cominciare da quella del loro leader l'imam W.D. Mohammed, è stata così calda, sincera ed entusiasta da aprire il cuore ai più promettenti sogni per il futuro. [...]

Our Jewish sisters and brothers

Non posso poi non citare gli incontri sempre più frequenti con sorelle e fratelli ebrei nello Stato d'Israele e altrove. L'ultimo da parte mia è avvenuto a Buenos Aires, con una delle loro più numerose comunità, seguito poi da altri membri del Movimento, in diverse occasioni. È stato con grande commozione che ci siamo scambiati un patto di amore scambievole, così profondo e sentito, da aver l'impressione di superare di colpo secoli di persecuzioni e di incomprensioni.

With the Hindu

Negli ultimi tre anni è iniziato un promettente dialogo in India anche con gli indù. Abbiamo contatti fraterni ed intensi con Movimenti gandhiani nel sud di questa immensa nazione. A Mumbai un profondo dialogo è nato con professori dell'Università Somaiya e dell'Istituto Culturale Indiano.

Più recentemente è incominciato un rapporto con un Movimento molto grande, Swadhyaya, che ha gli stessi scopi nostri dell'unità nella diversità e la fratellanza.

Un anno fa, abbiamo anche tenuto un primo simposio indù-cristiano. L'atmosfera che si è creata è stata così bella ed alta che abbiamo potuto partecipare loro tante verità della nostra fede. L'impressione che ne abbiamo avuto è che ci si spalanca davanti un orizzonte che non immaginavamo.

Pochi mesi or sono, sono tornata in India e abbiamo potuto continuare questo dialogo a livello della spiritualità che - a dire delle autorità della mia Chiesa - «è il culmine delle diverse forme di dialogo e risponde alle più pro-

fonde attese degli uomini di buona volontà».³

Abbiamo ora in programma altri simposi simili, buddista-cristiano e islamo-cristiano.

Thirty thousand from the main Religions

Per l'espansione universale del nostro Movimento siamo in contatto con tutte le principali religioni del mondo e sono circa 30.000 i membri di queste che condividono, sempre come è loro possibile, la spiritualità e gli scopi del Movimento.

Il nostro dialogo interreligioso ha avuto un'evoluzione così rapida e feconda perché l'elemento decisivo e caratteristico è stato quell'arte di amare di cui ho parlato prima.

[...] La nostra esperienza, infatti, ci insegna che, se si è capaci di morire a se stessi per «farsi uno» con gli altri, essi notano un tale atteggiamento e vogliono saperne di più.

In tal modo si può attuare quel «rispetto-so annuncio»⁴ in cui, per lealtà verso Dio e noi stessi, come pure per sincerità nei riguardi del prossimo, noi esprimiamo i contenuti della nostra fede circa i temi di cui si parla. E ciò nulla imponendo, alieni da ogni proselitismo, ma solo per amore. Ed è il momento in cui,

per noi cristiani, il dialogo sfocia nell'annuncio del Vangelo.

The challenge of fraternity

Il nostro lavoro con tanti fratelli e sorelle delle grandi religioni e la fraternità che sperimentiamo con essi ci ha convinto che il pluralismo religioso dell'umanità può perdere sempre più la sua valenza negativa come fomite di divisioni e di guerre per acquistare, nella coscienza di milioni di uomini e donne, il sapore di una sfida: quella di ricomporre l'unità della famiglia umana, perché in tutte le religioni è, in qualche modo, presente e attivo lo Spirito Santo, non solo nei singoli membri ma anche all'interno di ogni tradizione religiosa.

Parlando del meraviglioso avvenimento di Assisi, Giovanni Paolo II lo ha definito «manifestazione mirabile di quell'unità che ci lega al di là delle differenze e divisioni».⁵ Riempiamo, allora, il nostro cuore dell'amore vero. Per esso tutto possiamo sperare in ordine all'unità tra i fedeli delle grandi religioni e alla fraternità vissuta da tutta l'umanità.

Chiara

3 Personal letter of Mons. M. Fitzgerald dated 28.02.2003.

4 Cf John Paul II. Apostolic Letter *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, 2001, n.56.

5 Cf *To the representatives gathered in Assisi for the world day of prayer for peace*, in *The Teachings of John Paul II, IX* (1986) 2, Vatican City 1986 pp.1252-1253.



Londra, 19 giugno 2004.
Alla Westminster Central Hall



VI anniversary of Chiara Towards the unity of the human family

This year, on the occasion of the 14th of March, attention is focused on the contribution of the Focolare Movement to interreligious dialogue

For some years now, on the 14th of March – aside from the celebrations held worldwide – Chiara is remembered by highlighting a particular aspect of the Charism of unity.

In 2011 ecumenism, with the convention in her native city «Chiara Lubich a life, a charism for the unity of Christians»; in 2012 Chiara and the youth – at Castel Gandolfo – in 2013 Chiara and culture with the convention held at the Sapienza «Chiara Lubich, charism, history, culture». This year it will be the turn of Chiara and the religions.

«Chiara belongs to everyone»: this expression of the Buddhist monk Luce Ardente immediately comes to mind in this year that commemorates the also the 70° of the Movement.

If we think of the friendship of Chiara with personalities such as W.D. Mohammed, Muslim, with Nikkyo Niwano, Buddhist, with Minoti Aram, Hindù – just to mention a few – we are in front of a prophetic design. Great souls who have gone forward along a new path that opens towards a sincere, true and shared fraternity. Chiara knew how to generate these relationships which have spread, taking in always more faithful of the great religions.

Up to now the meetings with our friends of the great religions took place in a more or less bilateral way: Christians and Buddhists, Christians and Muslims, Christians and Hindù... For this occasion they will all come together. «This brings back an episode that happened in 2004 – recalls Christina Lee, co-responsible of the Center for interreligious dialogue: during the first symposium with Buddhists such an extraordinary relationships was built that the then president of the Pontifical Council for diaogue with the great Religions, Archbishop Michael Fitzgerald, present at the meeting hoped that not only bilateral meetings be held but also meetings that would involve more faithful of the great religions. And so this anniversary is an opportune moment for this».

It will be celebrated by an interreligious convention, from the 17th to the 20th of March, at the Mariapolis Center of Castel Gandolfo. In the afternoon of the last day, there will be a

In the photo above, from left to right: • Harlem, 18 may 1997, with the imam W.D. Mohammed • Castel Gandolfo, april 2004, with Archbishop M. Fitzgerald during the Buddhist-Christian symposium • Buenos Aires, 20 april 1998, at the B'nai B'rith with dr. Kopec during the meeting with the Jewish community.



public event at the Great Hall of the Urbanian Pontifical University starting at 17:00 entitled «Chiara and the religions – Together towards the unity of the human family», there will be a commemoration of Chiara presented by personalities of the various religions who have had a direct and personal contact with her.

The foreseen participants, aside from Christians, are the faithful belonging to different religious traditions: Jewish, Islam, Buddhism, Shintoism, Sikh, and Tenrikyo, most of whom hold positions of responsibility in their respective communities. They come from around 25 nations: from Asia, from the Near East, from North and South America, from Africa and from various European Countries.

They are our friends who for many years, often tens of years, have continued in profound communion with the Movement in this journey of interreligious dialogue on a vital

level, of collaboration and also in the academic field. Many of them knew Chiara personally and have shared, inasmuch as is possible, the spirituality of the Movement. It will be an occasion to compose a mosaic in which dialogue could be a gift to the other, an occasion to share the experiences lived in these years.

«It is a step forward in our dialogue – commented Roberto Catalano, co-responsible of the Center for interreligious dialogue –, towards a more universal perspective that we will learn to live and to experience in this occasion and which will be focused on in particular during the commemoration of Chiara at the Urbaniana. In the preceding days we will have the opportunity to share with the different people present the various experiences in the spirit of dialogue of Chiara Lubich».

prepared by the Editorial board

In the photo above, from left to right: • Castel Gandolfo, January 2002, the meeting with Joginder Singh, spiritual leader of the Sikh, after the Day of Prayer for Peace at Assisi • Castel Gandolfo, June 2002, Hindu-Christian Symposium, with prof. Kala Acharya • Bangkok, 3 January 1997, with the supreme master of Thai Buddhism Phra Nyanasamvara.

