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MARIAPOLI

Notiziario del movimento dei focolari

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Nei punti caldi

**Writing
together the
word peace**

Silvana Veronesi

The youngest
among the first
focolarine has left us

**Gen 2 Southern
Cone region**

A great mobilization
for unity

No to the defeat of peace



Castel Gandolfo, dicembre 2003

The numerous attacks in the past weeks, from Lebanon to France, from Egypt to Mali, have brought terrorism and its threats to the forefront, but also the clashes among the different cultures and religions and the possible solutions to the ongoing conflicts in various «hotspots» of the planet. On the occasion of Christmas 2003 Chiara Lubich proposed one of her editorials to the readers of Città Nuova offering them a broad reflection on terrorism and on the ways to achieve peace. We would like to propose some excerpts of this text that are of incredible actuality today.

It is Christmas once again. This celebration of life and of peace returns like a balm on our wounds, precisely in a moment in which the impetuous winds of war are blowing and the clouds of terrorism spread fear everywhere.

But from this Christmas onwards peace must return and triumph, because it is life, while war is death. [...]

So that humanity may continue to live, and to live better, we must put into action peace not just as an idea alongside the others, but as a fundamental idea in living together among all men, as the first law of the human family, without which it is no longer a family. [...]

Undoubtedly in these past years terrorism – an expression also of the «forces of evil» – has engaged in a march forward, becoming a danger for the security of the planet. «We must defend ourselves», is the demand almost everywhere in the West. Certainly every measure to prevent new massacres must be put into action, but without committing the error of perpetuating one's own «preventive» war, in a spiral vicious cycle that would put in doubt

the survival of humanity, which today is already being harshly tested by interrupted dialogues, by non-existent negotiations, unscalable walls.

Nevertheless, the principal objective is not military but political: to dry up the waters where the terrorists swim. This can be done with «pumping stations of peace» on various levels: giving new life to international organizations, working for a just distribution of the world's riches and promoting a new spiritual springtime. Above all we must give back a proper credibility to the international petitions, often reduced to impotence. [...]

In the second place it seems to be necessary to undertake a work of planetary justice. The heads of state must work for a true economic equality, which everyone of them, no one excluded, must affirm to follow in their respective electoral programs. [...] We can start slowly, so as not to jeopardize the international economic stability. But every effort must be made to eliminate the unbearable scandal of poverty in the world, simultaneously investing in the development of the local economies.

And also in education and culture, without which any progress cannot be sustained in the long run.

There is a third level, maybe an even more profound one, on which we must act. All of us, one day or another, have asked ourselves: where does the radicalness of the terrible choice of the *kamikaze* come from, wherein they are able to live for their ideals up to the point of killing themselves? We too must be able to give our life, certainly not to kill other people, but for the great ideal of the love of God for us and for our brothers. Unfortunately the Christian west, who venerates a God made man, who died on the cross out of love for man, has often forgotten Him. Well then, such a negation of God is considered as a threat in the Muslim world.

If the Countries who have Christian roots were united – because God is one and he wants unity – in view of the common good, if they manifest a unity of intent to resolve the problems of

humanity, maybe something would change also in the relationship with Islam.

Without the unity of Christians, Jesus Christ in a certain way is not born among us and for us, but continues to remain a «promise», that is faraway for many. We Christians are almost two billion: what kind of witness do we give to the world? [...]

The most visible aspect of unity is fraternity. This seems to me certainly the most suitable way to go against the current, to heal the wounds that are already festering and so as to reach more fully also freedom and equality. That fraternity which Jesus brought on earth by making himself our brother and making us all brothers. It is a valid way for whoever has the fate of humanity in their hands, but also for the mothers of families, for the volunteers who bring pieces of solidarity for the world, for those who put part of the profits of their own

Ciao Silvana

**Today, December 2,
just as we finished the layout
of our newsletter, we received
the telegram that Emmaus
sent to all the focolares
in the world**

«Dearest all, Silvana too has joined Chiara in Paradise this afternoon. Let us accompany her with the certainty that there will be a big celebration in heaven and that she will obtain a shower of graces for the Opera, especially for the focolarine and the focolarini and for the new generations. Slowly the constellation around Chiara is recomposed. Let us live together more profoundly this new grafting in Paradise. Unitissima Emmaus».

The words of Emmaus are echoed by the gratitude of the whole Opera for this



extraordinary figure of a focolarina of the early times - Silvana Veronesi - who since 1945, when she was only 16 years old, shared with Chiara the foundation and the development of the Opera. In '49 she moved to Florence to study medicine, giving rise to the community there. This is also what she did when, in '60 she went to the U.S.A., after having been in Turin, Milan, Rome.

From '61 she became the person responsible at the Center for the focolarine, a task which she would again take up from '90 to 2002. In '72 for around twenty years, Chiara entrusted to her the gen Movement, leaving an indelible mark in the hearts of an infinite legion of young people.

For a more complete profile please refer to www.focolare.org/notiziariomariapoli and to the next issue of Mariapoli.

businesses at the disposition so as to eliminate areas of poverty, for those who do not give up in the face of war... Fraternity «from above» and that «from below» can meet like this in peace.

The plan of God on humanity is precisely fraternity, that is possible even with persons of other faiths and other convictions, because fraternal love is in the DNA of every person created in the image and likeness of God. [...]

So then, this Christmas tells us: we must not give up! Unexpected moral changes and unsuspecting energies are often born from wars, even the most terrible ones. Maybe it is divine providence that sometimes makes use of situations of destruction caused by man's free will to build *ex novo* (from the beginning) that which is needed

in order to «breathe new life» into humanity. There are many signs, that from the serious international situation a new awareness of the need to work together for the common good, the rich and less rich peoples, those with sophisticated weaponry or those with less, believers or not, can finally emerge and with the courage to «invent peace».

The time of the «holy wars» is over. War is never holy, and has never been holy. God does not want it. Only peace is truly holy, because God himself is peace. Let us ask Him unceasingly to grant us the gift of His peace also in this celebration of life. Merry Christmas! Happy peace!

Chiara Lubich

from the *Editorial*, Città Nuova n.24/2003, pp. 8-9

A new responsibility for builders of peace

Message of Emmaus Maria Voce following the attacks that happened in Paris on November 13, 2015

«In front of the dramatic events that happened in Paris yesterday evening, which is added to those recent events in other parts of the world, we are in mourning, together with all those who have been affected emotionally and physically and all those who still believe in the unity of the human family.

