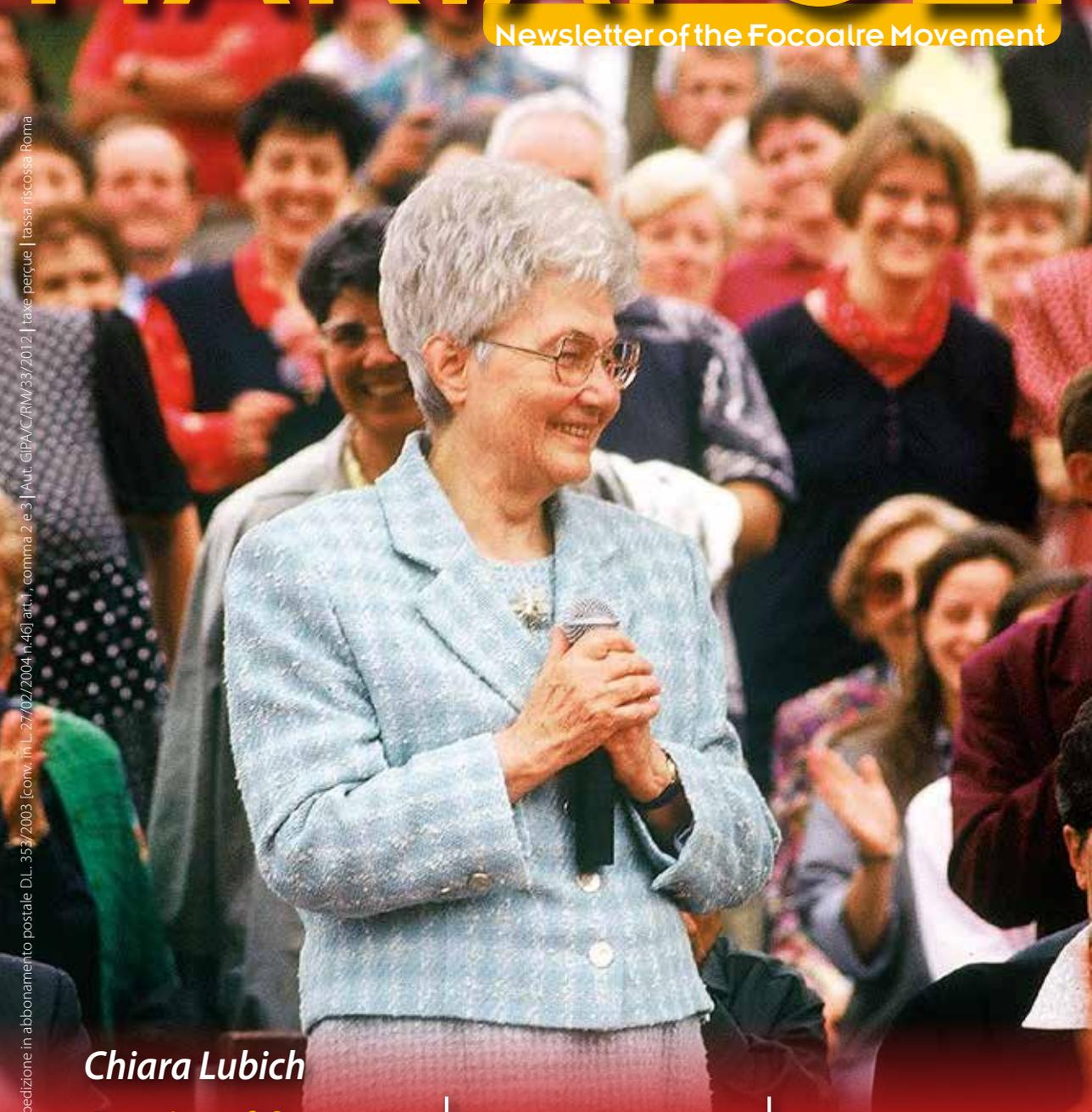


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MARIAPOLI

Newsletter of the Focolare Movement

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Chiara Lubich

**Opening of the process
of beatification
and canonization**

The way of dialogue

From France to Nigeria
the commitment to
building bridges of peace

The Opera on a journey

Important
indications from
the meetings at



Mariapolis Araceli, 30 May 1991

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Saints out of love

[...]

We are still in the atmosphere of Pentecost, which was for all of us and, I imagine also for you, the occasion in which we felt more deeply within our souls the presence of our Protector, the Holy Spirit.

The past two years of our Ideal life have been devoted to Him, and I believe that on this Pentecost 1991, He found us more vigilant than in the past, more loving, more grateful.

With the focolarini here at Mariapolis Araceli we have meditated on the effects that the Holy Spirit has produced in the members of the Movement. Generally speaking, they have found a very new relationship with the third Divine Person.

And because He is the Sanctifier, we tried to point out the attitude we have had towards holiness, in the history of the Movement, towards the need and duty to become saints.

Those among us who had the grace to live during the early days of the Movement can testify to the fact that at the beginning, they will remember this, we had even renounced to the idea of becoming saints, at least as it was thought of by some people then. It was in strong contrast with our Ideal's demand for doing things in a radical way.

We felt called to live *for God* and *for others*, totally oblivious to ourselves. Consequently, anything that could turn us towards ourselves or isolate us from the others did not attract us; indeed, we rejected it. God, to be loved through our brothers and sisters, was our only Ideal. If heaven intended holiness for us, it would have to come as a consequence of this.

Then many years later, when Mary manifested to us much of her beauty, previously unknown to us, and indicated the stages of her life as the way of our own journey towards holiness, we began to speak

once again about this duty of all Christians and of us, in particular.

There was no longer the danger of looking at ourselves: Mary, who was totally oriented towards God and all her children, did not permit it. The collective spiritual way, not only individual, which she showed us, fully satisfied us. It was, in fact, a collective way. It's enough to think of the second and third stages: characteristic of the second stage is the recounting of one's experience to others, following the example of Mary who sang the "Magnificat"; and characteristic of the third stage is the capacity, with the help of God, to give life, with others, to the presence of Jesus among us, which recalls His birth.

Thus we have tended towards holiness with all our strength. And in this thrust, enlightened by the Holy Spirit, we feel that many of those who have already "left," have achieved holiness.

Now, on the occasion of this new and deeply felt Pentecost (which is like the third phase in the history of our relationships with the Holy Spirit), it seemed that He was giving us a new light with regard to holiness.

We understood that we must love our neighbours, but we can love a little or we can love a lot. People who love a little are those who limit themselves to loving their neighbours only in this life. Whereas people who love a lot are those who find the way to love their neighbours also years and centuries afterwards. Since Christ lives in them, they remain on earth as models whom many can imitate.

This is what the saints did. We meditate on their lives, writings and works even centuries and centuries after their "departures" from this earth.

Following their example, we can do the same: we can become saints out of love for our neighbours today and for those who

will come in the future, so as to give them light and incentive along the way of life and to enkindle in their hearts the flame of love.

It is clear then that we should strive towards holiness not for our own satisfaction but for the glory of God and for our brothers and sisters.

As we meditated on these things here at Araceli, a slogan began which everyone likes very much: "*Saints out of love.*"

We promised one another, and now we renew the promise with all of you, to reach *this* holiness which is attuned to our way, which is the way of love.

But how can we become saints? Jesus, before dying, prayed to the Father in this way: "Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth" (Jn 17:17).

We will sanctify ourselves and we will sanctify ourselves for others by living the Word.

Thus during this month the idea of losing, of letting go should prevail. "Whoever loses their life..."; we should lose every desire that does not coincide with the will of God in the present moment. We know that one advances more in a month by practicing this Gospel renunciation than in a long period of time with other methods. This is the thought of St. John of the Cross.

In conclusion: saints out of love, saints by losing, letting go.

In doing so, we will grow closer to the two most sublime models of unattainable holiness, to Jesus Forsaken and Mary Desolate, to the "nothingness" they achieved in order to give to us the All. They were "saints out of love," yes, out of love for us.

From the Conference Call, Mariapolis Araceli, 30 May 1991, translation of Italian text published in *Santi insieme*, Città Nuova, Roma, February 1995



Chiara Servant of God

A new light for the Church in the journey towards unity

A message of Pope Francis for the opening of the process of canonization and beatification for Chiara Lubich

The cathedral of Frascati is packed. The came in droves filling up the aisles of the building which – as Bishop Raffaello Martinelli explained – is undergoing its fourth renovation since 1200. But today it seemed to have no walls because of the live internet link-up with the 18,000 venues following the event in the five continents. There are ordinary people and Cardinals, Bishops and members of Catholic Movements and those of various Churches. Present also were faithful of the great religions. From Trent, representatives of the civil institutions, just as from Frascati, Rocca di Papa and from the surrounding municipalities.

After the solemn song of the Vespers, which created an atmosphere of sublime recollection, immediately at the start of the opening of the process, a surprise: the words of the message of Pope Francis read by Card. Bertone, titular head of the suburbicaria Diocese of Frascati: «to make

known to the people of God the life and the works of she who, in welcoming the invitation of the Lord, lit up a new light for the Church in the journey towards unity»..

There is sacredness and solemnity, discrete and humble joy. There is a growing awareness of a greater responsibility in continuing to be the guardians and active witnesses of the inheritance of Chiara in today's humanity.

The ceremony, even in fulfilling the juridical acts required will remain in time – as underlined by Bishop Martinelli who presided – a profound and unitarian meditation: everyone here are called to be witnesses.

At the conclusion of the celebration, Emmaus thanked the Bishop and all those who were involved: «We would like to assure you that the only desire we have, is that of offering to the Church and to humanity the gift that Chiara has been for us and for countless people».

She recalled the group of the first women and men companions of Chiara «*who from the very first moment bore witness to the beauty and the possibility of walking together, in unity, on the road towards the one goal*».

And she concluded: «*We will wait with humility for the wise judgement of the Holy Father and we ask God, only for His glory and for the good of many, that, with the eventual recognition of the exemplarity of Chiara, humanity and history will come to know of new developments of peace, of unity and of universal fraternity*».

that the Spouse has brought to life here on earth to complete your “interior castle”, so as to make the Church beautiful just as you desired. Until we meet again St. Teresa. I embrace you, Chiara».

This is a recognition by the Catholic Church of the collective sanctity that can increasingly become the patrimony of everyone.

Silvana Veronesi. Those of us who were with her from the very beginning can bear witness to the fact that Chiara nourished us with her very life.

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Frascati, 27 gennaio. Da destra: d. Pasquale Foresi, Bruna Tomasi, Silvana Veronesi e Dori Zamboni



In prima fila da destra: Emmaus Voce, Jesús Morán, d. Silvestre Marques, Lucia Abignente e Waldery Hilgeman. In seconda fila da destra: Fede Marchetti e Eli Folonari

The first witnesses

We asked some of the first men and women companions of Chiara – privileged witnesses of that collective sanctity proposed and lived by her – for an impression.

Eli Folonari. Someone told me that for Chiara, who is also loved by the Buddhists, Muslims, Hindu, Jews... they wished nothing more than for the Catholic Church to begin the process of beatification... because Chiara belongs to everyone.

And so this moment has arrived. I remember that when I accompanied her to Avila in December 2002 Chiara wrote in the golden book: «Thank you St. Teresa for all that you have done for us during our history. Thank you! But the most beautiful thanks that I can give you I will tell you in Paradise. Continue to watch over us, on our “exterior castle”

It is important to highlight the sanctity of Chiara lived in the faithfulness to the Charism that God gave her for humanity: that phrase of Jesus «that all may be one». This recognition can generate that hope and trust which is very much needed today.

Now that we have received the gift of the Ideal from her, we are responsible for living this unity that brings the «*presence of Jesus in the midst*» in today's society. I wish for myself and for each member to the Opera to be worthy children of such a mother.



Cattedrale di Frascati



The programme

In a solemn atmosphere the formalities for the installation of the tribunal were performed: the reading of the «*supplice libello*» with which the Focolare Movement requested for the opening of the process in December 2013. It was followed by the reading of the «*nulla osta*» of the Congregation for the Cause of Saints and the constitution of the tribunal.