New publications

Sylvia before Chiara

In search of a new way

On the 7th of December 1943, Silvia Lubich was a young teacher of Trent. She did not have any idea of what she would have seen and experienced in the 88 years of her life, the people who would have followed her, of the Movement that would be born from her.

Before that 7th of December, the day of her consecration to God, Chiara was simply Sylvia. The events that followed are well-known to everyone.

A little less known are the facts regarding her family, her friends, the period when she was teaching, the cultural and human context in which she was born and lived her infancy and youth.

For those of Città Nuova, Nino Carella shares about her first 23 years outlining her journey of human and spiritual formation that will contribute to defining the personality of Chiara and to the birth of a Charism that God had thought of for our times.



Igino Giordani Center

Thirty years at the service of the Opera

It was Chiara's wish that the immense Ideal and human legacy of Foco would be the prerogative of every person of the Work of Mary

It was 1984 when the Municipality of Tivoli awarded Chiara Lubich the first edition of the Igino Giordani Prize. Upon receiving the Award, Chiara expressed the desire that an accurate human and spiritual profile of the figure of Foco be presented to the participants – co-citizens of Foco. She then called Tommaso Sorgi, a married focolarino from Teramo, a university professor, a member of parliament, to prepare an introduction to the life, thoughts and soul of Igino Giordani. It is probable that in that moment – thirty years ago – an idea was born in Chiara to create the Igino Giordani Center and to entrust its administration to Tommaso Sorgi. Enthusiastic, Tommaso accepted, even if he and his family could only transfer to the Castelli Romani in January 1985. Thirty years ago, then, this story began.

Carla Bozzani was a witness to the first phase of the development of the Igino Giordani Center...

«... really – Chiara shared – I arrived only the year after, in 1986. I came from Bologna and I was called to the Center of the Opera to help Tommaso. I was surprised by the size of the task that awaited me, above all I felt that it was a sacred task that I had to do to continue the work of organization that Foco himself had already started. There were many things, then, some were still in the attic above the apartment of the former Mariapolis Center (now the Center of the Opera), and so I was unpacking big boxes, putting the materials in the cabinets, and with the secretary of the Indigo we started to catalogue the books».

Seeing the cabinets today and also the Archives of the Igino Giordani Center that are so well organized makes us appreciate the work that has been done throughout the years.

«We started from zero. In the meantime, Foco himself had already put in order his things when, in 1974, he transferred to the focolare here at the Mariapolis Center. Then, after his "departure" it was Antonio Petrilli and Rita Muccio, even be-



Tommaso Sorgi e Igino Giordani

fore the foundation of the Igino Giordani Center, who organized and catalogued the material. They did it in constant communication with Chiara, who gave advice and directives, that were immediately carried out» .

We can imagine that the reason for this work was to prevent the loss of an important legacy such as the archives of Foco.

«To tell you the truth, when Chiara launched the task of putting in order the materials of Foco and then the Igino Giordani Center, she not only had in mind the necessity of keeping together the extraordinary materials (writings, letters, etc.) of the archives. She also thought immediately about writing a complete biography of Foco that would be useful in the eventual cause for his canonization. Chiara had immediately realized that this outcome is possible and a series of transcripts and notes of conversations of Chiara with Antonio Petrilli regarding this matter exist to prove this».

And Tommaso?

«He was entrusted with writing this biography .He started by reading all the books of Foco that he had not yet read. He built a well-organized series of bibliographic files, he worked in



Carla Bozzani, Tommaso Sorgi, Chiara, don Foresi, Rita Muccio

particular on the life of Giordani in a very meticulous and scientific way. He started writing the first indexes. He presented everything to Chiara first of all, and then to others. He treasured and took into consideration all the advice he was given. This volume is now in the process of publication, for the Città Nuova edition: thirty years of work, thirty years of life at the Iginio Giordani Center».

New publications

Look at all the flowers

from a page of '49 of Chiara Lubich

The Focolare Movement: identity and aim in the intuition of Chiara Lubich

The metaphor of a big blooming garden makes up the plot of a writing of Chiara Lubich of november 1949, subsequently published with the title: Look at all the flowers. Starting from that image and the invitation that followed to let one's gaze alight on that multicoloured beauty, the Author grasps the outline of a spirituality that bends downwards as communication and encounter and becomes reciprocal welcome, reflection on earth of the uni-trinitarian paradigm. The essays gathered in this volume illustrate how such a founding intuition gives rise to an interdisciplinary pathway in which the members of the Abba School undertake the challenge, with the intention of offering itineraries of research in the different intellectual fields, to confirm the theoretical and existential fecundity contained in the writings of Chiara Lubich.



What was your contribution? How did you live at the Iginio Giordani Center?

«Tommaso was a director who was an expert in intellectual studies, but he was also an expert in brotherly love. We have always preferred unity, even if the level of competence of Tommaso, Rita and myself were different. I particularly took care of the daily needs of Tommaso. Just imagine, during the first years, Tommaso would write everything by hand, I would then type them out with a typewriter. Then the computer arrived: one of the very first computers at the Center of the Opera was the one on my desk (it was around the end of the Eighties then)».

Today, how is the Iginio Giordani Center evolving?

«We continue to carry out our tasks at the service of the Opera, and to offer the person of Foco as one who is capable of exalting the light of Chiara and her immense charism in an extraordinary manner».

prepared by the Editorial board

Charism history culture

an interdisciplinary reading of the thought of Chiara Lubich

The reflection of the spirituality of unity in contemporary culture

Charism History Culture: an interdisciplinary approach to trace the horizon of a culture that places its roots and its «center» in the illuminating intuition from God given to Chiara Lubich during the summer of 1949 and, in a wider sense, to her Charism of unity.

Moving from the complexity of the contemporary historical epoch, sociological and theological, economy, politics and law – in the methodology of every science – leafing through the book of humanity so as to contribute to writing «new» pages of light coming from that intuition



News-Assembly

To help us in participating and in being updated on the preparations for the Assembly worldwide, a new section entitled “News-Assembly” on-line, has started within the website of the Mariapolis Newsletter, where we hope to insert an update every fifteen days. “News-Assembly” on-line is translated in five languages, with the possibility of increasing the number of translations. Here is the first news item.



Sei in: [Notiziario Mariapoli](#) > [Al Centro](#) > [Prima newsletter sull'Assemblea Generale](#)



First newsletter on the General Assembly

Welcome to the Newsletter that will accompany us in our journey towards the General Assembly of the Work of Mary!

This is the most important event for the entire Movement this year and also represents a great novelty compared to previous assemblies. For the first time, in fact, a Regulation of the Assembly has been prepared which provides "a wider involvement of the whole Work of Mary through the Zone Delegates and the members of the General Council," above all for the collection of "proposals of topics to be discussed during the Assembly," and also of "candidates for the positions of President, Co-President and Councilors of the General Council."

For the preparation of the Assembly, Emmaus has formed "a committee composed of members of the Movement representing the General Council and the Zones, and two secretaries" (CPA) ([link to the table and group picture of the PCA](#)).

Meanwhile, let's begin to see some important stages of our journey:

- Since February the collection of the Suggestions of Topics has begun: it is the most important contribution we can give for the preparation of the Assembly and because of this it is possible to send them until April 15th, preferably through the Zones or General Councilors.
- From February 1st (and until March 31st) the first phase of consultations for the formation of lists for the election of the President, Co-President and Councilors of the General Council is in progress.
- In the month of May 2014, the second phase of consultations for the candidates will proceed.
- In June, 2014, the official lists of candidates for the elections will be drawn up; a dossier with the topics and proposals received by the CPA will be prepared, which will present to the President, Co-President, General Council and the Zone Delegates a proposed work program for the Assembly.