In shock and in the firm condemnation of similar actions against human life, what strongly emerges is also a question: have we taken all the steps and every action possible to create those necessary conditions, among which is that of promoting greater equality, greater solidarity, more communion of goods, so that violence and terroristic actions lose their possibility to act?

In front of what appears to be a perverse plan, it is evident that there is no single answer. But it is also evident that not even the uncontrolled reaction to violence will push back those who want to eliminate the life force of peoples and their aspiration of living together in peace.

The conviction that the world can walk towards unity, and to overcome the conflicts and violence of weapons, remains alive in the soul and in the actions of all those who have in their heart the love for every person and the future of the human family and who would like to realize this through political means, through economic instruments, through the rule of law.

The Focolare Movement, even as it weeps with those who weep, continues to believe in the way of dialogue, of welcoming the other and the respect for him, whoever he or she may be, of any origin, religious belief or ethnic affiliation. For this reason, together with all those who in their various responsibilities are working also for peace even at the risk of their own personal safety, the Focolare Movements renews its commitment to intensify and multiply actions and gestures of reconciliation, venues of dialogue and communion, occasions of encounter and sharing on all levels and in all the latitudes, so as to gather up the cry of humanity and to transform it into a new hope».

Towards Christmas

To give and to welcome Jesus

From the annual activity that proposes to bring back the real Celebrant to the center of Christmas, to the different concrete initiatives in support of children in difficult situations: the life of the gen4 from all over the world



Lisbona (Portogallo)

«Entering a supermarket and being welcomed by such smiling children who offer you a figurine of the Baby Jesus is life-changing. We think we can find everything in a supermarket but I never thought of going back home bringing Jesus with me». This is what a gentleman from Florence (Italy) said after he met the gen 4 boys and girls who, in his city and in many others all over the world, are giving life to the activity «They have pushed aside Jesus», the yearly activity that hopes to bring Jesus, the Celebrant, back to the center of Christmas. «There are people who don't know Baby Jesus and that is why we bring him in the streets to make Him known» a gen4 girl explains.

The action «They have pushed aside Jesus» was born in 1997 and in many cities, its realization is spreading and growing: «This year - the



Vilnius (Lituania)

gen4 of Lithuania wrote - we were invited to participate in the international charity bazaar, organized by the embassy in Vilnius. We can present our activity and thus help children who are sick with cancer which is the aim of this year's bazaar». In some cities they are preparing also some Christmas songs or skits on the story of Jesus, which they themselves will present as they offer the figurines of Baby Jesus, like in India and in Camerun. Christmas is also the occasion to go and bring Jesus to those who are the most alone: among the elderly in a home for the aged the gen4 boys and girls of Guatemala celebrated the birth of Jesus.

The gift of Baby Jesus is an action which often provokes in whoever receives it, the desire to give in return. There are in fact many who spontaneously leave an offering to support this initiative. «We give the money to poor children – a gen4 explains – those



Firenze (Italia)

who are less fortunate than we are so that they can buy clothes, shoes, something to eat... and so that they can go to school». Every year specific activities or projects are identified to receive whatever money is earned. In 2014 the funds were sent to Central Africa, Sierra Leone and Syria, and also to pay for the costly medical treatment of a gen4 boy from Serbia afflicted with a rare disease. This year all



need. For example, there was a strong experience made in Jordan with Iraqi children who arrived seeking refuge with their families. Forced to leave ev-

everything and to live in a country with people of different habits, language and food, these children were helped by the love of the gen 4 boys and girls to go out of themselves, to integrate more, to express themselves and to feel that they are part of a community. This encouraged them to love in return.

From Teramo (Italy) they wrote instead: «We gen4 went to the Caritas emporium bringing food items and gifts for the immigrants and the poor. We involved also the gen3, our parents and many of the community. It was very beautiful! In the end we were able to fill up three trolleys of many delicious things! Before going home we wrote to Emmaus in answer to her letter where she gave us this wonderful idea. We did everything together with our community, and it was a precious occasion to engage ourselves in giving. In the end there was a great joy in the heart of each one!». The news of this activity spread through the website www.gen4.focolare.org, and it became the inspiration for other activities: «Yesterday - they wrote from Scicli (Italy) - we read the Word of life which explained that we are all brothers and sisters

and then we also read the experience of the gen4 of Teramo that was on the website. Knowing that in our city too there were migrant children who escaped from their country due to the war, an idea came to us to do something for



the funds collected will go to refugee children and for those who are suffering due to the war in the Middle East. But the gen4 in each place gather and accept the necessities of those most in need, even if some of them themselves are living in situations of war or of poverty. And so it may happen that from some African countries money is sent to Syria or from the Holy Land money is sent for Africa.

For this Christmas the motto of the activity is «Welcome Jesus», an invitation that the gen4 boys and girls live throughout this period of the year: they don't just offer the figurine of Jesus for Christmas, but they also give their concrete love and bring a living Jesus among them, above all to those most in



them. A gen4 boy who had some fritters for his snack, proposed to bring this to them as a gift, another thought of writing a letter. And so we went to visit the refugees. Even if they do not speak our language and their names are difficult to pronounce - they came from Gambia, from Guinea - they were happy and gave us a smile. The staff of the center thanked us afterwards».

Often the gen4 girls and boys are also invited to bear witness and to share about love and peace to their peers. In Bangalore in India, due to the wish of a parish priest who knows the Focolare Movement, it was proposed to have a day-meeting to present their life. They wrote: «We asked the help of a gen3 and a junior gen3, who were gen4 before. We prepared a two-hour program for 44 children from the ages of 4 to 11 years old. In the end we gave each one a “dice of love”, inviting them to throw it everyday and to live what it suggests. We will meet again to prepare together the figurine of Baby Jesus that we will distribute together during Christmas. The children were very happy and also some of their parents who were present, because, aside from the games, we also spoke about how to play and how to live the phrases of the “dice”». The parish priest was also happy and he wants to have a similar day-meeting for the teenagers.

A gen4 boy of Milan (Italy) shared that one evening his mother arrived home a bit tired and shouted at everyone. When she came to give him a goodnight kiss she asked for forgiveness. «Certainly Mama I forgive you – the gen4 boy said – God too created night and day, and so in the morning we are all new and we can start again».