It will be Mons. Angelo Amati, Episcopal Delegate, who will conduct this phase of the Diocesan inquest, assisted by Rev. Emmanuele Faweh Kazah, Nigerian, as the Promoter of Justice, and by the notary public Patrizia Sabatini, who in the preceding months had already gathered around fifty testimonies, so as to avoid losing those of the first men and women companions of Chiara.

The postulator is Fr. Silvestre Marques, Portuguese, and the vice-postulators are an Italian, Lucia Abignente and Waldery Hilgeman, Dutch.

The next session to listen to the testimony of Maria Voce is scheduled for this coming February 12, ahead of a list of around 100 names.

Marco Tecilla

She opened up a path and, at least twenty years before the Second Vatican Council, she prepared the ground for that which in the *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, John Paul II gave as a patrimony for the whole Church, the reality of the Church as communion.

During the early times, one of the things that Chiara told me was that I had to forget about sanctity and to aim at «*Ut omnes*». She really broke the mould. We must aim at unity and there we will also find sanctity.

Chiara has shown us a sanctity of the people, but built day by day through loving in even the smallest things. Being beside her was a divine school, in saying «for You Jesus» in every moment.

Gis Calliari. Being beside Chiara one learns how to love, love always, without measure, a love that is joy, life ... For me living with her was THE LIFE. To know her was a revolution of the soul. Chiara lived the Ideal, she had God within, in an extraordinary manner, it was not something normal of everyday. The love that she had for everyone, without differentiating people, was without measure. She lived the other.

Bruno Venturini. We have to ask the Holy Spirit to help us understand that the sanctity of Chiara is not that of a saint as we have envisioned him or her up to this moment. The reality of Jesus in the midst, of the Saint in our midst, is completely new. We ourselves we are not able to express the sanctity of Chiara because we do not know her dark «night».

We must penetrate this aspect, and this act of the Church will allow us to go deeper into it. Chiara did not only give the light and illuminated the words of the Gospel, but she lived them up to the point of the extreme consequences, up to the Abandonment, in her own way all through her life and this is what makes it authentic. Now we will present the complete picture, with this link between tradition and the novelty of the sanctity that Chiara brings.

Aletta Salizzoni. I am happy because it is God who will think about making us understand what the charism of Chiara is. What will come out is not what people want, but that which the Holy Spirit will suggest. It is God who guides everything. If everything were that easy or according to what we think, it would not be something ours. Instead we want what God wants, The recognition of the sanctity of Chiara is something beautiful and important for this earth. For heaven instead, Chiara is already what she is.



Giorgio (Fede) Marchetti. It is an act that takes place in the Catholic Church, it is part of this tradition. Naturally we start with the traditional pattern of the virtues – and they will not be disappointed – but they will discover always more who Chiara is, the universality of her charism.

I remember the journey of Chiara in contact with the saints. With Mother Teresa when she was still alive, with the great Spanish mystics, with Sr. Maria Gabriella of the Trappists... It was a relationship among brothers and sisters.

The conclusion of the life of Chiara showed who she truly is: the «spouse» of Jesus Forsaken! Like a seal to show us the only way to realize her vision: love, mutual love, unity, the trinitarian reality.

Story of Light

The «masterpiece» of Foco to be published soon in *Nuova Umanità*

«This is my masterpiece. Publish it only after my death». With these words, in the Seventies, Iginò Giordani gave this manuscript to Giulia (Eli), to hand over to Chiara Lubich, a manuscript entitled *Story of Light*. It is the story of Chiara and of the newly born Focolare Movement. The magazine *Nuova Umanità* will publish it – in chapters – starting from the first issue to be printed in March.

It is obvious that the pen of Giordani – already refined in itself – was this time committed to the narration of what enlightened the mind and the soul of the author. Our Foco was an author who among other things, was an expert in the lives of the saints. How many books he wrote! Bestsellers on Catherine of Siena, Francis of Assisi, Vincent de Paul, Francis of Sales, Ignatius of Loyola, Magdalene of Canossa... Well, he really knew a lot about saints. Nevertheless, his masterpiece is the story of Chiara. But, pay attention, he already shared her exploits while she was still alive and at work. For this reason it would be inappropriate to say that this book

Bruna Tomasi. The great joy upon hearing this news came to «cover», if I can say this, the suffering brought by the departure of Chiara.

Now that Chiara is no longer here, the Church can «give her back to us» as a model as we walk along the way in which God has called us. I think of all those who did not know Chiara personally.

It seems to me that a new period of our life is beginning. Chiara had opened to us a road to a new kind of sanctity, for everyone, collective, which she had gone through before us. If the Church now recognizes it, this is a guarantee, not only for the focolarini but for everyone.

I often recall the last trips that I made to visit some of the communities in Latin America. Wherever I went there was always the question – especially from the Bishops: «When will the process for the beatification of Chiara start?».

prepared by Gianna Sibelli

is hagiographic (literally, it means a biography of saints or venerated persons). And we cannot also consider it as a book of historical research. Giordani did not have the aim of having his story verified by documents. We believe that he was not overly concerned about reconstructing a biography scrupulously tied to the sources of the archives. What he was keen on doing was to bear witness to the greatness of Chiara, to the importance of her design, to the explanation of her work in the history of the Church and of humanity. In such a way, he continued to carry out the function that he had started since the first years of his entering into the original community that had formed around Chiara: to illuminate her person, revealing to them her greatness, to that group of young girls who believed that what Chiara was showing them was just the normal Christian life, and not a remarkable novelty that was destined to change the history of Trent and the entire world.

And so our next appointment will be in the next issue of *Nuova Umanità*.

Alberto Lo Presti

Story of Light

Towards March 14, 2015

Chiara and politics: from the beginnings to 2008

The 7th anniversary of the departure of Chiara for Heaven will be dedicated to deepening the influence of the charism of unity on political thought. There is a profound relationship that links Chiara Lubich to politics and which is interwoven into the entire history of the Opera. Let us go through it together through articles, letters and writings, some of which have never been published before

“No one in need” in an article signed Chiara dated February 1948

During the early times in Trent Chiara and the first focolarini and focolarine wanted to translate into life the words of the Gospel. The art of loving that they put into practice in their daily life, in the gestures of sharing and of fraternal love, above all for the poor, concretized «social justice» which is at the heart of the Gospel. This is what Chiara wrote in February 1948 for the newspaper *Amico serafico*:

«If in a small society Christians, while remaining in the world, would love one another with

Christian love and live the Gospel, each one on his own – in a direct relationship with God – and everyone among them would live the communion of goods, even of material goods and above all of material goods, it would be something logical, spontaneous, constant.

This was our conviction, we members of the Third Order of Trent when, just a few years or so ago, a real and notable rebirth began especially among the youth. The decidedly evangelical spirit with which we were being educated uplifted and maintained our souls in the supernatural vision of life, in a way that it was logical to give our surplus to those who did not have anything and to share what we had with those who were hungry and cold. [...] the spirit of unity in charity was the flame that was always alive in this active fraternity».

The article continued, explaining that during Christmas of 1947 they proposed to put in common all their surplus, above all money, so as to help, with charity and discretion, some families who were in difficulty. The aim was always to radically resolve the problem of poverty.

«The aim was: to reach the point wherein no one among us was in need, but that everyone would have the basic necessities of life.

The sum of money received and the monthly commitments was truly beyond our expectation and already in the first month we were able to help around



thirty families. If the grace of God will sustain us, the problem will quickly be resolved».

Open to all humanity: the encounter with Igino Giordani (1948)

Chiara shared about this meeting in 2000¹

«In 1948 we met for the first time the Honorable Igino Giordani in the Chamber of Deputies. He was a leading personality with a vast cultural, social and political experience, an apologist during the first years of the difficult post-war period, a scholar and a reference point for the generations that longed for freedom during the years of dictatorship. Giordani was a co-founder of the Focolare Movement and for us, he has always represented, due to a special design of God, the dimension of humanity, with its history, its sufferings, its achievements, its quest for an authentic ideal.

He opened our heart to humanity, to its problems and aspirations: the rebuilding of Italy and the rest of Europe in the wake of World War II, the rising democracy, the East-West division. In turn, Giordani received from the spirit of the Movement a new impulse for his own political activity. We can see this in his talk on universal peace which was applauded by the entire Parliament; the first bill on conscientious objectors which he presented together with the Socialist, Calosso; the dialogue on peace and disarmament with the Communist, Laiolo. Quite soon, a small group of deputies began to gather around Giordani. They shared our Ideal and sought to live it in Parliament».

The «Saint Catherine Center» was started in 1959 for this group of senators, and for almost ten years it was the laboratory for deepening and developing a concept of politics in the light of the charism of unity. With some members of the Parliament Foco formed a «parliamentary cell» which met every week and for which Chiara, addressing Foco, wrote down some programmatic points.

1 Chiara Lubich, *The Movement of Unity for a politics of communion*, A talk given in Castel Gandolfo on June 9, 2000 on the occasion of the first international congress of the Movement of Unity, published in *Nuova Umanità*, 22 (2000/5), n.131, pp.603-616.

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Strasburgo, 31 maggio 1999.
L'intervento di Chiara
al Consiglio d'Europa

«The first and only aim in the meantime is: to let Jesus live in Parliament—you must become saints: each one is responsible for the other as for himself. [...] Aim at all the senators whom you must treat as Jesus without considering the differences in political parties. Among you there must be the pure Gospel. [...] The rule of your life is the Gospel which you will live in the light of love»².

An appeal for a Christian social conscience in the last Mariapolis in the Dolomites (1959)

On the 22nd of August, 1959, feast day of Mary the Queen, during the Mariapolis at Fiera di Primiero, Chiara pronounced to representatives of 27 nations a speech that will remain famous: «Mary, bond of unity among peoples».

«These are the times wherein each people has to cross its own boundaries and to look beyond; the moment has come in which the country of the other must be loved as one's own, in which our eyes must acquire a new purity. It is not enough to be detached from ourselves in order to be Christians. Today our times demand something more from the followers of Christ: a

2 C. Lubich [«How to have Jesus in the midst among the senators»], 1949, in Chiara Lubich Center, Archives of Chiara Lubich, Letters, writings of Chiara Lubich; Writings of the early times; Writings 1949 (never published before).



Foco con alcuni politici nelle prime Mariapoli

Christian social conscience, which edifies not only one's own land according to the law of Christ, but also helps in the edification of the others' land, with the universal gesture of the Church, with supernatural eyes given to us by God the Father, who from Heaven sees things in a way quite different from us. We must live the Mystical Body of Christ in the best way so as to be able to translate it into a social mystical body».

Birth of the Movement of Politics for Unity in 1996

After about ten years in which the principles expressed by Chiara in the Mariapolis of 1959 were incarnated by the people of the Movement, in 1996 the time was right for Chiara to give life to the «Movement of politics for unity» that was born in Naples. Chiara described the broad outline in a convention held in 2000³ in front of politicians, administrators, civil servants, intellectuals, and citizens from all over the world, belonging to the most diverse political orientations.

«The Movement of Politics for Unity brings a new political culture. But its vision of politics does not give rise to a new party. It changes the method of political activity: while remaining faithful to one's genuine political ideals, a politician of unity

3 *The Movement of Unity for a politics of communion*, Talk given at Castel Gandolfo, on June 9, 2000 on the occasion of the first international congress of the Movement of Unity, published in *Nuova Umanità*, 22 (2000/5), n.131, pp.603-616)

loves everyone, as we said, and therefore, searches for what unites in every circumstance. Today we would like to envision politics – as we mentioned earlier – perhaps as it has never been conceived of before: we would like to give life – I venture to say – to a politics of Jesus, embodying what He wants and can do through us wherever we are: in the national and regional parliaments, in the town councils, in the parties, in the different civic and political groups, in the governing coalition and in the opposition. Then unity, lived among us in this way, must be brought, like leaven, into political parties, among the parties, into the institutions, into every ambit of public life, into relationships among states».



Innsbruck, 9 novembre 2001. Al convegno «Mille città per l'Europa»

The slow and unstoppable march towards fraternity

Chiara received noteworthy recognitions in the cultural, political, academic and civil fields, speaking in prestigious institutional headquarters. These were occasions for her to proclaim the universal values of Christianity such as reciprocal love and fraternity in God and to communicate her passion for the realization of the prayer of Jesus: «that all may be one». Here are three examples⁴.