Each zone will certainly find its own way and methods so as to involve the community of the Movement in this process of participation.

It would be wonderful to be able to share experiences, difficulties, and the fruits of this journey taken together. This newsletter wants to be a space of sharing, the place to receive this life.

The members of the CPA of the Big Zones are available to collect your contributions or your requests for information ([link to the table of the PCA](#)).

See you again in the next news item on <http://www.focolare.org/notiziariomariapoli>

Meetings open to everyone

Faith a novelty

Week-ends in different Countries so as to deepen the motives behind the Christian proposal. Protagonists youth, witnesses and theologians

You must come to Holland, Michel!». Ton Jonstra told me this in a very decisive manner and Red Deschyffelleer agreed totally with him. In 2006, both of them were the persons responsible for the Focolare in the the Netherlands and they had just explained to me how the youth of the Movement, who were very much committed in pastoral work in the Catholic Church in Holland, did not have an adequate theological preparation.

«You must come to spend a week-end with us and to do something with them». They were asking me because I had been teaching Dogmatic Theology for many years in the school of formation of the focolarini in Loppiano. A short time later I met some Dutch youth in Castel Gandolfo and from their questions I realized that they lacked a global vision of the Christian faith. And so I decided to dedicate two days to share



with them the essentials of the faith, interspersing my brief talks with moments of dialogue. It was the week-end of the Carnival and we met with around fifty gen near Nijmegen. The joy I felt after the first day was such that I couldn't sleep. So, to conclude the week-end, I suggested that we meet again next year, but this time with their friends too. The proposal was welcomed with enthusiasm and so the next year we were in 120, of different Churches and also from some surrounding countries. An Anglican focolarino, Callam Slipper, shared with me the task of ani-



From the preface of Emmaus

A journey into the life of Jesus. This was my impression as I read these pages. A fascinating journey with the dimension of a mystery and also of familiarity.

While I was going deeper into the reading of this book, I was thinking of the one who would have read it. Above all I thought about the youth to whom this book is primarily directed and I thought that they were fortunate. Fortunate because someone, without making himself a teacher but instead offering his competence and experience, has tried to open a dialogue with them, striving to clarify a question, faith, in such a decisive way in life and for life. [...] My wish is that the pages of this book will give the youth who will read it, the push to enter into a conversation with Jesus.

So as to get to know him more, and therefore to love him more and to freely allow themselves to be loved by Him. An adventure that I wish for many.

mating this second week-end and the fruits we gathered went beyond all our expectations. «They made an experience of contemplation because you told them what you yourselves live and see» a Dutch Bishop, who remained with us the entire time to listen as if he too was one of the youth, commented. But the real secret of the success of these two-day meetings was due to the reciprocal love that was placed at the basis of everything and which then attracted the presence of Jesus among us. It is Him, the Risen One, who enlightened us, making our faith alive and even reasonable. Each one of the participants, in fact, whether «professor» or «student», tried above all, to give space to Him and to listen to Him in his or her heart so as to understand whether to speak and how to speak, whether to ask a question or give a comment, a personal experience. In this way the week-end was built together or better still it was Him in everyone.

The news of these formation meetings in Holland spread by word of mouth and so other week-ends in France, Spain, Poland, Switzerland, Italy and in these last two years also in Lebanon followed. Other focolarinos and focolarinas were also involved and in the dialogue among all we were greatly enriched. In this search for answers to the most controversial questions we allowed ourselves to be guided by the light that emanated from the charism that God gave to Chiara Lubich and each time we lived moments of great joy.

Just recently a book was published by the Arcobaleno (Rainbow) Publishing House that has its headquarters at the Lionello Industrial Park, which is a fruit of these week-ends of formation on the essentials of the Christian faith; It reflects both the content and the format. It starts with a brief reflection on faith and reason, based on personal experience, and is then fol-

lowed by a pathway that brings us, like the first Christians, from an encounter with the historical Jesus to the Easter confession of his divinity and with it of the Trinity. Then we enter into the problem of evil and into the answer that is given by faith in Love. In the conclusion, new perspectives are offered on the novelty that Trinitarian life lived in one's daily life can bring. Just like during the week-ends, one comes to discover that faith is Life, Beatitudes, Love, Wisdom and Peace.

That we believe in love could be, for the Catholic readers, a kind of introduction to Youcat and an invitation to get to know this «catechism for the youth», but also the youth of the most diverse Churches will recognize themselves in the things presented in this small book because it is about the essentials of faith which we all agree on already. Even those who do not believe in Jesus or in God will find here a possibility of getting to know how a Christian thinks and how they give proof of their faith.

Michel Vandeleene

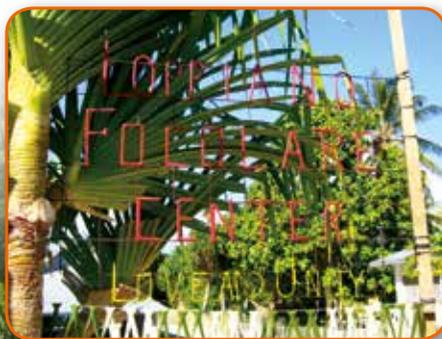


In Kiribati the adventure continues



In the Pacific Ocean, around the Word of Life, a community is built throughout the years

After 26 years, we returned to the Island of Kiribati, an archipelago made up of 33 atolls, of which 22 are uninhabited, and found in the Pacific Ocean half-way between Australia and the island of Hawaii, saddling the Equator and the Greenwich dateline. The population, of around 100,000 inhabitants, does not have great economic inequalities; nevertheless, since resources are quite scarce, most of them are



very poor while living happily with what little they have.

The Bishop of the place Mons. Paul Mea has been in contact with the secretariat of the Bishops at the Center of the Opera for many years and is insistent in asking us to go to Kiribati to bring ahead the formation of the people and above all the young people who receive the Word of Life.

With surprise, Mary Cass (from the focolare of Melbourne) and Marie-Christine (from the focolare of London) – who arrived in Kiribati last August to set-up a temporary focolare – found a group of 60 people, all with the desire to deepen the spirituality of unity. The majority of them met the Movement recently through the Word of Life, but

some have been in contact since 1987, and have continued to meet every week.

Mons. Mea built in Buota, a village in the main island, a maneaba for them. This is a typical structure for meetings,

with a big roof placed on top of pillars, and with a cemented floor.

In a village the maneaba is the center of their social life, it is very important for the life of the group, aside from its



symbolic and practical function. For this reason the Bishop saw to it that the focolare had one of its own, where the small community could meet every week-end, where they could eat together, pray together and share experiences, living as a community.

Beside the maneaba, Mons. Mea also built for the focolare, two rooms made of bricks with toilets. The community feels that this place is like their «Loppiano» – this is exactly how they called it – where they learn how to live love and unity.

During the month of their stay in Kiribati, the focolarinas met many times with the Bishop, who took on the task of translating the Word of Life in the local language.

At Buota, the community has grown and a small group has committed itself to bring ahead the others and they have even started a small kindergarten under a hut to answer concretely to the need of the small village.

Mary and Marie-Christine held many meetings: teachers, catechists, students from various schools wherein the “Dice of Love” was presented and which they have started to throw every morning. So, entering into some of the classrooms, they would find a sentence from the art of loving written on the blackboard...



They also met with various religious nuns, who were very much committed in the life of the Church and in doing social action through the «Crisis Centre», the only structure that helps women and children who are victims of abuse or violence.

The average age of the population is 25 years and it is the great desire of Bishop Paul Mea to help these youth and children, especially the little ones of pre-school age. We are now evaluating the situation and trying to see how to concretize these projects which are very much needed.

Lucia Compostella and Bruno Carrera

Travelling meetings

In Perth in Australia, our members in the city thought of holding community meetings in different places so as to give a greater possibility to those who do not come regularly to be present. Recently the meeting with around thirty participants, took place in the parish of Duncraig, with the very lively Anglican Word of Life group that was being followed by Roy Poole, Anglican priest, who passed away last March 30.

(see *Mariapolis* 3-4/2013).