Together with the gen3 another initiative was born with the gen4 boys and girls as the protagonists: in Rome

(Italy) where they spent an afternoon in a Jewish neighborhood. «Listen profoundly to everything that is shared told to you – Anna Coen Di Segni their guide and companion told them - then if there are still some things that are not clear, you can ask questions, but first listen!». A tour of dialogue that is thorough, attentive and respectful of the different identities. In the neighborhood and in the Jewish Museum many pages of history were opened, they saw the buildings and their layout, they got to know the jobs that were done within, the characteristics of the life of the Jews in Rome, the interiors of the houses, the objects of their rites of worship. A gen4 girl said: «Mary also lived in this way and when Jesus was born she taught him these things». And another said «We are very close, everything that is their history in fact is also ours». At the conclusion of the tour we reached the Synagogue. «It is like a big cathedral, it is not so different...» a gen4 girl said. And the guide: «Good, you said it well, in fact in the skyline of Rome you can easily distinguish the two nearby

domes: one is st. Peter's and the other is the Synagogue».

*Anna Lisa Innocenti
with the gen4 Centers*

(see also
<http://gen4.focolare.org>)



Roma. Con la comunità ebraica



Towards Munich 2016

In Holland the friends of «Together for Europe»

A working meeting in view of the big event of Munich 2016. A hundred participants from various Movements and Churches coming from 12 Countries. The news of the attacks in Paris made them relive strong moments in a renewed commitment for peace

Catarina is a gen2 from Portugal, studying Economics and Business. She is a member of the Regional Committee of «Together for Europe» (TfE) of the city of Porto. She is one among the one hundred people who arrived at the Little Town of Marienkroon, in Holland, for the annual meeting of the Movements and Communities friends of «Together for Europe». She too, like each of the participants brought along their experiences, expectations, questions... as the expression of the reality they represent on the local level.

It was a working meeting, that took place in the Little Town from November 12 to 14. The participants reviewed the preparations of the forthcoming big event promoted by the TfE which, after that of Brussels in 2012, will gather together in Munich, Germany thousands of people from all over Europe from June 30 to July 2, 2016.



It was the night before the attacks in Paris took place. In the interventions, the political, economic and social problems being experienced in Europe today were recognized; from the emergence of populist forces to the great tensions regarding the welcoming of refugees and the ongoing wars nearby. But the new forces were also recognized which are made manifest in the youth and also in civil society. One thing's for sure, the present times will certainly change the communities and the Countries of the «old continent». But in which direction?

The journey of the TfE was reviewed, characterized from the very beginning by unity in diversity and by the awareness of being part of a hopeful and confident minority. What has happened in the last fifteen years, through the meeting and the reconciliation among such diverse realities, says that this confidence and trust has



Cittadella Marienkroon. Lavori in corso all'incontro degli amici. Tra i simboli dell'evento (a sx) la porta che si apre

After the attacks of November 13

We learned with horror of the news of the dramatic attacks in Paris. [...] Europe is for us the continent wherein peoples of different cultures and religions, have come to live united in freedom and in peace. [...] These events encourage us to commit ourselves more intensely to the values of Europe. Our Christian faith also calls us and commits us to this. We are close to the families of the victims and we express our solidarity with the politicians who in these days must make difficult decisions. We live in Europe as friends and we experience in these hours a profound link with all the French people. We commit ourselves more than ever to pray for peace, to live it and to spread it there where we are. We want to live mutual love and trust much more than ever and to live it more profoundly, drawing strength from this. Through a human face and the faithfulness to its values, Europe will continue to hope and to share in a common future.

ecumenical network «Together for Europe»

had an effect. Communities and Movements savoured the occasions of meeting each other, the reciprocal trust changed the people. They spoke of the action of God, who never manifests Himself in power and who affirms: «Look, I make all things new» (Ap 21,5).

They worked, in groups and in plenary, for the preparation of the Munich event, which will be entitled «Encounter. Reconciliation. Future.» Munich would like to be a great sign of unity. In the era of fear, a witness of faith in the strength of the New Commandment. Among the symbols of the event, is a door that is open to a glimpse of the future. The three-day Munich event is to be subdivided in two big moments. On June 30 and July1, an international Congress at the Circus-Krone-Bau, organized into 19 Forums and 16 Round-tables with just as many topics; two days to exchange experiences and prospects, to tell one another how to face the underlying realities of each topic. On July 2, a Manifestation at the Karlsplatz (Stachus), open to the whole city, entitled «500 years of division are enough – unity is possible!» From January 2016 online registration for the event will be open.

The concluding morning at Marienkroon was lived in shock because of the attacks that happened during the night in Paris. Accurate news was scarce. There was fear for loved ones, for the security during their trips home ... A moment of silence was observed, followed by the prayer «Our Father» sung in Russian by our Orthodox friends. A solemn moment, hand in hand; concrete gestures, that reinforced their faith in the action of God expressed previously. It was decided to make a public declaration in this regard, which was spread through the means of communication (*see box*).

Catarina was the first to leave. She is not afraid. Smiling she greeted everyone: «See you in Munich».

Benjamim Ferreira

La Karlsplatz di Monaco di Baviera



With the charism of unity at the service of the Church

The power of «walking together»

From November 10 to 13, the Convention of the Church in Italy, which is held every ten years, took place in Florence. The theme was: «In Christ Jesus, the new humanism» 2,200 delegates from all over the Country studied in depth the five ways to put into action a concrete humanism: go out – announce – dwell – educate – transfigure. Among those present, around sixty people of the Movement who were like a «humble leaven in the dough»

A Convention that was built on a profound listening among everyone: laity, religious women and men, priests and bishops, and with attention given to concrete life, the use of simple language that is understandable to everyone, a total sharing among all the realities of the Italian Church. This event was in answer to the push given by Pope Francis in *Evangelii Gaudium* and in his meetings with the Italian Episcopal Conference.

In preparation for this Convention, there were many workshops and moments of communion which, together with concrete experiences, found their way to the website www.firenze2015.it. The Focolare Movement in Italy also presented in its website various experiences among which are those in the fields of education, relationships with Muslims and legality.

The intervention of the Pope in the opening of the Convention left its mark with his envisioning of a Church that is humble, disinterested and blessed (joyful), that does not fall into the

temptation of controlling everything, having faith in the structures, but also believing in the action of God and does not limit itself to knowing the situation and building up a clear reasoning, but rather one that goes out to meet the person in all his concreteness. The fact that Pope Francis, before coming to Florence went to visit Prato, a Tuscan city where many Chinese immigrants live and work, was significant.