4 Il primo è tratto dal *Discorso Verso l'unità delle nazioni e l'unità dei popoli* – Palazzo delle Nazioni Unite, New York il 28 maggio 1997, cit. Il secondo è *La fraternità in politica*, Sede del Parlamento di Bratislava (Slovacchia), 10 maggio 2001. Il terzo è *l'intervento alla II Giornata dell'Interdipendenza*, Roma, 12 settembre 2004).

«Christ, God the Father's "Son" par excellence, and every person's Brother, left a norm for humanity to live: mutual love. He knew how necessary this was for there to be peace and unity in the world, for all the world to be one family: a universal human family which goes beyond the limited concept of an international society, because within this family the relationships among individuals, groups, and nations are designed to break down whatever divisions and barriers exist in any age».

«Now we discovered that the value which is common to everyone is precisely fraternity, synonymous to unity, that unity which is also the goal of our Movement. [...] Fraternity allows us to hold together and to value human experiences that would otherwise run the risk of developing into irreversible conflicts. [...] We must consolidate the awareness of the importance of international bodies and of all those processes which tend towards overcoming barriers and which take important steps towards the unity of the human family. Fraternity, moreover, allows for the creation of new principles in the daily political endeavours. It sees to it that one never governs against another or only as an expression of a sector of the country. There are those who have tasks in the government and those in the opposition: but only together can they guarantee the sovereignty of the citizens. Fraternity also permits us to live fully the relationship between those elected and the citizens of the territory: the privileged venue for a dialogue that gives rise to programmes of collaboration between civil and political society. And still more, it is fraternity that brings peace and serenity, and political parties would find it much easier to renew themselves and rediscover the greatness of their task, because no one among them is born by chance, but from a historical need, from a need that is shared



San Paolo, 30 aprile 1998. Chiara con Franco Montoro, già governatore dello Stato di San Paolo (Brasile)

in order to affirm a value; and they would be pushed to highlight their own original inspiration and their founding values».

«Throughout my life, I have been able to get to know numerous individuals, groups and peoples. I have always seen that the thrust towards unity is an unquenchable aspiration in the heart of each citizen, of all peoples, of every nation. I have learned to recognize the signs that mark a step forward for humanity, to the point of being able to affirm that its story is none other than the slow but steady journey towards universal brotherhood. But unity is a journey that needs to be nourished and sustained. [...] After thousands of years marked by the wounds of violence and hatred, we have every right to ask that humanity may now begin to experience the fruits of love, not only of love lived out among individuals, but also among peoples».

prepared by Anna Lisa Innocenti

**Per informazioni sugli eventi
nel mondo del marzo 2015:
www.politicsforunity.com e www.mppu.org
Leggi anche Mariapoli 12/2014 pag.7**

New York 28 maggio 1997. L'intervento di Chiara all'ONU



From all corners In the year of the «yes»

The retreats of the men and women focolarini: centered on union with God. Emmaus and Jesús focused on the important aspects for the life of the Opera today.

«In a recent interview, a journalist asked me: “But do you really believe that the idea of Chiara, the dream of Chiara, can be realized?”. I answered him: “And do you think that if I didn’t believe I would be here?”». What Emmaus shared in the first of the four annual retreats of the focolarini and focolarine held at Castel Gandolfo from December to January, could have happened to many of those who came from the different focolare centers all over the world. Yes, people who believe that the dream of Chiara, «to bring You the world in my arms», which she herself had shared on several occasions, can be realized and for this programme, for «Ut omnes», they had answered “yes” to the call of God to follow him in the way of the focolare.

Four retreats, of which three had the usual characteristic of internationality and one that was rather special: that of the 1,300 focolarine and focolarini of the big zone of Italy that is on its way to becoming the new single zone, and then also the numerous retreats that many zones were holding locally

during the same period.

There were some concrete novelties: the new Centre of the Opera, the new Centers of the focolarini (Casa Vita) and the focolarine (Centro Foco), with many occasions for getting to know each other and for communion, as brothers among brothers. Then there was the novelty that the Holy Spirit gave life to everyday in the heart of each one present. Emmaus Voce and Jesús Morán were present in all the four retreats and there was such a profound communion with them regarding the various aspects. Here are some excerpts of what they shared, in the difficult task of pointing out certain passages within their articulated talks rich in wisdom that make up a precious patrimony not only for the men and women focolarini but also for the whole Opera.

Going out

For example, regarding one of the three «key words» that emerged at the general Assembly, «going out», a focolari-



no asked: «What balance should there be between our commitment in the Opera and our turning towards the peripheries, which Pope Francis invites us to do?», Jesús answered: «Without a doubt I believe that there is something we should be aware of, because sometimes it is said: “When we go out it seems that we leave the Opera”. We should realize that the Opera is not only in the focolare, in the Mariapolis gatherings..., the Opera is in the world, like the Church is outside of the institutions of the Church as such. The Opera and “Ut omnes”, therefore the Opera is always outside, any way you look at it. Wherever we are, outside, pushed by the Ideal, by “Ut omnes”, we are building the Opera. Therefore the balance will always be new, always something to be achieved, but it will never be reached, I think. I don’t think that anyone can say: “This is the measure: 20 % going out, 50% going in...”. I don’t think so. [...] Chiara too did nothing else but open new horizons to us, always, she was always going out. And for this reason she built this Opera». Emmaus added: «I know that it is risky to go out, I know that it is risky to remain closed up. Between the two risks I prefer the one of going out. Nevertheless we must risk our life and it is better to risk it totally». She also invited everyone to avoid «breaking into two something that is one. It’s as if one says: this or that? And instead it is just one thing [...] because the Opera means to bring the

Kingdom of God into the world. Don’t create this problem, this break within you. We do this and that, but why? Because we are doing the same thing. And so what do we do? We love». «I think that for someone who has as his Ideal “Ut’omnes” – Jesús specified – the periphery does not exist, in the sense that everything is Opera, until we reach “Ut’omnes”; rather we must always go to the peripheries, the Opera is there, the Opera is there, because we have to arrive there. In this sense I think that it is fundamental not to fall into this dualism which in effect does not exist».

Union with God and trinitarian life

Another «key word» of the Assembly: «suitably prepared». The retreats themselves, centered on union with God, with specific moments suitable for favoring it, and focusing on the Eucharist, sought to highlight the importance of «preparing oneself». «Flávio Roverè and Agnes van Zeeland (responsible of the sections) underlined the aspect of relationship with God -Emmaus explained – “which means that even going towards humanity can lead to (spiritual) aridity if one does not continuously have that interior motivating force that will bring one back to the first love, to that relationship with Jesus from which one draws forth everything. And then we said: yes, but we are going towards Jesus Forsaken in humanity, therefore the rad-





Da sinistra Marco Tecilla e Fede Marchetti

impression that basically there was a sense of fear, which I understand, I understand! In front of something new, in front of something you can't see, which is in the fog, it is not easy not to be frightened. I would like you to feel that this idea of the new set-up comes from the Holy Spirit. You may even think that I am rather presumptuous to say such a thing, but I feel that it comes

icism, the freshness must help us to go and meet Jesus Forsaken. But one goes towards the spouse with joy. To meet the spouse one must go with joy, making it a celebration. "Let us go to meet him with joy"».

Another suggestion: «Maybe – Jesús said – this is a year to rediscover the mystery of trinitarian life, because maybe we take it too much for granted, we talk a lot about trinitarian relationships, of Jesus in the midst, but what is Jesus in the midst? What is really the trinitarian life? This is the most profound meaning of the consecration: this mystery of God who makes himself present in a profound communion in Jesus Forsaken, with Jesus in the midst, in Jesus Eucharist. Therefore it means that we can live this mystery, and that when we enter the focolare we feel that we are entering a place where God, the mystery of God, is made manifest».

New set-up

A reflection on the new set-up could not be lacking and the meeting with the Italian focolarini offered ample ideas. Emmaus gave them an invitation which could be useful for the rest of the world, there where they are living the same reality. «Don't be afraid of the new set-up! I have the

from the Holy Spirit and this is what I am telling you; that I feel it is an idea that comes from the Holy Spirit, which did not come from my mind, that the circumstances maybe helped in bringing it to life, to make it mature, but that it is something that pushes us towards a wider vision of "Ut'omnes". If we are going towards a wider vision, to be able to look at this wider vision we have to go up higher. And we have the possibility to put ourselves on the crest of the mountain by being with Jesus in the midst, because Jesus in the midst is the one who will make us see things with his eyes, with his vision, which is not the same as ours, which is always small. If we look at it in this way, instead of feeling ourselves oppressed by this thing, the result of which we do not know, we should feel ourselves freed. Why? Because we enter into this dimension of synergy which is certainly vaster, maybe with a bit more effort, a bit more work, but with more results. And so what more do we want? Evidently we would like to have results from what we do and we want the maximum results, because we want to come closer to "Ut omnes". We want to work in order to obtain the miracle: that Italy not be made up of many pieces, but that it is only one; that the world not be made up of many pieces but is only one, it is the family of the

children of God. Everything that we are doing in view of the new set-up we are doing only for this reason».

An operation of freedom

Emmaus suggested a methodology to live the times that are awaiting us: *«First of all to free ourselves! And in freeing ourselves from these fears, leave the others also free. I believe that it is above all a big task of liberation and this task of setting free can only be done by the Holy Spirit. I have affirmed on*



some occasions that the structure conditions us. Yes, certainly, the structure conditions us. Should we leave it behind in order to be free? Certainly. But this does not mean that the structure is useless; if it conditions us then it does not help us. The structure must be used to help us feel more free, not less free, we should feel supported by it. The structure must support this creative freedom which we speak of, this launching towards "Ut'omnes" that concerns everyone: focolarini, volunteers, gen, everyone».

And in the last retreat she confided: *«Without a doubt all of you*

know that my passion is the Opera. Well and good, in this moment I would like to forget it and I would like all of you to forget it too, Instead we should think that we are focolarini and focolarine, which means "bearers of the light". Therefore to go throughout the world and not to think: "Now how shall we build the Opera? What should we do for the Opera? What will happen in this nation, in that other nation? How will it turn out? What shall we do?". We should not do anything, nothing! I would like to exempt you from every kind of work! Too easy, eh! Too easy. And so I exempt you from working but not from loving!».

And once again Pope Francis has something to say with regards to the path that the Opera is taking today. *«Look at the past with gratitude», «live the present with passion», «embrace the future with hope»: these are the three objectives outlined in the Apostolic Letter written by him for the Year of Consecrated Life, which Emmaus and Jesús quoted and gave to all those present, who, in being totally given to God, can «give Him the joy of showing the world that we reply to His love by falling in love with Him, by being totally His», through the fascinating «work» of «making this great charism history».*

prepared by Aurora Nicosia



Let's walk together

Interview of Agnes van Zeeland and Flavio Roveré, central delegates of the women and men focolarini. The challenges, the commitment, the joy of following God and giving the world His presence among men

Having just arrived, within the months of December and January, you have met thousands of focolarine and focolarini in Castel Gandolfo. What did this «immersion» in an international dimension provoke in you?

Flavio: «A great joy because of the warm welcome on the part of the whole Opera. It seems as if I had just changed rooms while remaining in the same house. What surprised me is the number of the focolarine and focolarini we were able to meet in such a short time: almost 3,500. On one hand it was a sea of people, on the other hand, there was the clear sensation that each one brought within him or her a sacred story: men and women who had the courage to leave everything and to follow God in focolare. After two months from our arrival we are slowly beginning to get to know them and to enter into their stories, into their focolares with different cultural environments, and with the Opera that expresses itself in the various fields of the Church and of humanity. The international dimension underlines with even greater strength the image that I always have before me, that of the craziest “dream” of Chiara: to bring to God the world in her arms».

Agnes: «I remember that the first retreat was about to start, in the beginning of December. Before entering the Mariapolis Center I suddenly trembled at the thought of having to face this big hall full of focolarini and focolarine. Then I told myself: I'll pretend to be brave. The first impact I had with this marvelous hall was very great. I felt in the applause which welcomed us, all the love, encouragement, and support of all the focolarini and the focolarini of the world. I was assured that we would walk together, each one in his or her place, but with



reciprocal love. And if Jesus is in our midst we will have the light for everything. I felt a great gratitude to God for having given me this gift of being able to get to know personally so many focolarini and focolarine from all over the world. The relationship with each one has enriched me very, very much. And so the retreats were not so much an obligation, even if they were entrusted to us, but rather a source of very great joy».