In the sierra of Huasteca in Mexico

A love that grows

Reciprocal love within a community overcomes the difficulties of all kinds, from the geographical ones to those economical and social

This indigenous zone in the Central North of Mexico is found in the sierra Huasteca (Hidalgo, San Luis Potosí, Veracruz). Their language is nahuatl.

There are 32 small communities who live there, each one made up of 240 families, spread out in a territory that spans hours of walking, because, even if it is just a few kilometers, the road are disastrous, and when it rains they are flooded.

The environment is evocative: the hills, often bare, stand between luxuriant valleys and contain waterways that, while inexistent during the dry season, become raging and dangerous torrents when it rains. Here and there are clearings that the indigenous people try to cultivate with their rudimentary farming tools, often reduced to just one stick used to make a hole in the dry earth in which to plant a seed of corn or beans, but the harvest is never assured because the climate is quite hostile and varies between periods of drought and very strong floods that ruin their crops with serious consequences.

Aside from these crops, nothing else is cultivated, except for a bit of «chili», a very spicy vegetable that often serves as food for their very poor meals in which meat is almost totally absent.

They live in huts made of wood and straw, built on beaten earth, and is usually amde up of just one room. The kitchen is outdoors: a shelf on which a wood fire is lit.

The incidence of disease is high and, because of the distance, most of the population are not able to take advantage of the health services of the State, where oftentimes the



medical attention given is also inadequate. And so they find themselves facing illnesses with no hope for a cure since specialist care is needed and the medicines are very expensive.

In front of these vital necessities, many persons of the Movement started different concrete actions. Throughout these years we were able to build a well for potable drinking water, to put flooring in some homes, to help some families to have their own small house.

Their sharing and generosity are very moving and the communion of goods is spontaneous and normal among them. Many actions are supported by our people and give a strong witness because of the fraternal relationships that are built between the working team and the indigenous population. The reciprocal love that circulates among all has strongly impressed the parish priest and the missionary sisters of the place. Even the civil authorities took an interest, thus starting a collaboration with some public entities for some surgical operations that were needed.

Not only this: a focolarino was able to intervene to solve serious conflicts among the different villages.

Just as in all the families of the Opera, here too a One Day meeting was held, that was truly a celebration of Jesus in the midst. Twelve indigenous communities participated with around 300 people present including a group of 30 intern members from the Mexico City and Neza, who after travelling the whole night, immediately went to work serving the others, and above all bearing witness to that fraternity of the family of Chiara, who they felt was very much present among them.

The theme on Love of neighbour, delivered in nahuatl by a volunteer and an indigenous focolarina, fell on ground that was already prepared because love for the brother is already in their nature, but they felt that it

communities brought something as a gift: firewood, corn, chicken, banana leaves, oranges, coffee. It was also very strong to experience the love of God through the providence that arrived from the other cities: a 100kg. pig, beans, sugar, etc. Everything was placed in common to prepare the zacahuil (typical regional food) which was shared with all the participants at



should become a daily practice for it to bear abundant and visible fruits. A catechist who came for the first time said: «Today I am born; I know the Bible very well, but here they taught me the Gospel lived». Our gen presented the musical on the life of Chiara Luce, who, as they later expressed, «helped us to understand suffering, as the way to reach God».

The One-Day meeting already started the day before when each member of the different

the end of the Meeting crowning the experience of fraternity and unity that was lived.

Alberto and Cristina, volunteer couple from Santa Cruz with five children, shared their experience about the «adoption» of their nephew Alberto. Since his parents could no longer care for him, they asked for their help. «How can I refuse to help my neighbor - Alberto told himself - when I know that Jesus is in him? And if he is Jesus, how can I not love him?». So they welcomed him into their home and loved him without measure, until Juan Alberto overcame his suffering and was slowly transformed; a few months later they also took in his two younger sisters. Now their family is made up of 10 members, who live in harmony and is a strong witness to reciprocal love for many: «we know that our love must continue to grow, that God loves us and his providence will never be lacking».

Vibel Lopez

Women volunteers

Use us

Commitment, radicalness, openness to what is new characterized the meetings at the Center and in the Zones. The talk of Emmaus at Castel Gandolfo

At Castel Gandolfo from January 30 to February 2, 2014, 1100 volunteers coming from North Italy and from the Eastern European Countries were present. There were also numerous Congresses that were taking place almost simultaneously in the Zones. With great joy and participation they were able to follow the live streaming of Emmaus' talk at the Center. Commitment, radicalness, new openness towards «Ut omnes» were the characteristics of each meeting. The talk of Emmaus made the vocation of the women volunteers «shine» making them all the more conscious of the potentiality of the Charism in its incarnation. Here are some of the passages from her talk.

a life of Paradise, we live relationships that could be similar to the relationships of the Trinity». The second is a «infection» that reciprocal love does, a sort of virus that spontaneously makes many people attracted to the people who live it, just as it happened in Trent with the first focalinas.

This is what is happening also today, Emmaus underlined: *«If we really have mutual love, the first thing that happens is that we have Jesus in the midst. The fruit of our love for one another is the presence of Jesus in our midst and it is he who gives taste, gives flavor, gives joy, gives a thrust. Therefore, the life of the nucleus becomes full, it becomes a life in which everything is shared, the most profound things we have, where we help one another to go ahead. [...] And then, it also happens that this mutual love is contagious, it spreads, it enlightens the environment around us, [...] it's inevitable that those around us will be attracted. They will ask questions, and then it may happen that a local action cell will transform the relationships in a hospital, in a school. As other people are attracted and ask questions a world in New Humanity comes to life, then an inundation develops. Why? Because some people started to love one another. Do you realize what an enormous gift the new commandment is!»*.

A greater measure of love, therefore – Emmaus explained – is strongly linked to the new set-up, to which she dedicated the



L'unica volontaria della Bielorussia

Emmaus in her talk spoke of two effects of reciprocal love when it is lived. The first is that of «transforming one's life. We no longer live just an earthly life, we live

second part of her talk, bringing back to the hearts of the participants the «vision» that is its basis. She does this by going over the journey that has brought the Opera to the new set-up that began with the realization that the number of focolarinos and focolarinas was not enough to answer the many requests that arrive from all over the world. And so the question was asked: «Through all these needs that are expressed, through these needs that are presented to us, what does God want to say to us?». And the answer was clear: «Through this need which is manifested, he can ask us not to increase the number of focolarini, but to enlarge our heart, to enlarge our heart, saying: so far we have been able to reach this boundary with love; now we have to be able to reach a wider border with love. And it is not only the focolarini who give love to the world. We suddenly realized that during all these 70 years of life, Chiara's family had grown. It was not made up only of focolarini, but that everyone had the same identical capacity to love. The same identical capacity to love with different calls, with different experiences, within different fields of action, but with the same identical capacity to love. And how great is this capacity to love? Its capacity is enormous so as to reach "that all may be one;" that is, through the gift of the Ideal, through the charism that God gave us, we are able to love to the last boundaries of the earth. Then we have to do it concretely, but the ability that God gave us has that measure».

And just as Chiara and her first companions said to Jesus: «Use us to arrive to the ends of the earth», so also today – Emmaus invited – we can tell Jesus: «Use us, use us, at your service, at the service of your Kingdom, at the service of your design on all of humanity so as to build this universal brotherhood, to build this family of your children, this family

that you want here on earth. Use us, use us! We are not working for the focolarini, we are working for you, for your Kingdom, to carry out that plan you have for all of humanity, to build this universal brotherhood, to build a family of your children, the family that you want to build here on earth. We ask you to use us, not only the focolarini. Use me too, an adherent, who has met the Ideal and wants to live it in the environment where I can bear witness to this love. Use us too: a family Focolare, living in this situation, in a country where there is no one else of the Ideal. Use us too: a nucleus of volunteers who are working in a particular environment, where it's difficult, where there's



La preghiera delle volontarie ortodosse

a lot of controversy. Use us to bring this life there. Use me, use me, use me... If we all say to God: "use me," this new arrangement gives way to a new sowing. This is why we keep talking about a new sowing. It will become a new thrust, it will bring us ahead toward our common goal, "...that they all may be one." It's the same goal as the first focolarine. The same goal for the focolarini, the volunteers, the gen, the priests, the men and women religious, the bishops, for Chiara's entire family, for the entire family of the Opera. And so – Emmaus concluded – we are all together at the service of "Ut omnes". This is what the "new set-up" means» .