Communion was created in the 200 workshops based on the five «ways», true moments of collective discernment that characterized the Convention, and gave hope for the future. Much life emerged which bore witness to a Church that is already going out and who is taking care of «the other». New eyes are needed to see what already exists and is being done, to strengthen it and to plan new methods. The desire for a more evangelical coherence, for





The sentiments of Jesus

What Pope Francis has entrusted

Humility, disinterest, beatitude: these are the three traits that I wished to present today for your meditation on Christian humanism which is born from the humanity of the Son of God. These traits also say something to the Church in Italy, which has reunited today to walk together in an example of synodality. These traits tell us that we must not be obsessed with «power», even when it takes on the face of a useful and functional power in the social image of the Church. If the Church does not assume the sentiments of Jesus, she gets disoriented, she loses her way. If she instead assumes them, she is able to live up to her mission. The sentiments of Jesus tell us that a Church that thinks of herself and of her own interests would be sad. The Beatitudes, after all, are the mirror in which we see ourselves... A Church that presents these three traits — humility, disinterest, beatitude — is a Church that is able to recognize the action of the Lord in the world, in culture, in the everyday life of the people.

Pope Francis

Speech at the Cathedral of Florence, 10 november 2015

pastors and the laity to walk together, to be more inclusive and to start this process is very strong. The result was a synodal paradigmatic experience that brought about in all the desire for a similar journey also in the local communities.

Presence and commitment: bringing the Opera up to date in the Italian Church

The following represented the Focolare Movement at the Convention: Jesús Morán, Rosalba Poli and Andrea Goller (central delegates for Italy), representatives of the New Families and of the Economy of Communion, and among those nominated by their diocese, sixty of them among whom were bishops, priests and lay people. Marialetizia Milanese Patron wrote: «... I saw this body belonging to the Work of Mary “put to good use” the charism they received. Each one of us was like a seed that died and lived its being in the various groups prepared and who could help the entire Church to live communion for a greater discernment. The working methodology in the groups, where each one of us was able to work concretely and to give our contribution was unique, and never experienced before. It is the Movement that together “goes out” to help the Church to “be communion”».

The day after the Convention many of the Movement were involved in the updates in the various dioceses or in the zonette (Naples, Sardinia, Tuscany, south Lazio, Molise, Basilicata, Sicily, Trivenetian). Now we are being asked to involve ourselves as Opera in a new way in the structures and in the life of the Church, aware that we have much to offer with our experiences and ability to build communion so as to bring ahead the synodal style and the collective discernment, so as to be a Church at the service of the person.

Claudio Guerrieri



Ecumenical meeting of Bishops in Constantinople

Culture of unity proven by facts



Crossroad and bridge between Europe and Asia, amidst lands of Christian culture and other of Islamic origins, Istanbul – the ancient Constantinople – breathes history at every corner. Today it is an commercial and communications hub where the push of modernity meets the secular tradition.

It is in this context that the 34^o Meeting of the Bishops of various Churches friends of the Focolare Movement was held last November 25 to 30, in a moment wherein the tensions in the Middle east are high, with new Christian martyrs and just as many victims among the moderate Muslim population. What brought the 35 Bishops from 19 nations and 16 Churches here was the anxiety for peace of Patriarch Bartholomew I.

There is still the atmosphere of those moments at the end of October in Loppiano, when the doctorate *h.c.* of Sophia in the «cultura dell'unità» was given, as Bartholomew I arrived on the 25th at the Island of Heybeliada (Halki) and ascended the steps of the Monastery of the Most Holy Trinity. To welcome him in the courtyard are Card. Francis Xavier Kriengsak Kovithavanij together with the Bishops and Emmaus and Jesús Moran, who arrived the evening before. The Meeting will take place for three days in this place where in 1844 the famous School of Theology of the Patriarchate was founded, which has formed hundreds of Bishops until it was closed in 1971 due to a new law of the State.

«I am happy to be together with you», Bartholomew I affirmed. Talking about the theme of the Meeting – *«Together for the common Home. Unity of the disciples of Christ in the diversity of gifts: at the service of the human family»* – he underlined its importance. *«The Church is the continuation of Pentecost here on earth, it is the image of the Trinity».* For this reason there cannot be unity without diversity or diversity without unity. Thus a question arises that demands an answer: What can be done in order to *«harmonize the diversity of the charisms in our Church today [...] and to be “models” for the unity of the world?».*

Another pillar of the opening of the Meeting was the theme of Emmaus on unity: *«Unity: gift – commitment – goal».* In the light of the charism of Chiara, she indicates the Trinity as the model and Jesus Forsaken as the key. She concluded with a phrase of Chiara the resounds in a special way: *«my being is humanity with all the people who were, who are and who will be».*

In the afternoon, the Bishops look at the life of the Churches in the Middle East. Enormous problems emerge that seems almost unresolvable. On the background of this «macro» situation, what comes to light is the involvement of the Focolare Movement in these lands as presented by the delegates of the Opera: many «micro» experiences of a true fraternity that is born from





the love for Jesus in his abandonment; facts of life that bring hope.

But how can we speak of unity without taking note that the Churches have rather different approaches to this theme? Often, Chiara has invited all concerned to face also these different visions with Jesus in the midst. Not so much as to enter into discussion about them, but rather in order to understand one another more profoundly and to offer, out of love, one's own point of view. In reality, the Patriarch has already outlined the Orthodox vision. Interventions and dialogue on unity followed from the Anglican, Lutheran and Roman Catholic perspective. Getting to know maybe for the first time the Church of the other brought about a

«greater» reciprocal love. Becoming aware too of the considerable differences was a gift and a challenge. The experiences presented by the persons of the Movement from different Churches on the «dialogue of life» was a light for many.

Unity as the *goal*, in today's world: was the motif of the third day, with Jesús Moran who presented the theme «With the charism of unity in front of the challenges of humanity today» with broad strokes and with a great appreciation of the theme on the part of the Bishops. Gerhard Pross illustrated the developments of the ecumenical network of «Together for Europe» and invited the Bishops to participate in the forthcoming event of 2016 in Munich (Germany).

Three days of «pilgrimage» followed. The first stopover was Chalcedony, the present-day Kadikoy, where in 451 the fourth ecumenical Council took place. «To reach the understanding that Jesus is true man and true God was a painful

The impressions of Emmaus Maria Voce and Jesús Morán

«In these moments of great social and cultural tension – Jesús said the day after the Meeting – an experience of unity such as the one made by the Bishops of 16 different Churches and 19 nations is of great importance. Their participation at the celebration of St. Andrew at the Fanar was a moment of extraordinary visibility. The Churches must make decisive steps towards full unity because the world needs it. Without a doubt, this meeting was a prophetic sign in view of the Pan-Orthodox Synod in 2016 and of the five hundred years anniversary of the Reformation in 2017. Aside from this, it was a precious to show solidarity with all the Churches and the Christians in the Middle east who are suffering all kinds of persecutions».