Starting from your experience, what do you think are the more urgent challenges for the focolarini in the Opera today? In what way can they respond to them?

Agnes: «I think that the greatest challenge is that of always remaining in our genuine vocation: of being light for the world. It is easy to let ourselves be dragged along by the vortex of the things to be done, by the *stress* of the society in which we too live in. For this reason it seemed important to us to plan our retreats on the basis of this objective: to go back to our first Love. Only if we are rooted in God, if we are in love with Jesus Forsaken, if we live in the bosom of the Father, just as Klaus Hemmerle used to say in his experience that we listened to during the retreats, can we then be Light for the world.

This does not really require external activities but an interior activity that calls to the fore our entire commitment and at the same time it is a matter of “not existing”. If we are like this, we will be faithful to the charism of Chiara and we would also have the courage to lose our securities and to have the creativity to find new ways of spreading the Ideal to the people today».

Flavio: «We want to discover this together with the whole Opera. Certainly we have received many indications from the Assembly and from the work done during these years by the Commissions. In the “Final Guidelines” of the Assembly of the focolarini some areas to take particular care of emerged and we hope to be able to address them: the personal development and accompaniment of each focolarino, the identity of the focolare which must be a heart that beats for *Ut omnes*”, the delicacy and the *chances* offered to the vocation in the youth and also in the elderly, the vocation of the focolarino living in community and of the married focolarino as one unique vocation, etc. Our wish is to be able to incarnate this desire of the Assembly».

During the general Assembly and on different successive occasions Emmaus spoke of the need to restart the Rainbow Revolution. What does this mean in the life of the focolarini individually and of the focolare centers in their entirety?

Flavio: «When we speak of the focolare in the Final document, one notices the “importance of living in the community, bearing witness to radicalism, to the family life, aiming at a life of the colours that is not just limited to harmony

within the focolare, the Opera, but also as an inspiration for our concrete actions in the world”. Our life as focolarini and of every focolare, and in the same way for every member of the Opera, can become livable, attractive, and sanctifying only in the measure in which there is harmony among the seven aspects. Chiara launched this through the Rainbow Revolution and then she reiterated it many times, helping us, as she has said to us focolarini, to make the “seven-faceted diamond shine”. In these last few years, especially through the work done by Commission 1 to gather ideas and suggestions regarding the vocation of the focolarini and the focolarine, what was greatly underlined was the need to take greater care of the different aspects of our life and to assure a complete and integral formation; and we also felt the need to put into practice all that the reports have suggested. With the annual spiritual exercises we wanted to start once again from our union with God and the meaning of our being consecrated persons and certainly the life of the colours which is one of our typical ways of expressing love for God and neighbour. This pushes us to live always more not only the desire to organize our life better, but above all to be able to offer to the world a credible testimony that love can change society in all its expressions, from the base. And so we have a very beautiful road in front of us, but also a challenge to personally and collectively face, as Emmaus had emphasized to us several times.

Agnes: «Our programme for these six years was given to us by the Assembly of the section. With the team we will see together how to concretize the results of the Assembly,



Si presentano i nuovi Centri delle focolarine
- Centro Foco - e dei focolarini - Casa Vita

among which is also the need for the life of the colours. Unfortunately, up to this moment we have not yet had the time to talk about this together. Nevertheless I think that striving to live all the colours personally and as a focolare will make us normal, balanced, people who can be imitated».

On a personal level, how are you living this new service to which you have been called? And how do you envision living this with your centers?

Agnes: «I realize that I am living it with serenity. It is not as heavy as I thought it would be. I continue to live as a focolarina. I remember a small experience I had a few years ago which has helped me also later on. I don't know if it has something to do with my Northern origins, maybe yes, because it is regarding perfectionism. The construction of the new house of the zone center in the Little Town of Holland had just concluded and immediately after moving in I went to Iceland for the Mariapolis. In the meantime, others completed the move. When I came back after a week, I saw that the wall along the stairs had several holes. I felt so bad seeing this damage in our brand new house. Then a voice inside me said: "You are looking at it with the wrong eyes. You are looking at it with the eyes of a perfectionist, instead these are all signs of the love of those brothers who helped you to bring the cabinets up". This small fact has helped me many times also in my relationships. How many times would I see the non-perfection in my neighbour; instead if I look at it with the eyes of Jesus I would see only the good intention, the love of the other, that is always behind everything.

During these days I thought: in the end there is no difference between a focolarina who is working for example in the kitchen and who is trying to love the other by guessing what she would like or that would be good for her. Maybe she would ask for advice from

someone or for a recipe, or maybe they would cook together. Also in this task that God has entrusted to me, what matters is to love the focolarine and to understand together how and where each one can realize the design of God and be happy. As the Center we would like first of all to be a simple focolare with Jesus in the midst, to be a family among us and with everyone. He in our midst will then guide us also in the work that must be done».

Flavio: «These first months were very intense, but characterized by a great serenity, light, joy and gratitude. Gratitude towards those who came before us and who had loved and served the Section with great enthusiasm and love; and gratitude to the Assembly and to the Opera who have entrusted us with this task that is so delicate; serenity in knowing that we are not prepared and unsuitable, but that we are in the hands of God who will guide everything; gratitude for the light that comes to us from having strived to live and to do everything with Jesus in the midst among us, with Emmaus, Jesus and the Center, with the focolarine of Centro Foco, with the focolarini in the whole world...

We strongly believe that ours is a task of service and that we can do it only through listening very much, often asking for rather than offering advice, allowing ourselves to be enlightened in this journey together.

In the theme of the year, Emmaus referred to a passage of Chiara which described what the Opera was for her: "A matter between me and Jesus Eucharist". We in Casa Vita would also like the life of the Section to be a matter between us and Jesus Eucharist. In fact, every evening we meet in the chapel and in front of Jesus we always have a never-ending list of graces to ask Him, focolarini and focolarine to entrust to Him, things to ask for. And you know what we are experiencing in these days? He punctually answers us and often we find ourselves saying: "Thank you Jesus!"».

prepared by Aurora Nicosia

The Year of Consecrated Life

Gospel, prophecy, hope

The year of consecrated life proclaimed by Pope Francis from November 2014 to February 2016: a time of grace. Excerpts of the talk of Card. João Braz de Aviz, prefect of the Congregation for the Institutes of Consecrated Life and the Societies of Apostolic Life, during the retreats of the women and men focolarini



proclaim the Gospel». But the Pope also drew our attention to certain areas of weakness, that we too in the Congregation, have recognized: «The fragility of certain formative itineraries, the fatigue brought on by institutional and ministerial tasks to the detriment of spiritual life, the

The year of consecrated life would like to look at the past with a grateful memory for the wonders that were realized by God through the consecrated persons; and to look to the future with confidence because God, the Lord, is always faithful; and to live the present with passion, which means being determined to respond to the Lord's loving gaze for each consecrated person.

Pope Francis recognized that *«In a particular way we give thanks to God for these fifty years which followed the Second Vatican Council. The Council represented a "breath" of the Holy Spirit upon the whole Church. As a consequence, consecrated life undertook a fruitful journey of spiritual, charismatic and institutional renewal that the Council itself had asked for, arousing in the hearts of men and women new ways of responding to the invitation of Jesus to leave everything so as to dedicate one's life to following Him and to*

difficult integration of the cultural and generational diversities, a problematic balance in the exercise of authority and in the use of possessions».

To respond to this invitation of the Pope not *«to be afraid of leaving the old wine skins»* so as to make use of the new ones, the Plenary Assembly of the Congregation proposed the particular care of three areas of consecrated life:

The community. Every consecrated person and every community today are called to base their life in the mystery and in the mission of God Trinity, which means in love. The consecrated men and women, in concretely being this trinitarian reality, are then called to put themselves at the missionary exit, in conformity their own charism, towards scenarios and challenges that are always new, especially towards the peripheries that are in need of the light of the Gospel.

Formation (continuous and initial).

We recommend that formation be integral (human, intellectual, theological and spiritual). That it be, in particular, a formation nourished by a wise discernment of the vocation and attentive to the emotional-sexual area, with a formative method that is well integrated with spiritual and psycho-pedagogical elements. It is provided for in the «*Ratio Instituitonis*», which means in the programme of formation, the obligation of preparing the formators through courses that aim as much as possible at an integral preparation of those who will be accompanying. The formation is continuous. Every Institution should do this seriously and consistently.

Government and economy. To open up venues of participation. To organize the patrimony and the administration of possessions so that our poverty will be able to bear witness to a «*poor Church and a Church for the poor*».

From the Apostolic Letter *Testimonies of Joy* that Pope Francis has dedicated to the men and women religious for the beginning of the Year of Consecrated Life (Saturday, November 29, 2014), we would like to attentively reflect on the expectations expressed by him.

I. «*That the old saying will always be true: "Where there are religious, there is joy". We are called to know and show that God is able to fill our hearts to the brim with happiness; that we need not seek our happiness elsewhere*».

The ecumenism of consecrated life

In this letter I do not hesitate to address a word to the consecrated men and women and to the members of fraternities and communities who belong to Churches of traditions other than the Catholic tradition. Monasticism is part of the heritage of the undivided Church, and is still very much alive in both the Orthodox Churches and the Catholic Church. The monastic tradition, and other later experiences from the time when the Church in the West was still united, have inspired analogous initiatives in the Ecclesial Communities of the reformed tradition. These have continued to give birth to further expressions of fraternal community and service.

The Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and for Societies of Apostolic Life has planned a number of initiatives to facilitate encounters between members of different expressions of consecrated and fraternal life in the various Churches. I warmly encourage such meetings as a means of increasing mutual understanding, respect and reciprocal cooperation, so that

the ecumenism of the consecrated life can prove helpful for the greater journey towards the unity of all the Churches.

Nor can we forget that the phenomenon of monasticism and of other expressions of religious fraternity is present in all the great religions. There are instances, some long-standing, of inter-monastic dialogue involving the Catholic Church and some of the great religious traditions. I trust that the Year of Consecrated Life will be an opportunity to review the progress made, to make consecrated persons aware of this dialogue, and to consider what further steps can be taken towards greater mutual understanding and greater cooperation in the many common areas of service to human life.

Journeying together always brings enrichment, and can open new paths to relationships between peoples and cultures, which nowadays appear so difficult.

From the Apostolic Letter of the Holy Father Pope Francis To all consecrated people on the occasion of the Year of Consecrated Life, 21 November, 2014

2. «I am counting on you “to wake up the world”, since the distinctive sign of consecrated life is prophecy. As I told the Superiors General: “Radical evangelical living is not only for religious: it is demanded of everyone. But men and women religious follow the Lord in a special way, in a prophetic way.” This is the priority that is needed right now: “to be prophets who witness to how Jesus lived on this earth... a religious must never abandon prophecy”».

3. «Men and women religious, like all other consecrated persons, have been called, as I mentioned, “experts in communion”. So I am hoping that the “spirituality of communion”, so emphasized by Saint John Paul II, will become a reality and that you will be in the forefront in responding to “the great challenge facing us” in this new millennium: “to make the Church the home and the school of communion. ».

4. «I also expect from you what I have asked all the members of the Church: to come out of yourselves and go forth to the existential peripheries. “Go into the whole world”; these were the last words which Jesus spoke to his followers and which he continues to address to us (cf. Mk 16:15). A whole world awaits us».

5. «I expect that each form of consecrated life will question what it is that God and people today are asking of them. Only by such concern for the needs of the world, and by docility to the promptings of the Spirit, will this Year of Consecrated Life become an authentic *kairos*, a time rich in God’s grace, a time of transformation».

prepared by the editorial board

The priests' focolares today

So as to make a gift to the Church

Following the trail of the three major priorities of the Opera – Go out – together – suitably prepared – the annual meeting of diocesan priest and deacon focolarini was held from January 13 to 16 at Castel Gandolfo

Centered on two fundamental themes: Jesus Eucharist and the priest focolares in the Opera and in the Church today, around 500 participants mostly from Europe and some from the continents outside Europe, especially Africa came together for this meeting.