Maria Ghislandi

Religious men «Go ahead!»

**Men of faith, of communion, of joy,
protagonists of the change
taking place in the Opera**



It has probably never happened before that a meeting of a section of the Opera starts with the blessing of the Pope. This happened for the meeting of the religious men held at the Mariapolis Center of Castel Gandolfo (4-7 February). One of them had the possibility of concelebrating the Mass in Casa Santa Marta on the morning of February 3 and at the end, during the personal greetings, he told Pope Francis that he was a religious of the Work of Mary and that he was going to participate in the meeting that would start the next day. The Pope told him in a strong voice: «Go ahead, ok!». And so with this push we started our meeting.

The central point of the meeting was the theme of the year, summarized by Emmaus in Montet: «If the reciprocal love among you is not visible, it is something serious, because people will not be able to recognize Jesus. It will be useless to talk about it: they will not be able to recognize him». She emphasized this once more when she came to see us in an hour of «paradise» (with our feet on the ground). Talking about the Opera today, she affirmed: «It is important to grow in love,



not in the number of focolares». With Teresa Martins she gave us the gift of sharing how they live reciprocal love in their focolare: the supernatural in its smallest details.

The Secretary of the Congregation for the Religious, Mons. José R. Carballo, presiding at one of the Masses, invited us to be men of faith, of communion, of joy. This is what dominated the meeting, without taking anything away from the seriousness of our responsibility in front of all the religious families, the Opera, the Church and all humanity. With Giancarlo Faletti we became more conscious that we are called to be protagonists of the change that is taking place in the Opera. One of us commented: «The branch, if it lives for itself only, will die» .



As a conclusion, we put ourselves or we put ourselves once again on the path to the preparation of the Assembly, and to the discovery and realization of new ways of bringing the Love of God to humanity, starting from the nucleus, from the local communities, to the involvement of the young religious, our communities, having in our heart (or in our arms) «Ut omnes».

La segreteria internazionale dei religiosi

New Humanity Listening to humanity

Congress of the international secretariats

«If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go with the others». This African proverb contains all the wisdom of the people of Achille Biffumbu, who in Goma, in the Democratic Republic of Congo, started a project to form the youth of the villages in his region in the cultivation of the land and in the

The project of Achille is one of the experiences shared during the International Congress of New Humanity, from February 12 to 16, that gathered together at Castel Gandolfo, 250 participants coming from all the continents.

A dynamic programme, based on dialogue, including the most diverse experiences, that helped to go in depth in some current themes, also in the light of the *Evangelii Gaudium* of Pope Francis. The African proverb, therefore, summarizes well the meaning of the entire Congress: to learn how to walk together more and more, as one body with the whole Opera, towards the existential peripheries.

«This year we concentrated in a particular way on the world of the Green» - Maria Cristina Canavese relates, she is a volunteer of Florence and a member of the central secretariat - «looking at life as harmony, we found ourselves more aware and capable in the dynamics of reciprocal love also among the various “worlds” of New Humanity, love that contributes to the health of the individual and of the social body».



Emmaus gave a talk of Thursday, February 13: hers was a profound and sincere dialogue with the participants; she read their hearts and gave back New Humanity to the Opera and the Opera to New Humanity, highlighting the treasures it contained for the Church and for humanity.

Giancarlo instead greeted the secretariats on the last day, with a touching encouragement to go back to the zone as a «gift», and to contribute to realizing the design of the Opera all over the world. The profound vision for the present and the future was not lacking, but there was also a stimulus, involvement and affection.

Everyone departed certain that with this true, authentic, mysterious, transparent love, ready to die one for the other, they would discover new roads and fresh solutions that will draw them closer to humanity and to the needs of those who are suffering the most.

Paolo Balduzzi



Restore life to the family

Emmaus opened the annual Congress of the secretariats encouraging all those present to be protagonists in civil and ecclesial environments



© Roberto Rigo

Much-awaited and important appointment to share experiences and to identify future prospects, in the joy of the presence of Emmaus, who, in opening the Congress of the Secretariats of the New Families (Castel Gandolfo, February 7-9), encouraged everyone to have that reciprocal love that makes us members of the family of Chiara and which makes us look at humanity so as to grasp its demands and its needs.

To all the secretariats present – majority of which come from the European Zoness – and also including the persons responsible for the engaged couples, the young families, the separated, the widows and widowers and those who represent New Families in ecclesial and civil entities on the Zonal level, and to all the families from the continents who were linked directly through streaming, she underlined how nowadays the family is in the spotlight and attacked by politics, economy, the media,

but, Emmaus said «if there is this fury against the family it means that the family is a force to be reckoned with». That is why – she continued – I want to thank you for all that you are doing for the family, and I would like to encourage you to preach the Gospel. She reminded them of a phrase from the Scriptures: «When they incite me to battle, there I will place my hope». In particular, Emmaus mentioned an episode from the Gospel, that

in which Jairus throws himself at Jesus' feet to ask for the healing of his daughter, but the people around, crying and shouting, told him that she was already dead. Jesus enters the house and «sends everyone out, he took with him the mother of the child and those that were with him» (Mk 5,40) so as to perform the miracle of the resurrection. Emmaus commented how Jesus always acted in front of important matters, he called his apostles as witnesses, but this time he also called the family, as if he wanted to tell the parents: «I gave back life to this child, but now it is your turn to bring her ahead in life and in sanctity». This is «a sign of Jesus' desire to restore life to the family – Emmaus continued – as shown by the fact that the Church has thought of a Synod for the family».

In view of the preparation for the event, announced by Pope Francis for October 5 to 19, 2014, the New Families of various Zones worldwide have prepared precious contribu-

Engaged couples «Give us this day our daily love»

With Pope Francis at St. Peter's Square

When I went to fetch Valentina at the subway station, the square was deserted. Many of the seats were empty, this time we'll get to have a seat! We just made it in time to reach the Colonnade, and everything was already buzzing: engaged couples filled the square. At the entrance they are distributing well protected strange looking pieces of paper.

tions, that the central secretariat has gathered and sent to the Pontifical Council for the Family, in answer to the questionnaire that was sent to the ecclesial realities all over the world so as to get to know the real situation that the family is living today.

«I entrust to you the engaged couples – Emmaus said in her closing remarks – so that through your witness they will see true love, they will see that “forever” is possible. Love comes from God and God is forever» .

Urged by the document OMS that defines the standards of sex education, a reflection was also started during the Congress regarding the task of parents in educating their children about emotions and sentiments. The formation project «Teens Life» was launched prepared by the Teens for Unity in collaboration with New Families, which also includes courses for tutors. The objective is the integral formation of teens and the harmonious growth of the person, taking into consideration the various physical, emotional, intellectual, social and spiritual dimensions.

Giovanna Pieroni



Papa Francesco saluta Fiorella e Andrea Turatti

© Foto Felici

We come closer, curious to see what they were... they are not pieces of paper.

The question «will you be getting married within the year?» takes us by surprise, instead of a piece of paper, we are given a small white satin pillow, with the signature of Pope Francis and the Pontifical Coat of Arms; it will serve as the cushion for the rings on the day of the wedding: it was the first surprise of the day, together with a prayer written on a small card and the sun that shined brightly and warmed us after so much rain.



St. Peter's welcomed 30,000 people from all over the world; aside from our sector, there is a group of youth who are holding up a sign saying «Focolare Movement». This is the day that Pope Francis has dedicated to married love, receiving engaged couples in a special audience.

On the other hand, today is February 14, the feast day of St. Valentine (176-273 a.d.), the bishops of Terni who had a particular affection for young people in love.