«One can say – commentato Emmaus – that the Bishops experienced all the dimensions of ecumenism: that of life, of theological dialogue and that of spiritual ecumenism. It was a very beautiful and important experience because they found themselves immersed in the atmosphere of Jesus in the midst that made them speak to each other



with complete openness, ready to listen to one another up to the end. They told us that they found themselves with this freedom and with the ability to love reciprocally thanks only to the charism of Chiara and the environment of the Movement. We saw Patriarch Bartholomew very attentive in letting the others know about this experience of the Bishops, explaining it in public, during the ceremonies, sharing what the Focolare Movement is. For the Opera everything is a reminder not to lose sight of this enormous possibility that we have to make the others experience unity as our typical characteristic. And to be aware of the importance of these places, symbols of the first Christianity, as the foundation for bringing unity back to its original design».

and exhausting journey, but today it is a decisive point of reference», commented Card. Kriengsak. «For us too the journey towards unity in diversity is at times arduous, but if we are faithful it could generate fruits for the centuries». It is with this soul that the Bishops sealed here the pact of reciprocal love. Being in the ancient church of St. Ireneus (now a museum), the «mother» church where the council Fathers defined the Nicene-Constantinople Creed, and in St. Sophia (also a museum now), church of the Orthodoxy, were moments, as a Bishop defined, that: «Call us to return to our one root».

In the following days the Bishops participate in the Vespers and the Divine Liturgy for the feast day of the patron of the ecumenical Patriarchate, the apostle Andrew. In the homily at the Vespers, Bartholomew I makes a parallel comparison of Andrew, the brother of Peter, the «first one called» by Jesus, and Chiara Lubich, the «first one called» to the charism of unity. «*We do not have the right to be discouraged – he affirmed – in front of the sounds of many horrors that are perpetuated throughout the world, instead we have the duty to announce to everyone that only dialogue, understanding, the positive attitude that comes from our faith in Christ can triumph*». And still more: «*The holy apostle Andrew had no doubts when he met the Teacher, and Chiara too did not have any doubts in entrusting herself to Him. We too must do the same*».

That same evening, Card. Kurt Koch, sent with a delegation by Pope Francis for the solemn celebration, spoke to the Bishops on «Pope Francis and the case of the unity of Christians». According to the Pope what comes first is not theological dialogue but fraternal encounter: «Unity will not come like a miracle at the end: it will come in the journey, it will be made by the Holy Spirit».

*prepared by Giancarlo Faletti
and Hubertus Blaumeiser*

Little Towns Loppiano today, beauties and challenges

**The General Council in the Mariapolis
Renata. Joxepi Zubillaga and Stefano
Fontolan, co-responsibles of the little town,
share the experience lived in those days**

«In its humbleness Loppiano is truly a scale model of a united world and as such has extraordinary beauties and also extraordinary challenges. But we show its beauties, because it is worth it!». These are the words of Emmaus at the conclusion of the week (23 – 27 ottobre) that she together with Jesús Moran and the entire General Council of the Opera, spent in the little town in order to get to know in depth its various components. Their stay also accompanied the visit of Patriarch Bartholomew I.

***Joxepi and Stefano, how did you live
these days with the whole citadel, together
with the General Council of the Opera?***

The visit was born from the desire, expressed by Emmaus and by the General Council of the Opera, to get to know the little town better from within in all its complex articulation, fruit of a design that developed in time, starting from the original intuition of Chiara.

That week was truly a moment of grace in order to bring back into focus the identity and the role of Loppiano in the Opera today.





How did you prepare for this appointment?

Wanting everything to be an expression of unity, we prepared by trying to involve everyone – from the members of the Schools to the permanent residents, from the last to arrive to the «pioneers» – asking them for their personal contribution in the form of observations, requests, questions. Then we sent the material that we gathered to Emmaus, Jesús and the whole General Council, as the basis for a common reflection from which, thanks to the presence of Jesus in the midst, gave rise to guidelines and indications. The programme was also prepared together, in moments of discussion on various levels.

After a morning of introduction centered mainly on the structural aspects of the City there were many important encounters that dotted the day of their visit: with the Council of the City, with a group of the permanent focolarini and focolarine and the ones responsible for the Schools, with the focolarini and focolarine present for the Schools of formation, with the entire City.

The visits to the Sophia University Institute, to the Lionello Industrial Park and the the Loppiano Prima Cooperative were important, just as the visits made by the General Council to the various work activities of the Schools.

Moments lived in an atmosphere of family and useful in order to penetrate into the fabric of the little town were the two evenings spent having dinner in the families, in the focolares, in the Schools. Everything was the raw material for an increased reciprocal awareness and of unity.

Did you immediately experience the first effects?

During the various moments of discussion and sharing, the profound listening and the words of Emmaus and Jesús made us progressively understand and make our own, in a new way, both in the present and strongly, the most profound reality of Loppiano: its being a permanent Mariapolis. An impulse that we have grasped as a unique chance to take care of every relationship, until everything becomes a fruit of reciprocal love that is always new and fresh. This will surely help us in this singular coincidence of the year dedicated to unity and with the jubilee of mercy.



The visit of Patriarch Bartholomew and the strong experience of unity has shed light on the many potentialities of the Little Town. What does it mean to have experienced this historic moment?

The fact that the General Council has entered into the multiple aspects of the little town has made its potentialities and treasures all the more evident to us, which the coming of Patriarch Bartholomew has amplified.

The previous issue of the Newsletter *Mariapoli* has already reported on this quite thoroughly! Without a doubt we can say that it was a historical moment, the culmination of a long journey that is rooted in the very same history of the Opera and which has had its origin in the prophetic encounters of Chiara with the Patriarch Athenagoras.

It is significant that the one who «provoked» this event was the last reality that was born in Loppiano, which is the Sophia University Institute, through the conferring of the very first Doctorate *honoris causa*. This event, of great ecumenical and cultural importance, found its natural habitat in the life of the little town, which gathered around the Patriarch to express gratitude and love, symbolically represented by the awarding of the honorary citizenship during the evening of celebration dedicated to him.

Extraordinary moments, sealed by the words of the Patriarch which he delivered at the Shrine of the Theotokos on the morning of his departure which made the unity among us palpable as a reality that has already been given to us.