In correspondence with the priorities of the Opera and with the word «contemplate» proposed by Pope Francis to the general Assembly, every day had a particular tone: Focolares Church – Focolares-Opera – Marian Priests – the attraction of modern times.

The mornings had the characteristics of a retreat, meditation, contemplation of the design of God, sealed with moments of «face to face with Jesus in the Eucharist». Many spoke of their rediscovery of the «first love» and also of «rebirth».

In the afternoons, in search of incarnation, there was a forum on the local communities and on the synergies in action in the Opera. These were the occasions to share experiences and reflections also with the Orange of the Opera and with the central secretariat of the Parish and Diocesan Movements, as the «experts» who helped them to understand the great opportunity that the local communities bring, deepening the relation-



ship with the local Churches. What was highlighted was how to make the beauty of each person shine forth and the realities in the perspective of "going out". What emerged from the various forums was the conviction that: «If we will be able to truly be a community going out, then we will be able to give a greater visibility to the Charism. The people around us will not realize it if we remain in our nucleos, focolares, groups... they will not even perceive what the Movement can give to the Church. In going out and going towards Jesus Forsaken we will reveal the potential of the Charism to bring about renewal».



A salient moment was the presence of the new Center of the Opera, on the day of the promises of the priest focolarini, with the intervention of Emmaus and Jesús who made us understand the importance of for our branch to be «Opera» in this new stage that is "going out". Priests who are in effect brothers of the other members of the Opera and the priests' focolares wherein the life of Jesus in the midst palpitates because like Mary – Emmaus said referring to the words of the liturgy – they welcome Jesus with «ineffable love».

There were still other moments that helped us to focus on our vocation as «priests-popi». In particular was the experience of Bishop Klaus Hemmerle on being a «popo» which meant a life in God Trinity, introduced by Fr. Antonio Bacelar, the new person responsible of the branch, with his profound communion of soul; the presentation and the giving to everyone all the «Orientations» that emerged from the Assembly of the branch, a



fruit of a communitarian discernment, where the Holy Spirit indicated to us how to go ahead in a re-launching of the life of the priests' focolares; and aside from this, there were the profound reflections of Jesús Morán both in his homily during the Mass of the promises, where he underlined the matrimonial sense of our consecration to God for Unity, and during the conclusion of the meeting, where he spoke of the Marian priesthood which is like a «pearl» to be given to the Church: «But what is needed – he explained – is a two-fold operation so that the Church can discover this pearl». It is first and foremost an experiential operation: «therefore (priests') focolares for the people, open to the Opera, to the local communities, to the realities of the local Church, the social realities [...] focolares that are beacons of light». And a cultural operation,



with theological and anthropological studies, that express what a Marian priesthood is, «otherwise it is not possible for us to give this pearl to others».

A special gift in this regard was the intervention of Piero Coda who commented and went in-depth on that famous «Pagnetta» (Page) of Chiara

Lubich on the Eucharist. A moment that gave the meeting the tone of «Paradise» right from the start and at the same time it made us perceive how this light must be given to the Church with the wonder and enchantment with which Chiara exclaimed with all her soul: «Oh! Unity, unity!

What divine beauty! We do not have the words to express what it is! It is Jesus». And therefore to find once again, to rediscover, to re-invent the priests' focolare which means: to rediscover this unity. Which means this Jesus.

Fr. Eudo Rivera

Gens

«At the service of Jesus in humanity»

From December 27 to 30, 38 seminarians belonging to gens units attended their congress at the Center



To be «in the Father for all» this was the idea that guided us. We wanted to look at our life as seminarians and future priests in the light of the Eucharist.

«Gen's: means new generation at the service of Jesus in humanity». With these words Emmaus reminded us of the Marian profile of our priesthood and the foundation of our entire life: to be mothers, to be the presence of Mary so that all may feel themselves at home.

From the experience of Chiara of '49, with the «entrance into the bosom of the Father» presented to us by Renata Simon and Francisco Canzani (counsellors for the aspect of the Indigo), we drew from the source so as to become this «home» for everyone. The profound communion that was generated among us, welcomed the answers of Jesús Morán to our questions. Answers that opened us up to a profound understanding of how to live the

Eucharist «in our daily life», «the importance of being Eucharist for the others», «how the Eucharist is a support for the priestly vocation» and the «relationship of the Eucharist with the points of the spirituality». A meditation of Chiara on «The resurrection of Rome», presented by Friederike Koeller and Angel Bartol (central delegates) with their experiences that shed light on how «to be for everyone», helped us to start to be truly «at the service of humanity. But the biggest gift came at the conclusion of the congress with the funeral of Fr. Lino d'Armi: there we saw the life of a fulfilled priest who had lived the spirituality proposed by Chiara and he lived it all the way, up to the end.

One of the seminarians wrote: «These days were like a hand that opened the eyes of those who couldn't see».

Fr. Zbigniew Wołkowicz, Fr. Wilson Moreno, Fr. Krystian Winiarski and Bruno Florindo



Parish and Diocesan Movements

An outpost of the Opera

Meeting of the secretariats of the Parish and Diocesan Movements at Castelgandolfo

There was a great joy in meeting each other again after a year in which the meetings of the secretariats were held in the big zones. The fact of coming together at the conclusion of the meeting of the priest focolarini and simultaneously with the secretariats of New Families, allowed fruitful moments in common.

Aside from the presentation of Fr. Sandro Salvucci, the new priest in-charge of the Parish and Diocesan Movements at the Center, we began with a lively dialogue with the new persons responsible for the branch of the priests and of the gens, sharing with them the life and the challenges of our realities.

The meditations we listened to were special and brought us to a new radicalism in this year wherein we live together under the banner of the Yes! In the concluding message we sent to Emmaus and Jesus, we wrote: *«In the experience of Chiara which she shared way back in '76 about the "affair between You and me" we draw the strength to incarnate the design of God on the Parish and Diocesan Movements, believing that the key to our living the Ideal lies in the "abandonment" and in Mary Desolate, just as Foco had shared with us this morning».*

There was some family time with Friederike Köller and Angel Bartol (the new Central Delegates) who, after a moment of sharing, introduced two answers of Emmaus and Jesus regarding the synergies and priorities. From here



we found a new enthusiasm to live the synergies in the Opera, sowing generously and with the great desire to realize the guidelines of the Assembly.

The entire meeting, in fact, was focused on the document that was produced by the General Assembly: «Guidelines of action». Every morning or afternoon was dedicated to deepening one of the themes, by groups of zones, trying to find the ways and forms of incarnation according to one's own zone or community. Everyone participated actively in these meetings, bringing forth different initiatives, proposals, reflections.

During the working forum with those responsible for the other mass movements, the moment of sharing was an occasion to concretize unity and this encouraged everyone to build always more living communities.

Everyone left with the awareness, as someone said, that «through the Parish and *Diocesan Movements we are already constantly outside, like an outpost of the Opera in the world» and with the desire to spread the Ideal generously so that the Opera will flourish in all its beauty also in the local Church.

Fr. Sandro Salvucci, Sameiro Freitas, Marco Bartolomei



Secretariats of the New Families

Family atmosphere

140 persons responsible for the New Families met from January 15 to 18 at Castel Gandolfo

There were the new Central Delegates for the New Families, Adriana and Francesco Scariolo, who have arrived around a year ago from Switzerland. There was also the almost completely new team of the Secretariat made up of families who have already moved or are in the process of moving to the Center, or collaborators at a distance, but also the composition of the zones are new, following the concretization of the new set-up both in Europe and in Italy.

Everyone immediately breathed in a family atmosphere because the responsables of the zones, those who were just newly nominated and the others who have already been at the service of this mass movement for some time now, were visibly united in the intention to respond to the great challenges faced by the families in the Church and in society and to discover how to live always more and better with the whole Opera the “going out, together, and suitably prepared”, by making their own the final indications of the Assembly 2014.

The couples from Lebanon, Egypt, the Philippines, Colombia, Panama and Korea gave a precious contribution.

Reports and group work followed and these made all those present enthusiastic, without excluding those who remained at home. This is because 4 sessions were held in live streaming, making it possible to involve more people in



Da sinistra: Angel Bartol e Friederike Koeller, delegati centrali dell'Opera, con Francesco e Adriana Scariolo

discussing the principal topics, with the aim of freeing creativity in thinking of new strategies for an ever wider diffusion of the Ideal. A big gift was the unexpected visit of Friederike and Angel Saturday afternoon, who brought with them the greetings and the unity of Emmaus.

From the very beginning there was the underlying sense of gratitude towards Anna and Alberto Friso and to all the members of the outgoing Secretariat, who have dedicated many years to the birth and consolidation of the New Families Movement, following the trail of Chiara. This gratitude culminated Saturday evening with a moment of celebration dedicated to them. The *leit motif* of the celebration was none other than the *Hymn to Joy* of Beethoven interpreted by choirs in different languages who sang with good will and a lot of heart. This was then followed by never-ending personal greetings and embraces while we all enjoyed a giant cake.

Marina Vegliach



meeting of the gen3 Rainbow Units

A big laboratory

Ideas and projects to live in one's own territory with the soul of «world-men».

The title – «*We link* – bonds of unity» – was the guiding principle of the congress that gathered together the gen3 boys and girls of the Rainbow Units from Italy, Belgium, Austria, Hungary, Argentina, Brazil and Kenya. «This meeting was something new for me, it couldn't have been better», a gen3 boy said. Aside from the main theme, always beautiful and profound, we were able to touch on the various themes which opened my eyes and that of others too, I believe, moving something inside me, and pushing me to desire more and more a united and harmonious world».



I could have given more», a gen3 girl wrote. «In the future I will try to give more for my neighbour, to propose ideas for my community and not to waste my time in useless things. I want to do things that will remain fixed in my heart forever».

On the third day we went in depth into themes linked to politics and communication.

We link: one on one with God – One evening the Mariapolis Center was transformed: just like in a cathedral which safeguards Jesus, it was possible, in silence, to meet Him and to talk to Him, in the chapel, or by listening to his

Word, or by the sharing goods through the «*fagotto*» (bundle), or in the sacrament of reconciliation. «I hope that this experience will recharge me to the maximum, because I need your energy, Jesus», a gen girl wrote in a message that was left in the chapel. «In my daily life it is difficult to be able to live the Ideal fully because I am easily influenced by the others. Chiara united herself to You and together you were able to do something incredible. I cannot imagine my life without the gen. Thank You!».



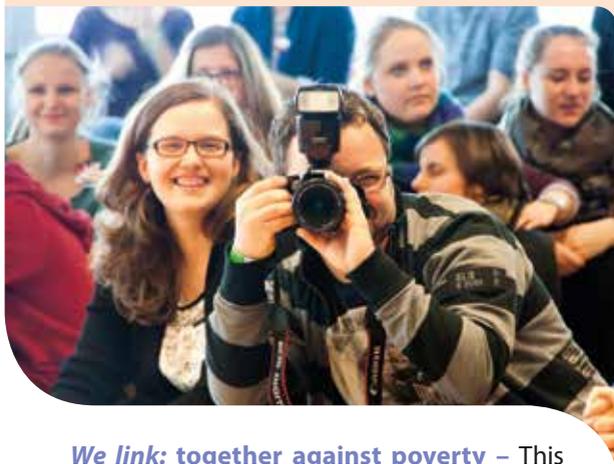
We link: how I would like my local community to be –There were various moments of group work. The first was on the local communities: sharing of experiences and difficulties, ideas on the contribution of teens. The second day dealt with the realization in the territory of pro-social projects according to six tracks: observe, think, involve, act, communicate, celebrate. «This year is nearly over and I think that



Europa Center

Unite the zones: the best idea that could ever happen to us

the gen2 boys and girls of the zone of GASW (Germany, Austria and Switzerland) held their first congress together



We link: together against poverty – This year Emmaus proposed to the Teens for Unity to go back and to walk again along the «red path» and to work towards fighting hunger in the world. During the Congress, together with Luigino Bruni – focolarino and university professor, responsible for the Central Commission of the Economy of Communion - in a lively and profound dialogue, they talked about giving and sharing, of a critical consumption and of reciprocity.