A series of experiences, among which is that of Fiorella and Andrea Turatti belonging to the New Families Movement,

make the value of the satin pillow clearer: it will not just be a ring holder! A pillow is also used for sleeping, a place to lay one's head safely after the labors of the day, and then to start a new day that will rewrite our story. Answering to some questions, Pope Francis encouraged us to live in this way: to allow God to work in our life as a couple, looking back to that pillow, to our faith in Him, that will make our humanity beautiful and which will give us the ability to start again, going to bed everyday with peace in our heart.

«Lord, give us this day our daily love», is the written prayer that the Pope made us

repeat in the Square: it is the recipe for a marriage that will last, that is able to «make the man more a man, and the woman more a woman». Just as a craftsman does, with the daily care he takes that also means fatigue and sweat, we can grow together and give one another true happiness.

I looked at Valentina on this her feast-day: oh yes, she has precisely this name! Now we have to go back to work immediately, and we don't have the time today to exchange gifts. But looking at one another, we realized that we had already received the most beautiful gift.

Paolo Balduzzi

The new magazine online No gen without GEN

We are fast approaching the launching of the new GEN Magazine on-line that will replace completely the printed edition.

The new GEN is the fruit of team-

work that was born from the request and from the collaboration of all the gen boys and girls worldwide.

It has been designed after taking into consideration the results of a survey which was answered by hundreds of gen from all the continents and which has helped us to make it technically accessible to the greatest number possible and closer in style to their tastes and requirements.

It will come out simultaneously in five languages: Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, English and French.

What gives us the most joy is the thought that this step we have taken is taking us closer to Chiara wish: «No gen without GEN».

The Magazine will be inserted in the gen Website with the address:

<http://gen2.focolare.org>

To request for access or for information you can write to:

redazione.gen@gmail.com

La redazione di GEN



Movement of politics
and policy for unity

What we have most a cuore

The launch of the international website
of the pfum. A new step towards a greater
universal dimension

The mppu wants to assume an always more universal dimension, just as it should so as to be able to politically build a united world. Aside from this, other fruitful indications emerged in the meeting with Emmaus last June, on how it should remain a light Movement, open, where-in everyone can freely be a part of it.

Here we are in the photo: Réka Szemerkenyi di Budapest is not present, she is the consultant for the politics of international security of the Hungarian government. She recently received a recognition from the Slovak Atlantic Commission, for having promoted freedom and security in Central Europe. And, aside from this, we have a young and international editorial board: Joaquin (Argentina), Charlene (England), Melchior (Burundi), Gedi (Korea) Donata (Canada/China) and Maria do Carmo (Brazil).

Also for the German speaking regions an important dialogue has started. Yes, because it doesn't just deal with translation, but in expressing the charism of unity in the political dimension of each people.

We are now discussing about our new website. The one in Italian can be found at www.italia.mppu.org. The new international website - www.mppu.org - will open in English! It is an adventure of cultural and linguistic unity, that is making us take steps forward. For example the acronym «mppu» does not correspond in English to «politics for unity movement».



So, here is the new logo of the Movement of politics and policy for unity. It was the occasion to understand that we are not only dealing with renewing the style of politics (bringing with it the recognition of the other and of a true dialogue), but also of building new political, economic, social, environmental, international ... And, recalling the words of Chiara at Westminster, London: «if we could give a colour to every human activity... politics would be the background, the black, that makes all the other colours stand out», we rediscovered our task of service within the Dialogue with contemporary culture.

In such a dimension, we are now working for the event of March 2015: Chiara, the charism, politics. A year of involvement and elaboration towards a new participated democracy that is more in accordance with the project of unity in the richness of diversity.

We can all be involved, not only because each person has a political dimension – which for us has the horizon of the unity of the human family – but because – as Emmaus said: «what is in my heart is that all the actions of mppu are always done in unity and a fruit of unity... it is a reality of the Opera which together with the whole Opera aims at "Ut Omnes"»

Letizia De Torre

In the photo, from left to right: Enzo Cardaci, Sergio Previdi, Joaquin Salzberg, Maria Voce (Emmaus), Letizia De Torre, Annalisa Colombo, Daniela Ropelato, Cecilia Di Lascio, Pasquale Ferrara, Marcello Sanità, Giancarlo Faletti.



From the state of Indiana A doctorate degree that links America and Europe

The recognition conferred to Emmaus and to the Focolare Movement
opens an important collaboration in the field of Law

On January 27, the headquarters in Rome of the University of Notre Dame, among the most important Catholic Universities in the U.S.A., experienced an intense and involving moment: the conferment of two doctorates Honoris Causa in Law to Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran, president of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue and to Maria Voce, president of the Focolare Movement.

The word that re-echoed most often during the day was «dialogue», an open dialogue, with those who belong to another religion, another culture, a dialogue in which each one in the first person gives his or her own thoughts, so as to walk together.

«We are extremely proud to add to the number of our alumni such illustrious persons like Cardinal Tauran and Maria Voce», the Rev. John I. Jenkins, CSC, president of the University, said.

The doctorate, as the President recalled, is an honour, that cannot be «given», but is recognized in the person who already has it. And this is the way it is for these two personalities.

It was a day of open dialogue that was lived also at the other end of the Ocean, from the home of the University of Notre Dame, in Indiana.

In spite of the inclement weather, everyone came – as Prof. Peter Casarella said – to the «warmth of the focolare». Also present was a group of professors and doctors, aside from representatives of Communion and Liberation, the Community of St. Egidio, Schoenstatt and lay friends of the Madonna House.

The first presenter introduced the programme defining the day as an «extraordinarily important» moment that begins a new relationship of the University of Notre Dame and the Ecclesial Movements: a step forward, at the forefront, in the search for what it means to be a Catholic University in the world today.

In this strong context, the role of the spirituality of communion was very much appreciated, in an open dialogue, on a cultural level, among the various charisms.

Michael James, director of Boston College's Leadership program in the Catholic University – in the round table together with John Cavadini, director of Notre Dame's Institute for the life of the Church – presented the theme «The spirituality of communion and Catholic teaching in high school». John Mundell presented the Economy of Communion in dialogue with Martijn Cremers, of the Business School of Notre Dame. Don Mitchell from Purdue University to-



gether with Peter Casarella of the Department of Theology of Notre Dame went in depth on the theme «The Spirituality of Communion, interreligious dialogue and building peace».

Amy Uelmen, professor of law at the Georgetown University, discussed «Fraternity in politics and in law» with Daniel Philpott, director of the Center for civil rights and human rights of Notre Dame.

She illustrated the journey of Communion and law and the Politics for unity Movement, in various parts of the world, in the search for a way that – while respecting cultural diversities that are expressed in the use of certain terminology, such as fraternity, relationality, love for the neighbour – it allows law and politics to speak to all men, to leave a mark in society so as to contribute to the unity of the human family.

In the meantime, in Rome, Maria Voce showed, with brief brush strokes the course of her studies and research, of her personal commitment and of how the network of Communion and Law has left a mark in drawing a novelty in the juridical field.

Emmaus highlighted the tenacity with which she conquered her studies, when her father would have stopped her from going ahead after her elementary education, her work as the first woman lawyer of Foro di Cosenza, and the choice of leaving everything, without regrets, to follow and to work for a greater Ideal up to the point of rediscovering, in her research as part of the Abba School, and with the network of Communion and law, the heart of the new vision of law. «One of my professors defined Law as "a sys-

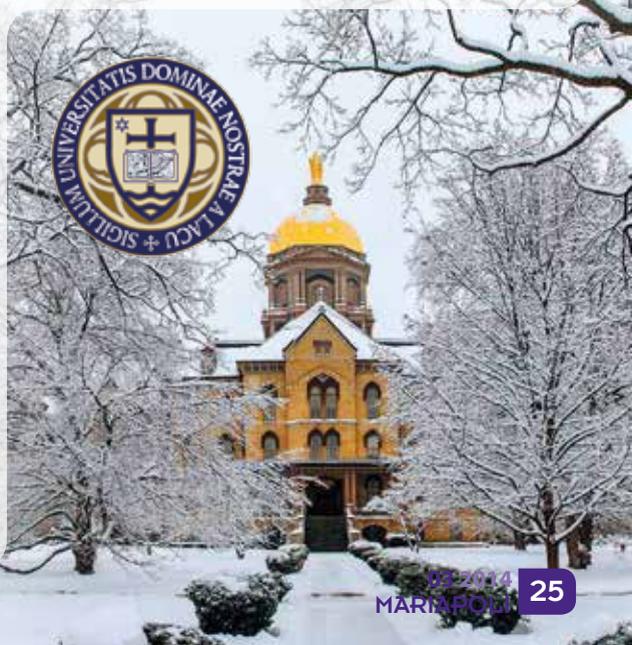
tem of limits". And my studies confirmed to me that in relationships the sphere of autonomy of an individual or of a group would inevitably collide with that of another and only at the price of this reciprocal limitation one can build a peaceful co-existence.