It seems to us that everything that happened has allowed the vocation of Loppiano as the «city of Mary», to emerge not only in the Opera today, but also in the Church and in humanity, its being a privileged place of encounter and dialogue.

In these past few years Loppiano has changed:

its structures and its inhabitants.

What are the biggest challenges? What are the certainties for the future?

Yes, Loppiano has changed throughout the years and is up to now in continuous evolution. We have in fact passed from predominantly focolarini and focolarine present for their School

of formation to a more variegated composition. Now all the Schools for the members of the various vocations of the Opera are present here; there are more permanent residents; new realities have been added: the Lionello Industrial Park and the Sophia University Institute with its sizeable academic community. Loppiano is starting to look more like a city.

For this reason, one of the challenges that we face is that of growing as a community in the city of Mary, the Mariapolis. And this also affects the way we manage the little town, with the search for ways that will guarantee a greater participation, responsibility and involvement of all its inhabitants.

The birth of the new Zone of Italy opens up further prospects for an increased synergy that is still to be discovered and experienced.

Another topic is sustainability which commits us on the level of the need for human resources as well as economic support. We are working on this in close collaboration with the Center of the Opera.

The request of many people who want to know more about Loppiano, is it opening up the little town to new horizons?

We cannot ignore the demands of all the activities linked to irradiation and hospitality. In fact there are more and more requests on the part of outside visitors who would like to come for a few days in order to make this experience with us, and also requests from the various expressions of the Movement who would like to hold Congresses, Mariapolises, courses in Loppiano because they feel the grace that the little town brings within it.

What animates us always is the certainty that we are at the service of a Work of God, born from a charism. a certainty that is renewed every time someone after having been here in the Mariapolis, even for just a brief period, leaves with the experience of the united world in his heart.

Prepared by the editorial board

Cf Mariapoli n. 10-11/2015, pp.4-7.



Connected by webex Activities in the field

The gen2 boys and girls of the Southern Cone region make use of the potentiality of the Web in order to consolidate the relationships of unity within the new Zone

We are the gen2 boys and girls of the Southern Cone region, one of the six Zones, which under the new set-up, now forms part of the Big Zone of Latin America. Four Nations (Argentina, Chile, Paraguay, Uruguay) are linked to the Southern Cone, although similar in language and culture, are also quite different from each other. Also we the gen3 are learning how to get to know each other in this new configuration of the Zone. Every Friday we link up by *webex* with the different Zonette so as to put in

men. We share our time and energy with them. We get to know one another and we try to help them to go ahead in life.

In **Uruguay** the gen2 girls, who some time ago were quite few and who found it difficult to meet among them, have started to go to the focolare even with the other youth who would like to know more about the gen life. Together they went to the «Youth Fest» in Argentina where they were strongly touched by the Ideal of Chiara. Many of them have decided that during summer they would go back there for the gen2 school.

And now we would like to share with you the activities of the different **Zonette of Argentina:**

In Casilda, a small city near **Rosario** many young people, enthusiastic about the Ideal of unity, started to propose some continuous activities that they are now bringing ahead. They too look forward to the inevitable appointment which is the «Youth Fest» at the Mariapolis Lia.

In **Buenos Aires**, in the northeast area we have a *movieforum* once a month in collaboration with members of the fourth dialogue, trying to work on the web with the families and communities of the Opera. After having participated in many of the «Youth Fests», we thought,



Paraguay

our hearts the different activities and projects of everyone. The last link-up was with 14 places. Many initiatives emerged, different from the others but all with a common goal: «*Ut omnes*».

In **Paraguay** we joined other students of the University to stop the corruption within its walls, in a peaceful and effective revolution! In view of the fact that the «Youth Fest» that is held every year at the Mariapolis in Argentina, we organized a meeting with friends and youth interested in the Ideal.

In Santiago del **Chile**, among the other activities what is outstanding is the weekly visit to the homeless living in a reception center for



Cile



in collaboration with the southern area, to «bring» the «Youth Fest» here to Buenos Aires, to give many young people the chance to get to know the Ideal and thus to give many of them something to live for.

Bahía Blanca. Here the gen2 boys and girls work together with «Fazenda Esperanza» for the youth who are undergoing a period of social rehabilitation. Together with the gen3, then, they go to serve snacks to a kindergarten for poor children.

Córdoba. For a year now, in putting into practice the 'Encyclical *Laudato si'*, with other young people of the Youth Pastoral Care we are collaborating in some ecological activities, such as tree-planting or painting big murals to make the city square more beautiful. Often, other members of the Opera in our area also come to join us in these activities.

In Mendoza every week we bring food and clothing to the homeless, creating relationships of friendship with them. A parish priest put a picture of Chiara Luce in his church, asking us to make her life known to others. We did it through a video presentation, experiences and songs.

La Pampa. The gen2 girls and boys help the diocese in the pastoral care of children. This year they were able to create an *atelier* with games and books in the Emergency Room of the Children's Hospital.

In **Salta**, since last year (through the project Global Person) we work with a community of local indigenous people to renovate the city square and the library. We organized football games according to the «rules of the Ideal game». Together

with other youth Movements we received a recognition from the City Hall for our community work. Many youth from Salta have also participated in «Youth Fest» in the Mariapolis Lia, together with the youth of Córdoba.

Tucumán. We began to meet also with the gen3 to plan the activities in common. We also work with «Fundación Lucía», a reality that was born in our city under the care of the Movement. The Bishop asked us to help in the preparation of the Eucharistic Meeting of 2016.

Chaco. We are working to develop Youth for a United World. We have already divided the tasks among us: those who will take care of the monthly Word of life meetings, those who will



concentrate more for the participation in the «Youth Fest». The results? Upon returning from the Mariapolis Lia the youth wanted to organize a meeting in Resistencia to continue what they have experienced and to go in depth in the life of the Ideal of unity.

Paraná. For the gen2 house «Eletto» - which was presented in the last Collegamento CH - some financial help has arrived. A gift of Providence, that will allow the gen2 boys to go and live in the city center. The gen2 boys and girls continuously share the Ideal of unity to other young people also through the Word of life. In a parish of Santa Fe, a nearby city, they began in this way, and now, slowly, many other young people have joined them.

Magda Martinez and Esteban Mendez Lesser with the gen2 boys and girls of the Southern Cone region

Parochial Movement and Diocesan Movement

The creative ability

The commitment to «go out», to be at the concrete service of society and to continue in synergy with the other realities of the Opera are among some of the points which emerged from the recent meeting of the Secretariats of Europe that was held in Castel Gandolfo

Secularism and laicism which cover the western world would like to confine the parish only to the sphere of a private religion, as if it were not the «home» of Christians, open to the world at a 360 degree turn.