We link: discovering fraternity. This is the title of the next appointment of the Teens for Unity, on May 3, 2015: the fourth edition of the Run4unity, the worldwide relay race that involves within the span of one day, thousands of teens in all the time zones, who are committed to bear witness to their commitment for the peace and unity of the human family.

the Gen3 Centers

A New Year to be able to get to know one another better, to celebrate together and to leave more united so as to build the new zone of GASW (Germany, Austria and Switzerland). This experience was lived by 173 gen with 20 assistants gathered together from December 30 to January 3 in Baar (Switzerland).

«Since the start of the congress there have been many surprises», a gen girl said, «because, even if we speak the same language and we come from different cultures, we make similar experiences. To unify the various zones was the best idea that could happen to us». «I understood that this is my big family!», added a gen boy. «Whatever language we spoke, independent of whether we knew each other before, we became one extended family!».

The programme included experiences and dialogue, workshops and moments to deepen the vocation of a gen, games, and the New Year celebration. «There were moments of recreation and others that were very profound. And I liked this a lot» a gen boy observed. And another: «Here I was able to open myself up truly as I have never been able to do before even with my closest friends. I spoke of life and death with people that I have just met two days ago». «The assistants left us free to prepare everything and at the same time they helped and supported us» – a gen girl shared. It was very beautiful to experience their re-

lationship with us and for me that was not something obvious».

Because it was quite expensive to take the bus, the gen boys and girls from Germany decided to go by car. «We were impressed – they shared – by the generosity of the men and women volunteers who supported us not only financially, but also in trusted us with the use of their cars. In the end we had more than what we needed!».

One day the trip was to Zurich, to trace the steps of Chiara in Switzerland and in dialogue with the Reformed Church. «This day was particularly strong for me», commented a gen girl, «a day prepared very well with the contribution also of the members of the Focolare in that city. We studied in depth the significance of the Reform through the experiences of our men and women intern members who were present. We could feel a strong presence of God. Just by coincidence it was the day of peace. The experience we lived is not something insignificant or ordinary».



An ecumenical tone was present all throughout the meeting. «I am very grateful for the Mass and the Reformed Church celebration», a gen girl said. «They were precious moments and the atmosphere was very beautiful. I appreciated very much the presence of a student of the Reformed Church studying theology, who celebrated the Reformed worship and also participated in the Catholic celebration. I strongly felt the presence of God among us». A Lutheran gen boy: «It was the first time for me to experience the unity among the members of various Churches with so much harmony. I really felt comfortable».

the gen2 boys and girls of the zone of GASW



From the Philippines

Stronger than the typhoon

«I have no words to share your suffering». These are the words addressed by Pope Francis during his recent trip to the Philippines to all the faithful gathered for the Mass in Tacloban, one of the most devastated places struck by Typhoon Yolanda that caused more than 6,000 victims in 2013. The people of the Movement who were present share with us their encounter with the Pope

The coming of Pope Francis made us feel the maternal love of God through the Church. We felt understood and consoled, after having suffered so much in the past. We were surprised by his spontaneity in loving, by his decision, in spite of the typhoon, to celebrate the Mass out in the open with winds that blew strongly. We were touched by his homily, by his humility, when he said that he had no words to say in front of these sufferings and when he asked our forgiveness since he arrived a little bit late.

The community of the Focolare was fully involved in the preparations: «The local Church entrusted to us the preparation of the venue for the Mass: the vast open field that could contain 120 thousand people. In front of this very demanding task we asked the help of adherents, sympathizers, friends, relatives, also coming from the other provinces, and we organized a plan which we had been preparing for the past three months.

The day of Pope Francis' visit was a unique experience: to be there with all the people, working together for 24 hours under the rain, the strong wind and many other discomforts. What a joy it was for us to listen to the Pope speak of Jesus Forsaken and of Mary Desolate! It seemed as if he was reading a page of a meditation of Chiara. His words and the experience we lived will always remain in our hearts!

There were many fruits from this precious work done together: people returning to the Ideal after many years of being away, conversions to the faith for some, new people who worked with us and who now would like to

know something more. Fr. Manny Baybay, a priest of the Opera who was in-charge of welcoming the Pope when he came to have lunch with some of the survivors of the typhoon in the Archbishop's house, was able to greet him personally and to hand him our card signed by many of us and which expressed our joy and



gratitude for his coming and also our readiness to be at the service of the Church in helping those most in need.

The gen boys and girls wrote: «We worked in the sector of crowd control in a section of the field assigned to us. We tried to make love reign above everything else: giving preference to the elderly, to those who had come from faraway (walking for many kilometers) ... We were very moved by the words of the Holy Father. We greeted him up close and he smiled at us. What a great joy we felt in our hearts at this encounter with him!».

These days were like a sacred pilgrimage for us.

The community of Tacloban



Dialogue, the only road to follow

Terrorist attacks, tensions among faithful of other religions, but also actions for peace and fraternity: experiences from Pakistan, Nigeria and France.

An escalation of violence – this is what various regions of the world are living in these last few months, with terrorist actions conducted above all by fundamentalist groups. Last December 16 in the Pakistani city of Peshawar the Taliban of the Ttp (Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan) attacked a school attended by children of the military, causing 141 deaths among children and teens. In the beginning of January, Paris was the target of the attacks: from the break-in at the headquarters of the weekly satirical magazine *Charlie Hebdo*, to the murder of a policewoman, to the attack in a Jewish *kosher* supermarket. What followed were manifestations in favour of peace and dialogue, but also reactions to the publishing of offensive cartoons, leading to disorder in various countries, from Yemen to Niger. In the meantime in Nigeria the Islamic integralist militia Boko Haram carried out kidnappings of adolescents and *kamikaze* attacks, leading to the massacre in the municipality of Baga,

along the banks of the Chad lake, where sixteen villages were burned to the ground with at least 2,000 victims.

«One asks today, after the murderous attacks in Paris and the massacres in Nigeria and Pakistan – Emmaus reflected in a recent message – whether there is need for dialogue between people of different religions and cultures. “I beg to reverse the question: can we live without dialogue in a globalized world?”, in a planet where there is an increase in the number of people who choose to emigrate and entire populations are forced to flee because of persecution. Uprooted from their environment and their future, they are forced to live with others of different races, cultures, opinions and religions». «The most effective dialogue – she continued – is the one built on the sharing of everyday life, which is not generated through an immediate confrontation of ideas but through getting to know the other person – and not his religion – to be

able to discover the bond of brotherhood that binds all human beings. This is the starting point that may lead one to understand the other person's beliefs and respect them fully. Thus, dialogue becomes truly constructive and is not limited to a non-belligerent coexistence which hinders people from building their common future together».

«Many times I have noticed - concluded Emmaus - that dialogue leads to identifying common topics which require solutions to be found and shared initiatives to be started. [...]Therefore a Christian or a Muslim become better persons when they walk on the road of dialogue and discover that they can progress together, and that this progress leads to common initiatives, starting from peace, for the benefit of humanity».

From the gen2 of Paris (France):

«Precisely during the days of the attacks, we were meeting in our gen units, and we meditated on an answer Chiara gave regarding prayer. Chiara said that often we are not aware of the power of the One to whom we are speaking, and that with the power of unity we can ask Jesus to defeat even the most satanic evil in the world, certain that He can do it. In the light of the events of those days, this sentence had a particular effect on us.

How could we not think then of all the gen boys and girls who are living in zones of conflict! This realization made us renew the will and the commitment to live the will of God daily wherever we are, always being attentive to spreading Love. What touched us even more is the need to do all that we can for interreligious dialogue. The minute of silence requested by the Government the day after the

tragic events, at midday, made us immediately think of the *Time-out* and we understood better its importance and solemnity. It was a beautiful witness of hope to see so many people, not only the French, recollect themselves punctually to respect this minute of silence.

From these events we would like to safeguard the chain of fraternity which has been manifested by many French cities for several days now, a proof of the fact that a profound aspiration for a more united world is resounding in many. The word "unity" is coming from the mouths of many. It seems that we are suddenly discovering that we are all equal in the humbleness of our humanity. We thank you once again for your prayers. And we assure you of ours especially for those who are living in regions in crisis.

In this year of the "yes" we say ours to Jesus Forsaken, who pushes us to live concretely for "*Ut omnes*".

From Veronika, Pakistan

«Here in Pakistan, where religion represents the identity of a person, our daily relationships among Muslims and Christians are made up of cordiality and respect. Sometimes there is a certain distrust, often brought about by a scarce reciprocal knowledge of one another. The massacre in Peshawar, directed above all to the children



of a school run by the military, left everyone shocked, regardless of their religious affiliation. People prayed both in the mosques and in the churches. There were peaceful manifestations against violence everywhere. The country found itself more united and more mature through this suffering. The Muslim world appreciated the condolences expressed by the Pope. The Government, among other things, imposed security measures in all schools and recommended greater vigilance in all places of worship. What is now worrying are the repercussions that the events of Paris – generated by the lack of respect for other religions – are causing in the Islamic world. It has been generalized as a religious conflict when in effect it is not. The wave of violence in Paris is now reaching the weakest sector of the population, there where reactions can become uncontrollable. Love, sharing and dialogue are for us Christians the only “weapons” that we can use in this moment towards our brothers wounded by the hate of the terrorists and by the provocations born from a lack of respect for the person on the part of certain sectors of western society. To give our life for our people means to bear witness decisively to our faith. Just as hatred begets hatred, so too love should beget love: in a hospital in Islamabad, after the events of Peshawar, a group of Muslim colleagues of a volunteer who is a nurse and who is very much appreciated for her dedication, have expressed the desire to join her everyday at the sound of the *bip* of her cell phone, to unite themselves in the universal prayer for peace».

From George and Ruth, Nigeria

«After the first trip we made to meet the people who were displaced by internal warfare, we



realized what the true situation is: the misery, diseases, hunger, lack of clothing, lack of shelter, but especially the children with no hope for a future. And so we organized a second trip, inviting their friends, relatives, co-workers and even the parishes to join us. We truly experienced the generosity of our people. In Focolare God's bounty arrived in various forms: money, food, clothes, medicine. We even received a car with a driver who, being an expert, knew where to pass to avoid the dangerous areas. On December 6, three of us (a focolarina who is a nurse, a woman volunteer and the driver) left bearing many gifts «so as to bring the joy of Christmas to those people who more than anyone else resembled the Baby Jesus who did not even have a suitable place to be born. The situation was precarious: the medicines were not enough for their many needs: «I am a professional nurse – Imma shared – I treated hundreds and hundreds of sick people: malnutrition, anaemia, malaria and various illnesses. Then we helped the bishop to distribute food to more than 5000 refugees. It is a very painful situation, and everyday other refugees arrive. We would like to thank you for all the prayers that are a great support for us in this moment before and after the presidential and legislative elections».

a cura della redazione

NetOne is born in Korea

In Seoul the first meeting of people in the field of communication.
The push to renew the media so as to renew society

The first meeting of NetOne Korea was held in Seoul on November 12, 2014, entitled «Media Forum for Unity», with around 30 participants (professors, television directors, announcers, journalists, writers and some others interested in the field of media). In the programme they spoke of NetOne International and of the spirituality of unity in the light of the life of Iginò Giordani, presented by Colomba Kim, a Korean focolarina who is teaching in Loppiano.

The participants happily adhered to the invitation to bring a culture that is inspired by the charism of unity into their environments in Korea. A director (with no religious convictions) of the KBS (the major television station of Korea) said that he was happy to have found in the Focolare Movement someone with whom to work with to renew society and the world of media.

firmed a Catholic journalist. And a media announcer said: «The *media* can contribute towards bringing either good or evil. To have a better world someone must take the first step, even if they are small steps. I would like to do this with you».

Before the official birth of NetOne in Korea, a commission was formed: Clara Nam (married focolarina, a director), Immacolata Choi (Volunteer), Sole Yoon (member of New Humanity) and Rina Han (extern married focolarina). They tried above all to keep Jesus in the midst so that He would be the one to guide them in this new reality that was coming to life in the zone.

During the Mariapolis last July, with some of the participants who are experts in different categories of this field, we held a programme: «Media Forum – communications for unity». Around 100 people interested in this field were present and many expressed the need for the diffusion of the spirit of unity in the world of media in our country.

This new reality of the Opera in Korea is in line with the invitation of the Pope to respond to the signs of the times

and to go towards the peripheries in a country, like ours, that is still far from God.