Today in the globalized world, we see an always greater fragmentation. Often we live beside each other, but not together with the others, rather we live in fear and mistrust of the other and therefore in a profound solitude. Also a victim of this cultural crisis, Law has become always more the law of the individual, rather of the individuals, separated and isolated.

In the logic of a lived evangelical love, instead, the limits become occasions to experience the true being of the person that is realized in giving, in giving of oneself, in making oneself a gift. Only in this way can the respect of individual freedom be reconciled in a superior synthesis that leads to communion, in which and for which the subjects can see their identity protected, and even strengthened».

From this vision of Law, comes the commitment, from both ends of the Ocean, to work together with the University of Notre Dame and with all those who intend to commit themselves to illuminating the understanding of law and of the relationships among all men.

Maria Giovanna Rigatelli and Amy Uelmen



Elio Cimmaruta

The pact of fidelity

Yesterday, at 8:15pm, Elio Cimmaruta, a focolarino from the Roman Mariapolis left for Heaven. Days ago he said: «After making the Pact to be faithful to the end with Manfred and Enrico (2 focolarini who passed away in these last months) I feel more in Heaven than on Earth. I am ready to leave».

Elio was born in the town of Afragola (Naples) on March 28, 1952 into a large and numerous family; he had 11 siblings. Two months after he met the Ideal in 1968 he wrote Chiara: «When I met the Gen I was fascinated by their way of life». In 1970 he asked her for a new name to remind him in every moment of what he should be. Chiara responded and gave him the name Trinitas explaining: «This name will remind you that we must live 'on earth as it is in heaven' ... in Trinitarian relationships among us ...with a divine charity that asks nothing for oneself, but gives everything».



One day in 1975, deeply moved and recollected after receiving the Eucharist, he felt called to become a focolarino and with great joy, said his Yes. He confided to Chiara: «My only desire is to follow Him. I hope to remain faithful to Him until the end». A year later he left for Loppiano.

Following the school of formation he became part of the team of the audiovisual center of the Movement, Santa Chiara Centre, where he worked for thirty two years. He himself recounts: «It is a special grace to be able to live, because of my work, so many moments at Chiara's side». With his talents and his expertise with fore-

sight and wisdom, Elio lived out his passion to spread the charism of unity in the world through the media. His great desire was to be certain, before undertaking any task, to build relationships so as to ensure the presence of Jesus in the midst. He leaves us a wealth of images and documentaries that will continue



to nourish the future generations. He contributed to the birth of the video version of the Conference Call, a powerful tool for the entire Movement to proceed together on the Holy Journey.

In 2010 Elio moved to the permanent Mariapolis in Belgium where he impacted the many hearts of those who came to know him. In July 2013 he was hospitalized due to terrible abdominal pains. He was diagnosed with a very advanced tumor. He wrote to me immediately: «Let me tell you that today I cried for joy, a joy which is unexplainable but whose root I know very well. Due to the grace of God, I am ready. I offer my life so that the Movement may flourish in its design».

Months later he told me: «The other day I went to visit Enrico in the hospital and we renewed our Pact; Manfred continues his part of our Pact from heaven. Please know therefore that we are at your side during this special year in which the Movement, enlivened by mutual love at every level, may take a decisive step ahead towards its origins».

His relatives also accompanied him during this period. Elio always kept them up to date about how he was living this illness.

Let's thank God for his life in which he gave everything. Let's begin the suffrages and let's make his commitment our own so as to generate the collective sanctity around us, to give life to - as Elio loved to say - 'spaces of Paradise' where Elio continues to live.

Thank you Elio!

The sharings on Elio and his profile read during his funeral can be found on Mariapolis online www.focolare.org/notiziariomariapoli

Zaida Fernandez

«The smile of Jesus Forsaken»

Zaida, focolarina of Spain reached the Heavenly Mariapolis on February 6.

She was born 75 years ago in Oviedo in northern Spain and then her family moved to the Canary Islands. In 1965 she met the Ideal through Gio Vernuccio and other focolarine who were accompanying Fr. Peyton on the «Way of the Rosary». Zaida, struck by the



relationship shared among them in which she found the essence of Christianity, she too wanted to give her life to God.

In 1996 she left Spain for the school of formation in Loppiano. Once back in Spain she contributed to the spreading of the Ideal tirelessly travelling either by train or car to different parts of the country. Many people met the Ideal through her and are grateful for her love.

Zaida dedicated herself in a thousand ways to build the Movement: the Mariapolis preparations, her work in Ecumenism, being part of the editorial staff of Ciudad Nueva. She always sought to give her best, discreetly and deeply to the novelty of the Charism.

In 1994 she wrote Chiara: «I feel the responsibility to be an instrument of Jesus in the Midst to show the world the collective spirituality, with the novelty you made us contemplate. Today Jesus passed by and ask me a new 'yes' in this adventure».

At the time she retired from her teaching career she was entrusted with the task of working for the cause of beatification of Luminosa Bavosi, the Argentinean focalarina who had been the delegate of the Movement in Spain and with whom Zaida had lived for many years. Along with the postulator, Carlo Fusco, Zaida dedicated herself with passion to this task to the point of finalizing and presenting all the documents to the Congregation for the Cause of Sainthood. From that period Carlo recounts: «Very often while Zaida was reading an episode of Luminosa's life she was quite moved, remembering a particular incident that, since it was of God, it had remained forever». Working on this marked a leap in her race towards holiness.

Zaida knew how to make herself one in all situations, she was demanding yet sincere. Of course, there were always challenges which required her 'yes' to God repeatedly. In 2002 she wrote Chiara: «I've spent the last 8 years of my mother's life with her, because she depended upon my help each day more. They were difficult years for me, but no, it was like walking along the Holy Journey with one fixed idea, what you had given to me 'You, Lord, are my only Good'. This was the panacea». In 2006 she again wrote Chiara: «For awhile now I have a special relationship with Mary, with Desolate Mary, who having held the dead Jesus in her arms is certain that this is God and the last word in life is not death, but resurrection».

Her race accelerated even more during her two months stay in hospital because of an unexpected illness. She could no longer express herself with words and yet was able to say «thank you» for every bit of help she received. But above all she communicated

with her smile that expressed the quality and warmth of her love, as a living expression of her new name: «Smile=the smile of Jesus Forsaken» which Chiara had given her in 1969.

It is certain that those «for You» which Zaida repeated until her last breath made the presence of Jesus in the Midst among all grow.

p. Alfredo Dinis sj

«One lives as if in heaven»

Last September 22, at the age of 61, Fr. Alfredo left for the Heavenly Mariapolis. He had leukemia for about a year, facing this painful illness with total trust in the love of God and of Mary.

A Jesuit priest, he found in the Ideal of Unity the light which united and renewed the new and old charisms. He considered himself lucky for having met a spiritual father and mother during his lifetime: Ignatius of Loyola and Chiara Lubich. During the final years of his life he was responsible for the branch of the religious men in Portugal, promoting meetings both on the local and national levels, open to members of the various congregations. He was a professor in the faculty of Philosophy of Braga.