Pope Francis instead continues to push the parishes to open up on all fronts to the different aspects of human life. It is the *Evangelii Gaudium* which affirms that the parish «has a great plasticity», and what is important is that «it remains in contact with the families and with the life of the people» (EV 28).

When the Pope speaks of the Church as a «*field hospital*» he is certainly thinking primarily of the parishes and the dioceses who put themselves at the service of humanity. And this is what the Opera itself invites us to do with insistence, along the line of the Pope and along the path of the new set-up that is being consolidated all over the world.

These and other considerations were the objects of the meeting of the Secretariats of the Parochial Movement (PM) and of the Diocesan

Movement (DM) of Europe that was held on November 6 to 8 at Castel Gandolfo. Considerations that resounded in everyone as a profound echo and a new push for a launching «outward».

The need to assume the dimension of Christianity in its integral form was greatly felt, going beyond prejudices. We saw that this is a necessity that is becoming a reality.

In fact, it was noted that in the «life» that was shared to us, there was a much involvement in the actions of hospitality given to refugees and a capillary work done with all the components of society: adults, teenagers, children and youth. Particular attention given to the world of the families, through the welcoming of engaged couples, young families and those who

Now too... like yesterday at the source of the Charism

Last August 3 to 8, a school for young people committed in the Parochial Movement and in the Diocesan Movement from various Zones of the world was held. The formula which has already been happily tried and tested in Benevento in 2014 was enriched by the presence of numerous genS, priests and adult animators.

It was a an occasion to look both within and without so as to be able to conserve entirely the identity of the Charism

(segue a pagina 20)





inspired by Chiara and by the Gospel lived, but also to immediately let it flow down into our present day. The challenge is great because this radicalness demands the profound understanding of the mechanisms of society so as to be able to choose to not allow oneself to be subject to all its socio-cultural contradictions.

The themes presented were derived from this: relationship with others, reciprocal love and interreligious and intercultural dialogue, which were placed in the context of present day events through meeting-debates supported by the invaluable participation of Roberto Catalano, Paolo Loriga from the Center of the Opera and of Marta Caradonna and Francesco Marini of the UWA (United World Action). In a way that was totally centered on the predominance of the individual, lived as a single person, in the ambit of communication– we have in mind the alienating influence of the *social networks* and the means of mass communication – we hope to rediscover another dimension of individuality, lived in reciprocity.

What emerged is the importance of investing in the formation of Christian men and women, seminarians and committed persons who are profoundly called to social commitment and to the active participation in initiatives primarily targetting the existential and human peripheries.

are separated was notable. The importance of educating, forming the person to life in society, to ethics and to values was also strongly felt.

On the other hand synergies in action, work done together with the other realities of the Opera was quite visible: the

school of Cadine last August (see box) of those committed youth and the gen5; the school for formators that is scheduled for February 2016 which is being prepared together with the Centers of the gen3 and gen4; the forthcoming school post-WYD in Slovakia organized by the different youth realities of the Opera. And at the Center just as in the Zones a more profound unity is being built among the priestly branches and the secretariats of the Parochial Movement and of the Diocesan Movement that is bringing a lot of fruits of new life in the parishes and beyond.



All in all, it was a meeting filled with hope, along the lines of what the Church hopes for, an «integral humanism» for our times.

*Fr. Sandro Salvucci, Sameiro Freitas,
Marco Bartolomei*



UPM is 35 years old

The new academic year 2015-16 dedicated to the theme of unity has started

«Why do we want to study? Why don't we want to stop studying?» this is what Chiara was asking herself when she met with a group of young girls who wanted to give their lives to God in the focolare way back in 1960. The answer burned in her heart: «Because we love God and when someone loves a person and is in love with him, she would like to know everything about that person. We want to know all that we can about God so as to fall more in love with Him»¹.

This is the reason that pushed Chiara - on October 15, 1980 - to a simple, brilliant initiative: the founding of UPM, a «distance-learning» University for the permanent formation of the members of the Focolare Movement. A Popular university, to be attended independently of the studies one has undertaken or is still undertaking, but just as in depth and rigorous. And finally, it is a Marian university because, just as Mary became learned by being near Jesus, it is the same for the students and teachers of UPM, who in learning and in teaching, through mutual love strive to keep alive the presence of Jesus among them (cf Mt 18,20) so that it will be Him to form the thoughts of each one through His wisdom.

Every year there are around 10,000 registered for UPM, coordinated by the zonal secretariats spread in the various parts of the world. The lessons are held in the international headquarters of the Movement, followed in direct streaming (live.focolare.org/upm) by the students in the different points of the planet who understand Italian. The corresponding texts are translated in six languages (french, english, spanish, portuguese, german and polish) and are uploaded to the website www.universitapopolasemariana.org. The academic year ends with a dialogue between the student and professor, in the light of the spirituality of communion.

Chiara in 2008, as her last public act before leaving this world, also founded a residential University Institute [Sophia, in Loppiano (Florence)]. But UPM continues its journey and year by year proposes new projects on the

multiple cultural perspectives linked to the charism. This is what took place also this year with the course: Called to Unity, inaugurated last November 7 in Rocca di Papa by Renata Simon and Francisco Canzani, counselors at the Centre of the Opera for the aspect of the Indigo (Wisdom and studies).

A need which emerged from many areas - the two counselors explained - is that the lessons of UPM should be pertinent to the urgent demands of humanity that surrounds us. And some of these were listed: the



1 CHIARA LUBICH *Unity*, edited by Donato Falmi / Florence Gillet, Città Nuova, 2015, pag. 121

Calendar 2015-16

live.focolare.org/upm

7 NOVEMBER

Restore the broken unity.
Reading paths in the Old Testament
(GIOVANNA MARIA PORRINO)

21 NOVEMBER

Man-woman relationship: an
anthropological reading (ROBERTO ALMADA)
Unity: fulfillment of the History
of Salvation (MARIA MAGNOLFI)

23 JANUARY

The unity of God and the «trinitarian»
unity lived in human relationships: biblico-
theological and practical ideas (DECLAN
O'BYRNE – ENRIQUE CAMBÓN)

13 FEBRUARY

Towards full communion: in spite of the
challenges the Churches are moving
forward (JOAN PAVI BACK)

precarious state of the environment, globalization that flattens cultures and values of individual peoples, the gap between the rich and poor areas of the world, the unresolved relationship of men and women, the theory of gender and so on. If we stop to reflect for a moment - Francisco and Renata affirm - we can see these questions are a consequence of the lack of unity, of a failed unity. For this reason, in harmony with the point of the spirituality that will be deepened by the whole Opera this year, UPM will also take up the theme of Unity as the object of its study, precisely so as to be able to give a collective answer to such burning questions.