We hope that with this humble beginning the seed of universal fraternity will spread in the field of *mass-media*, hastening the journey towards unity among the people of the country.

Clara Nam and the secretariat of NetOne in Korea



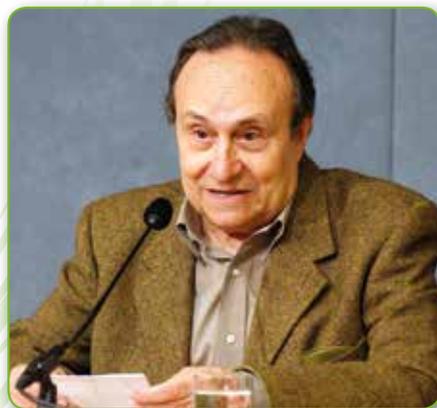
The birth of NetOne in Korea, in fact, was motivated and stimulated precisely by the present situation of the nation, which is visibly in need of the media to heal and unite the people.

«With the warmth of the love of the Focolare even the world of media will change, so let's begin with this faith», af-

Due to lack of space we will only publish the telegrams sent by Emmaus for the latest focolarini and focolarine who have arrived in the heavenly Mariapolis. In Mariapolis online you may find a more complete profile of some of them...

Giuseppe Maria Zanghì (Peppuccio)

A refined intellectual and passionate scholar of the charism of Chiara Lubich, he was among the first group of those who followed her in the way of the focolare



«After a very brief illness – Emmaus wrote on January 23 in her telegram to the entire Movement – Peppuccio unexpectedly joined Chiara. He, who often spoke to us of Paradise, can now enjoy it fully».

A personality and a life, that of Giuseppe Maria (Peppuccio), truly rich and multi-faceted. Gifted with a profound interiority and a lucid and marked capacity for studies and thought, he placed all his talents at the service of the charism of Chiara Lubich, highlighting its cultural, doctrinal and prophetic dimensions. It was not by chance that during the daily Mass that he used to celebrate for his focolare his first intention was always: «So that the Opera founded by her will become more and better aware of the importance of the charism and of the design of God on Chiara».

This year too – in spite of his being 85 years old – he spent almost two months in the Little Town of Montet (Switzerland) to transmit to the young people who were preparing to enter the focolare, the mystical experience of Chiara which she herself called Paradise '49, leaving in each one a trail of joy and of light. When he returned to

Rocca di Papa, he spent his days in an atmosphere of great simplicity, characterized by and increasing fraternal tenderness towards each one and all the members of his focolare. No one expected such a rapid decline in his health.

He was born in Syracuse, and then lived for several years in Lombardy. Upon his return to Sicily he graduated with a degree in Philosophy from the University of Catania. Here, under the influence of atheist thinkers and fascinated by the Oriental Religions, he left his faith. He was about to become engaged when a friend introduced him to Graziella De Luca, one of the first focolarine who was passing through Syracuse. Dazzled by the experience of the Gospel that she had shared to him, Peppuccio's life began to change.

He attended one of the first Mariapolises, but because of his adversarial nature he escaped the first chance that he could from Fiera di Primiero. But then he returned, convinced that it was worth it to commit himself to an Ideal as great as this, and so he asked Chiara to become a focolarino.

After some years lived in various focolare centers on the peninsula, he became one of the pioneers of the School of the focolarini in Grottaferrata (Rome). He then became a professor at the Istituto Mistici Corporis of Loppiano. In May '70 Chiara entrusted him with the responsibility for the Gen Movement, and forming entire generations of youth. «Those were years – the gen of that time told us – marked by unforgettable congresses



Con i gen nel 1976

wherein, under his wise guidance, the Formula gen was elaborated, the first attempt to express our physiognomy as the Gen Movement».

At 44 years old Peppuccio was ordained a priest.

In the following years he was put in charge of the Nuova Umanità a magazine on culture and he became one of the promoters of the UPM (Università popolare mariana) and was among the first professors that began the Abbà School with Chiara. Authentic witness of the luminous and innovative intuitions of Chiara, being a refined intellectual, he knew how to highlight this – enriched by philosophical and theological



Peppuccio con Chiara

At the same time, he was also responsible for the Center for interreligious dialogue of the Focolare Movement for several years.

Chiara gave him as his Word of Life: «Though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident», a phrase taken from Psalm 27, which Peppuccio had perfectly embodied in the spiritual and human aspects of his life. Bruna Tomasi, focolarina of the early times, responsible since the very beginning of the Movement for the aspect «Wisdom and studies», shared how one day Chiara told her: «Your task at this moment is above all to listen to Peppuccio». «And so I did it – Bruna affirmed – and I understood that Chiara was right. Now I am happy in thinking that he is now enjoying that Paradise which he had often spoken to us about, that trinitarian life that invites us to live and receive the hundredfold because of his effort in giving to all of us that which God had made him understand».

Stralci dal profilo letto al funerale.
In *Mariapoli online* il telegramma completo di Emmaus

categories that he had widely studied in depth – through publications and engaging conversations, thus becoming a faithful, relentless, passionate transmitter of the charism of unity.

Piero Coda, dean of the Sophia Institute said: «The pages written by Peppuccio are pages dictated by love and dripping with wisdom, impassioned outpouring coming from his obedience to a task, from an exercise of a vocation joyously welcomed overcoming countless obstacles, due to his closeness to Chiara intensely lived and brought to fruition up to the end».

Peppuccio was also entrusted with the responsibility for «Wisdom and studies», the cultural aspect of the Movement, a task which he carried out with enthusiasm and great competence, during which the ISC, a Summer School dedicated to the young intellectuals of the Movement, a foretaste of the Sophia University Institute, was established in Loppiano in 2008.



20 novembre 2014. A Montet, con Palmira Frizzera e i focolarini della scuola



Castel Gandolfo, aprile 2004.
Peppuccio Zanghi con Natalia Dallapiccola e il monaco buddhista Luce Ardente

Lucio Dal Soglio

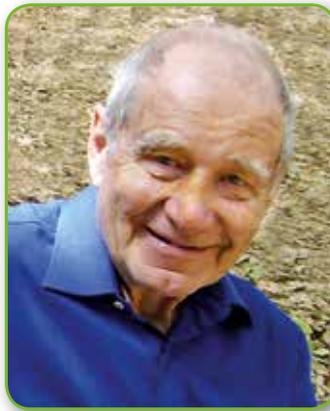
Like a baobab tree

On December 23, Lucio left us for Paradise. Born on February 22, 1927, he met the Ideal in Pisa in '52 from Alfredo Ziroldoli (Maras) while he was studying clinical surgery. His other two siblings, Publio and Flavia, also became focolarini.

After a few years in Italy (Rome, Pescara, Turin), a big turning point: Africa. The start of his African adventure began in Rome, in Libya street, where he was working with other focolarini in the «Lucas» Clinic. One fine day in autumn, Chiara and Fr. Foresi went there. They wanted to talk to him and to Nicasio Triolo. «According to you – Fr. Foresi asked – is it more important to run this clinic or to open up a new frontier?». Lucio did not hesitate in answering that he would choose the second option. «I wasn't expecting anything else – he commented – but then they asked us again: "Are you ready to leave for Africa?"». Those were the first days of October '62.

A few months later, on February 11, they landed in Cameroun together with Danilo Gioacchin, a veterinarian and from Venice like Lucio. Life there was a daily encounter with the reality around them, in an attitude of honest and calm respect for a culture that up to this moment was completely unknown to them and also for its people. Surprise, uncertainty, discoveries and acute perception of their limitations in front of the mystery, but above all an unconditional openness to the plans of God who would transform everything into a stupendous hymn of love that will run parallel to the foundation of the Movement and the spread of the Ideal of unity in the black continent.

Lucio lived this very special period in the strongest unity with Chiara who went to Camrroun three times, in '65 to Douala and then in '66 and in '69. Later Chiara would go to Kenya in '92 and for the last time in 2000 she went to Fontem. Lucio was very, very happy when he realized that «in a span of 35 years the dream of Chiara had become a reality, that God exists, that love is real and that mutual love is the secret of happiness, and this is because Mary has embraced us all into one family».



Lucio never liked talking about himself, he was never a show-off, he never made himself visible. This «hiding» was part of his supernatural personality. But for those who had the immense fortune of knowing him, Lucio was a Great man, a «big baobab tree» – just as some had described him in these days.

There have been many echoes that have arrived from all parts of Africa: «We will never be able to thank him enough for what he has done for the Opera here in Africa!!! I owe my vocation to the focolare to him». «His love for others was infinite, because – for him – every person was Christ, him who Lucio loved without guile...». «He helped me to get to know my own people, and to welcome the seeds of the Verb that are present in my culture, to make myself one with the environment, because he said that only love counts!». «We will remember him especially for his radicalness and sincerity and how he lived the Ideal life seriously, a giant of a brother, a true friend who has always accompanied us on this "holy journey"». «A few days ago I went to visit Lucio, and I strongly felt that I had to thank him for all the life that he had given for Africa. And I told him that we are the fruits of his gift. If we are here it is because he had said his "yes" to that will of God expressed by Chiara». «I can imagine an African Mary, with her arms wide open to welcome her favourite son together with Chiara, Marilen Holzhauser, Piero Pasolini and many other men and women who had lived, suffered, worked and loved without measure to bring the Ideal of unity to the African lands. This is not a moment of sadness, but of profound gratitude to God for the gift of having travelled with Lucio who was for us father, big brother and friend, in a part of our "holy journey"».

His Word of Life was: «And leaving the ninety-nine, he went in search of the lost sheep». (cf Mt 18,12). Let us pray for him and ask him to help the whole Opera to fulfill the design of God, so that all may be one.

Fr. Giuseppe (Giò) Aruanno

A champion of unity

Another pillar of the Opera spent his Christmases in Paradise: Fr. Giò (Giuseppe) who, together with Fr. Silvano Cola, composed the first nucleus of the Priests' Center of the Focolare Movement. He returned there in 2000, after 20 years at the Priests' School «Vinea mea» in Loppiano, where he formed hundreds of priests and seminarians to the life of unity.

The name Fr. Giò was given to him by Chiara when in 1967, together with some other diocesan priests, he consecrated himself as a focolarino: a foretaste of what would later become the reality of the «priest focolarini». In that year Chiara also gave him a Word of Life: «Son, here is your mother» (Jn 19,27), which summarizes the entire life of Fr. Giò, not only because of the deep relationship he had with Mary and with Chiara, but also because of his attention in living reciprocal love with everyone, so that the Opera «will become a divine irradiation everywhere, the Church will manifest herself as a united community and humanity will find itself reflected in her», as he used to say.

Fr. Giò was born on September 8, 1924, feast of the Nativity of Mary, in Ruvo of Puglia, the thirteenth child of a beautiful and united family, with whom he has maintained an intense relationship up to the end, doing all that he could so that his numerous relatives would get to know the Ideal of unity.

Ordained a priest in '47 at Molfetta, he soon took on important tasks in the Diocese. Sensitive to the signs of the times, among other things he gave life to a «Center of social studies» which had the aim of forming committed lay people to be suitably prepared to face the great challenges of the post-war period.

In '64, invited by Lucio Dal Soglio, Fr. Giò participated in the summer gathering of priests Ala Di Stura. He was struck by those young people who were living the Gospel with radicalness. In answer to this, he went to Giorgio (Fede) Marchetti and emptied his wallet. He had found his family, a branch of a living Church.



Two years later he participated in the newly started Priests' School. He was supposed to stay for six months but he never looked back. Without second thoughts he left all his possessions to the Opera and to the Diocese of Molfetta. Thanks to his generosity, the first men's and women's focolares were opened in Puglia.

He wrote to Chiara during that period: «I would like have the simplicity of children, so that God can be free and find the space necessary for His will to be realized in me in every moment. Isn't this the way Jesus and Mary lived?».

In '82 Chiara entrusted him with the running of the Priests School, which at that time was located in Frascati and which was eventually moved to Loppiano. Fr. Giò felt himself to «nothing», «inadequate», «the least» for a task that is so demanding. Mons. Michael Mulvey, now bishop of Texas and who as a priest worked with him for two years, thought otherwise, just as others did: «With Fr. Silvano and the first priest focolarinos – he affirmed – Fr. Giò had prepared the way for us diocesan priests to live a Marian priesthood by realizing in an exemplary way the total stripping of Jesus Forsaken».