One of the questions that he loved to face was regarding the relationship between science and faith; he would participate in round tables and debates, aside from the Mariapolis and gen congresses.



Matilde Manelli Giardina

A goldmine of humanity

«She did not love a God who was only for herself, but a God who was Fatehr of everyone. Love that links everyone and makes us one!». It was the conclusion of the homily given in the Church of S. Maria di Piedigrotta, filled with the most diverse people as if it was a feast day, to greet Matilde, a volunteer of Naples, who left for Heaven on the 26th of December, 2013, with the same peace and serenity with which she had always lived her life.

Born in Naples in 1926, in a family with deep Christian roots, as a young girl belonging to the FUCI (Federation of Catholic University Students) she met Antonio, who



was also committed in that epochal change that would lead to the Council. They got married in '54, had five children and continue their search for an authentic Christianity. Their house was the meeting place for many.

In '72, experiencing an immense suffering because her sixth child, Emanuela, was stillborn, Matilde comes into contact with the Ideal and she immediately understands its essence: to love always, to love everyone. Her call to be a volunteer matures. «Matilde was for all of us an inexhaustible goldmine of humanity... she taught us how to love without stopping especially the least who passed beside us, she made us enter into her heart, making our hearts wider», this is what the women volunteers said at her funeral.

Chiara gave her as her Word of Life: «Here I am, I stand at the door and knock» (Ap 3,20) and during her long life there have been many occasions to open that door! In '84, her son 21 year old son, Gigi dies in an accident. Even in the midst of this absurdity of this trial, Matilde is certain of the love of God that is hidden also in this circumstance, so much so that she refuses to write in his necrology anything that speaks of a life that has been «broken», but: «in 21 years, Gigi has concluded the arc of his life». And in this way she transmits to everyone the fruits of a solid and serene faith.

She always gave herself generously to the Opera, with Antonio in the New Families Movement, and subsequently as person responsible of a nucleo, and then as the delegate of New Humanity of the Zone of Naples and finally as the delegate of the women volunteers, and as such she was able to transmit to many her profound

One day, in the Little City Arco-iris, he said: «Here one begins to live already here on earth as one would live in Heaven: the life of reciprocal love. And so being here means being in Heaven». He impressed everybody with his smile, the clarity of his thoughts illuminated by wisdom, aside from the sincere relationships he built with people of all convictions which he established through an open dialogue.

In Fr. Alfredo, the life and thought on the frontiers of the knowledge of the universe and of his relationship with God, were one and the same. he used to say: «As a philosopher I have tried to understand the world. Surprisingly, I feel that the world has an incomprehensible side. The world exists maybe not to be understood, but to be loved!».

Antônio Oliveira

love for wisdom, her great passion for humanity and that joy that comes from knowing that the Charism is able to answer fully to all our needs.

In this regard, Fausta, her daughter who is a focoolarina, said: «Her heart was big, she never excluded anyone, she never judged anyone, and it gave her eyes to see the drops of love present in any person. And she rejoiced in this greatly». To get to know deeply the soul of Matilde, there are no words that are more beautiful than what her youngest child said at the end of her funeral: «Mama never explained anything to me. She was too humble and discrete to give explanations. She was the living witness of sweetness and of the smile, of giving and welcoming, and example of how to accept suffering and how to grasp the essentials of all things of people. Mama never explained anything to me, but she taught me everything that I try, everyday, to be».

Maria Rita Cerimele, Fausta Giardina

Resia Picariello

Perseverance up to the end

On April 28, 2013 Resia, volunteer of Avellino (zone of Naples), left for heaven at the age of 73. Married to Rino (who left for the Heavenly Mariapolis in 2002) in 1979, they met the Ideal in that same year. They would have two children. Their home, in the city devastated by the earthquake of '80, became the collection center for all the aid that the Opera offered, open to the gen from all over Italy who then went to bring the relief goods to those affected by the earthquake and also to bring comfort to the many who were desperate. They were very much committed in the world of the family, through New Families, in the as-

sociation of Foster Families of Avellino, in the reality of the home-family, in the Diocesan Consultative Commission of the laity and also in the courses for natural family planning. Together with Rino they also fostered many children, and always together with him, who was a basketball coach, they contributed to the birth of Sportmeet in the Zone. In every action Resia was open to welcome the others with her concreteness and efficacy and also after the death of Rino she continued to give her contribution to this reality of the Opera, supporting - among other things - the birth of a sports complex in Africa.

She followed with passion and love and with much wisdom, the nucleo of her city. In her illness, Resia entrusted herself docilely to the Will of God, facing with serenity the treatment and the sufferings that were long and many, without ever stopping from loving: she never «measured», for her they were steps to arrive to Him. Meeting her was a conversion to love, a love that hopes in everything and transforms everything.

Chiara wrote to her: «... now go ahead with the certainty that Mary will help you to be faithful to the choice that you have made». As her Word of Life Chiara chose: «Who perseveres up to the end will be saved» (Mt. 10,22), and she added: «Best wishes, Resia! May the design of God on you be realized for His glory».

Her perseverance up to the end is what accompanied her to the house of the Father, helped by the unity of Antonietta, her sister who is also a volunteer, by her family and the whole Opera.

Maria Rita Cerimele





Luís López

Effective in loving

Luís, volunteer of Cordova (Spain) left for Heaven on January 20 at the age of 83.

From the start he had a great desire to live the Gospel which was seen in his daily

life, but this radicalness was consolidated when he met Pepita who, after a period of true Christian engagement, married him and they had six children. In 1975 they met the ideal together. The spirituality of unity permeated the life of their family, where one daughter is a religious Teresian and another child, Rafael is a married focolarino. Since then, Luis' commitment to the Opera was total, among the men volunteers, in the families and as the representative of the Movement in his Diocese. Every month he would distribute around 100 copies of the Word of Life among his friends and in different parishes and religious congregations.

He was a typographer, and he founded, together with another volunteer the Cooperative «Catholic Typography» in Cordova, teaching graphic arts to many of the workers. He was very faithful to his nuclear life, and said that there are no excuses not to participate in the weekly nucleus meeting; his faithfulness in the communion of goods and his concrete and effective experiences were also noticed. He underwent a great trial when one of his sons died and, he suffered also physically due to a wasting illness.

Precisely on the day of his wedding anniversary, his funeral mass was held, which became a thanksgiving to God for his great testimony.

Toni Torres

Our relatives

they have passed on to the Next Life: **Aurora, mother of Cristina Negro and Rita, sister of Margarida Nobre**, focolarinas at the Centre of the Opera; **Pius, father of Montse Capellas and Giorgio, brother of Giuliana (Alanova) Bighignoli**, focolarinas at the Roman Mariapolis; **Marisa, mother of Marco Bartolomei**, focolarino at the Roman Mariapolis; **Francesco Camillo Buntham, father of Bancha Srisujikan**, focolarino in Bangkok (Thailand); **Mario, father of Claudio Amato**, focolarino in Dallas (U.S.A. West); **Joao, father of Zito Lopes and Lucia, sister of Raf Fontana**, focolarini in Loppiano; **Elizabeth, sister of Poulien Samsoon**, focolarina at the Mariapolis Center Arnold (Brazil South); **Nair Maria Pazin, mother of Fátima Célia Lagher**, focolarina at Mariapolis Luminosa (U.S.A.); **Gerda, mother of Gabi Schelenz**, focolarina at the Mariapolis Center of Zwochau (Germany South); **Franz, father of Gudrun Griesmayr**, focolarina at the Little City Nuova Legge (Ottmaring - Germany); **Mario, father of Eliana (Sevi) Secomandi**, focolarina in Loppiano; **Maria do Carmo, mother of Maria de Fatima**, focolarina in Trento and of **Maria Isabel Sousa**, focolarina at the Mariapolis Center Arcoiris (Portugal); **Danilo, father of Brigita (Aster) Eterovic**, focolarina in Moscow; **Elisabetta, mother of Vera Hye Sook Lee**, focolarina in Korea.

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