During those years, the trials he had to face were not lacking, but he faced them without ever giving up. «Go ahead, Fr. Giò – Chiara wrote him in '99 – constantly recognizing and embracing Jesus Forsaken and aiming only with radicalness at Jesus in the midst, and life will burst forth more abundantly in you and around you, for the glory of God and for the joy of Mary. The Madonna is counting on you!».

As he grew older Fr. Giò discovered more and more the art of loving in the little things, thus contributing in creating a human-divine atmosphere around him.

In 2013 he wrote me: «I felt the presence of God who tells me: I will lead you to the desert. I understood that he is asking me to detach myself from everything, to lose everything and to always say my "yes" to Jesus Forsaken... so as to participate together with the whole Opera in its new set-up».

Feeling that his encounter with Jesus was approaching, one of his constant prayers was: «Take away everything from me, but leave me my lucidity so as to be able to love up to the last moment». And this is what happened. On the evening of December 31, vigil of the solemnity of the Mother of God, he was forever in Him.

Let us thank Him for this champion of unity, let us pray for him and entrust to him a new flowering of vocations which he had so much at heart.

Fr. Lino d'Armi

A life of service to the Opera

On December 28, feast of the Holy Family, Fr. Lino priest focolarino of Pescara left for Heaven. He was born in 1933 and since '68 had been at the service of the Opera. Precisely in that moment, the Mass was being celebrated at the Center of the Opera with all the genS gathered for their Congress.

A week before, he experienced a mild heart attack and a few hours later, due to serious cerebral hemorrhage, he fell into a coma. On that day Fr. Darryl D'Souza of the Priests' Center had just told him to remember the genS in his prayers and he had answered: «Of course!».

Fr. Lino came from a beautiful family with whom he has always maintained a lively relationship. The first person to speak to him about the Ideal was his bishop, Mons. Antonio Iannucci, who in the summer of '56 had the chance of meeting Chiara and getting to know the Opera at Fiera di Primiero Chiara. What then struck him was his encounter with Graziella De Luca, who was sent by his Bishop to see Fr. Lino in a small town where he was the parish priest. At first he was sceptical, he was not able to surrender in front of the facts of a life experience.

Successively he would later share, in that hour he saw his entire life change and become harmonious, finding an answer to all his questions and the expectations of the preceding years; that meeting was his «Tabor», a «coming Home», an immersion in the big family of origin, with the one Father. He would later confide that he had the im-

pression that Mary, whom he had clung to with all his strength during his years in the seminary, had come down to earth to meet him.

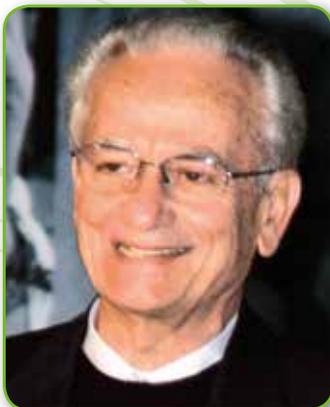
From that moment on Fr. Lino became a living member of the growing community of the Movement in Abruzzo and later he was one of the members of the first priest focolare there. After a period as assistant parish priest, parish priest and then secretary to the Bishop, from '64-'66 he was the spiritual director at the Major Seminary of Chieti. He was a little more than 30 years old. Around him, a group of seminarians was born,

attracted by the Ideal, and among them was Gianfranco De Luca, who today is the bishop of Termoli-Larino. It was a foretaste of the genS Movement that would be born two years later.

In '68, he obtained the permission to move to Fontem where they had begun to think about starting a parish. As soon as he arrived he was infected with sleeping sickness.

He was saved due to the skills and courage of the focolarini doctors. The experience of unity made in that period was exceptional, especially with the two persons responsible for the Little Town. He was a witness to one such episode: one day Lucio Dal Soglio, Marilen Holzhauser and Fr. Lino welcomed the bishop of Nigeria to the permanent Mariapolis. He admiringly observed the relationship among the three of them: priest and lay had different roles, but they were «one». Hundreds of baptisms bear witness to the fruits of Jesus in the midst during those years. He wrote to Chiara: «Those realities are becoming more and more united as in their convergence towards the Most High they become one: Jesus Forsaken, Mary Desolate, God, the life of unity with Him, the practices of piety and the relationship with the world around us. I feel an ever greater need to become transparent and empty so that the encounter with every neighbour will only be an expression of God».

In '74 Fr. Lino returned to Italy and since then he was at the Priests' Center. When the reality of the priest and deacon Volunteers was coming to life, Chiara entrusted to him this developing



branch, which he will serve for 33 years. His relationship with Chiara was always fundamental in his life. He wrote her in 2002: «I believe that I have been marked for life by your passion, which I now want to make my own, to live and work so that our family may always be more united».

Grateful to Fr. Lino, let us pray and rejoice with him who now has surely received the hundredfolds for the gift of his life.

Carlo Pentenè

«If I ask her, Mary will redo the job for me»

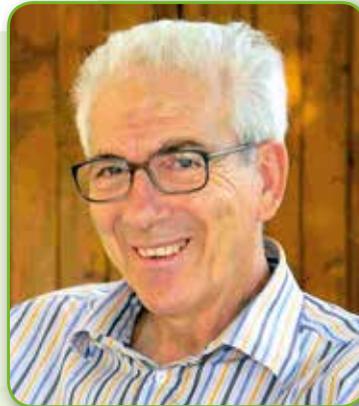
Carlo, of the focolare of Turin, unexpectedly reached the heavenly Mariapolis on January 14. A few days before he was at Castel Gandolfo for the annual retreat, bringing back with him a profound echo: «What remained in my heart is the great desire to do all I can to live the Ideal and to bring it to many, so that the gift from God will not belong only to me».

Carlo was born in Rome on March 26, 1939. He himself shared: «I have three younger brothers; my father died in an accident in '56 when our mother was only 39 years old; she knew how to raise us with courage and sacrifice, giving us the example to a Christian and generous life». In '61 he meets the spirituality of unity and after a few years he entered the focolare in Rome and then was transferred to Palermo where he stayed for 15 years, becoming the person responsible for the focolare. This was a time rich in fruits, wherein Carlo gave his love generously to many people who were attracted to the life of the focolare. In that context rich in challenges, what came to light was his great humanity and amidst the joys and difficulties that he met, his relationship with God and with Mary, who were always present in his life, deepened.

In '67 he wrote to Chiara: «The Madonna is nourishing me and is encouraging me to go ahead; in the midst of the mistakes that I commit I feel that She is pushing me always to go out of myself, not to think of myself, and to trust Her with my soul and above all that she “redo the job” if I

ask her to do so, just as you have taught me». And in '71: «God, after a certain period of aridity during which he worked a lot in my soul, urged me towards a more profound intimacy with Him; often I find myself full of joy, and this is for the benefit of the people close to me. The crosses have not decreased, but my trust in Him has increased».

A gen of that period remembered: «The first thing that came to light when I thought of Carlo was that which Chiara had said about the child of the Gospel, the “popo” in the Trentine dialect, as a new model of a follower of Christ. All the characteristics that Chiara listed were evident in his life: to believe in the love of God, to be a child in the arms of the Father, the innocence, the candor, the simplicity, his being similar not only to the father, but also to his Mother, Mary».



In '84 Carlo was entrusted with the focolare «Christopher» that housed the focolarini who were passing through Rome coming from all over the world. They were intense years, of welcoming people at all hours of the day. He wrote about this experience in '96: «I try to encourage every focolarino to go ahead, not to be afraid of difficulties in life, and to strongly believe in the mercy of God, who knows how to cover everything with Love. My joy also comes from being able to contribute in a substantial manner so that everyone who passes by will find a “home”: the focolare; which means people who love one another in His name».

In '99, as he was leaving for Bari, he wrote: «I leave truly happy and “fulfilled”, carrying in my heart the certainty of having contributed in building an important piece of the Opera. I have given much energy and I have made many acts of love, most of them in silence that only Jesus knows about. Now I go towards a new will of God in a spirit of love and service. Our fullness is in Jesus in the midst».

After Bari he returned to Rome once again and then to Turin, where he arrived in 2007.

Up to the end, even if his strength was diminishing, he continued to love everyone: from

his companions in the focolare, for whom he would always remember to buy what each one liked when he went shopping, to the poor person who knocked at the door; to the shop owners and the people who came to the focolare. When he learned that two focolarini were arriving, he suggested that he could transfer to a smaller room and that evening, before he unexpectedly left for Heaven, he greeted the focolarini and thanked them with all his heart for the care he received. In Carlo it seems as if the words of the Scriptures that Chiara had given to him as his programme of life were truly fulfilled: «The Lord will guide you always and will satisfy you even in the desert» (Is 58,11).

Maria do Carmo Gaspar

Un continuo «sì» allo Sposo

Maria do Carmo, focolarina brasiliana, il 22 dicembre è passata alla Vita del Cielo. Era nata nel 1942. Rimasta folgorata dall'Ideale negli anni 60, è stata la prima focolarina sposata del sud del Brasile.

Era la più grande di tre fratelli e a 15 anni le è morta la mamma. Poco dopo si è sposata con Rozário Gaspar. Hanno avuto cinque figli e presto attorno a loro si è formata una comunità molto viva e il Movimento si è diffuso in tutta la regione. Come strumenti della provvidenza, sono stati tra i primi a collaborare alla nascita della Mariapoli Ginetta.

Improvvisamente nel '73 un incidente cambia la loro vita: Rozário parte per il Paradiso a 45 anni e Maria do Carmo rimane vedova a 29, con cinque figli ancora piccoli. Scrive a Chiara: «Dal primo istante in cui ho capito che Rozário non sarebbe ritornato da quel lago e io sarei rimasta senza di lui, ho creduto all'Amore e ho scelto Gesù Abbandonato come unico Sposo. Ho capito che per mio marito questa chiamata inaspettata poteva essere solo amore di Dio, perché Lui è Padre.

Ho creduto all'Amore pure per me e per i miei figli, pur senza capire, nutrendomi della Parola di vita. Ora la nostra famiglia incomincia a vivere il suo destino eterno, perché in Rozário siamo già arrivati in Paradiso».

L'anno dopo Ginetta Calliari la invita ad abitare nella Cittadella e lei comunica a Chiara: «Da poco più di un mese vivo con i miei figli nella Mariapoli. Trasferirmi qui è stato rispondere alla chiamata dello Sposo a seguirLo dovunque. Prima Dio mi aveva chiesto il marito, adesso anche i campi. Ma la grazia non è mancata e io sentivo, nell'intimo, che era il centuplo che Lui cominciava a darmi. Metto nelle tue mani di madre il nuovo "sì", per contribuire alla fecondità dell'Opera in zona, nella Chiesa, nel mondo. Voglio essere più che mai tua figlia».

Col tempo Maria do Carmo è incaricata nazionale delle focolarine sposate, poi di Famiglie Nuove e dei Giovani per un Mondo Unito di



Zona: funzioni che ha svolto con amore, creatività e responsabilità. Collabora anche per anni alla redazione di *Cidade Nova*. E nel '91, quando Chiara lancia l'Economia di Comunione, credendo nella forza dell'unità e nella grandezza profetica di questo progetto, affronta la nuova sfida aprendo con un piccolo gruppo «La Tunica», prima

azienda del Polo Spartaco. Più tardi si dedica con instancabile dedizione al movimento politico per l'unità.

Nel febbraio 2009 accoglie con gioia l'invito a vivere in focolare. Mi scrive: «Sono arrivata a Brasilia, dove l'amore dello Sposo mi ha chiamata proprio nel mese in cui la Parola ci invita a posporre tutto a Dio. Ho lasciato i figli, la casa, la Mariapoli Ginetta, dove ho vissuto per 35 anni. Sperimento una vera gioia soprannaturale. Qui ho trovato Lui vivo in focolare, nella meravigliosa comunità e più che mai vivo in fondo al mio cuore con la Sua tenerezza».

Maria do Carmo è stata un dono speciale per i focolari e le comunità e per la sua maturità spiri-

Work in progress