Anna Friso



Interamerican School at the Mariapolis Ginetta EoC an alternative to the crisis

«The crisis that we are living is, after all, telling us that a deconstruction of society is taking place. There will still be much suffering, but then something new will be born. Herein lies the importance of the EoC as an alternative, a point of reference for the reconstruction of society!».

This is, in extreme synthesis, the luminous vision of the entrepreneur Rudi Leibniz, one of the pioneers, interviewed after having experienced with the youth in the Mariapolis Ginetta (Brazil) an intense week at the interamerican school of the EoC (October 26-30) and the Forum of the entrepreneurs. (October 31 – November 1).

For Rudi the crisis, also and especially here in Brazil, has its roots in a profound moral crisis that is reflected in politics and economy, fuelling many deficiencies: not only on the financial level, but also at the level of health, education, relationships, on the spiritual level, producing an ever growing imbalance between the rich and poor. «The EoC must therefore meet these deficiencies!», he also added: «I can see in the efforts of the entrepreneurs – many experiences were presented during the



Forum – the answer to the novelty that must emerge after the crisis».

This is a new understanding that is making a headway, illuminated by the profound experience of communion lived. The culminating moment was Friday October 30 after having listened to the historical words of Chiara of May 28, '91, which gave rise to the birth of the EoC. There was a special echo, because they resounded in the very *auditorium* where they were originally pronounced. «I have seen this video many times» – Armando Tortelli said in an interview, he too was among the first entrepreneurs of the EoC – but on that day I had the strong impression that I have just understood a small part and that within that video are hidden infinite “novelties” that only the life and the unity among us will be able to understand and to put into practice».

«During the school we were able to grasp what attracts the young people to the EoC, how strong the certainty is in them that a life based on the charism is possible, that it could be the answer to the thirst for fraternity and social justice. I did not hesitate to ask how many were interested in embarking on an adventure to answer to the proposal of Chiara. 30 of them raised their hand. Among them were those who had already started new enterprises. And it was immediate, after quickly consulting the other entrepreneurs beside me, we launched what we later called the “Operation one by one”. I strongly felt that I had to declare our willingness to follow these youth in the process of their professional activities». In fact, at the moment of the handing out of



certificates, every youth was flanked by an entrepreneur.

«It was a strong moment – Anouk Grevin, of the central Commission of the EoC said –. A wave of emotion swept the hall. One could touch the apex of communion in which God Himself is present. I remembered the image of the trophy that Chiara showed the young people when the gen were born: an adult who had already circled the globe with the flag of “*Ut Omnes*” and flanked by a young person, ready to run together towards the same goal».

«It is the birth of a new experience, a sign of great vitality», Vittorio Pelligra, one of the professors of this school said. He cited a phrase in which Chiara foresaw that «at a certain point, an experience of God will allow us to bring back the Life, to life». «It is a new step that has its roots in 25 years of faithfulness of many entrepreneurs», Armando continued. «In that moment I saw the repayment for all the difficulties that we lived through. What came to light was only hope, only the life».

«There was an expectation regarding this school – Anouk confided: that it may be a laboratory capable of producing something “new” for the EoC not only for the continent. but for the world. What happened here is way beyond all our expectations and it makes us believe that the EoC has a great future».

Carla Cotigoli

Environment and «rights»

Between responsibility and participation



They were three days (November 13-14-15) of fruitful discussion among jurists, professors, law enforcers, students. There were many professors and researchers who actively contributed or who were simple listeners. A gathering to reflect and to debate on the relationship between the environment, the person and legal rights and to open, starting from legislation in the different geographical areas, new juridical prospects of participation.

«The inundation has started» someone said. In fact, this international network of scholars and those who work in the juridical fields called "Communism and Law" (CaL), has experienced a strong leap forward. What was surprising, especially for those who came for the first time, was the scientific rigour of the presentations and their synergy with the present day, the methodology which gave space to everyone, the richness of relationships that were woven, the «excellent» participation of the youth, the universal vision, the «common» language. Appreciation was unanimous also for having taken



Emmaus, che nei giorni precedenti aveva seguito parte del programma via *streaming*, il 15 novembre è intervenuta personalmente con un messaggio, preceduto da queste toccanti parole: *«Permettetemi di dirvi dal cuore una parola: grazie, grazie perché ci siete, grazie per il lavoro che fate. Ascoltando i vostri interventi mi sembrava tutto bellissimo. Veramente ero felice di sentire queste belle cose positive, questa visione, questo sguardo positivo. Ma mi è risultato tutto ORO quando la sera ho seguito quello che è successo in Francia (gli attentati a Parigi del 13 novembre, ndr). Li ho sentito la preziosità di questo lavoro risaltare quasi per contrasto, perché paradossalmente [...] più il male è grande più fa risaltare le possibilità di bene che ci sono nel mondo. [...] Anche quello che voi avevate raccontato; tanto che mi sembrava che avevate anticipato, in un certo modo, quello che poi ho sentito di dire nella dichiarazione che mi è stata chiesta, cioè che ad una violenza non si risponde con violenza ma mettendo dei germi di bene nella società, unica risposta anche di fronte a questi mali estremi».*





the theme of law and its implications on the environment and for the unified vision that served as the backdrop and which revealed itself capable of recomposing the terms man and nature in a relational dimension.

The collaboration with the other inundations was very precious: Architecture, Education, the Movement of Politics for Unity, EcoOne and Economy, in a «synergy» of contributions. The contribution of New Humanity was not lacking as the reality of being One Opera was experienced by all.

A young lawyer and municipal councilman said: «The importance of the message of hope and the witness of life show how it is still possible to act in daily life, not bowing to the reasoning that honesty and respect for civil society has nothing to do with it. Everything has a price, but coherence and certain values are priceless. To be able to listen to experiences and work being done by other Countries, where the relationship man-nature is different with respect to Europe, reinforces my conviction that diversity is an added value».

A woman lawyer: «This is a high-level Congress. It has made us overcome every division among people with or without religious beliefs».

A first-year law student: «Here we are able to talk to university professors and magistrates as if we were talking to our friends in a bar!».

Different contributions from the various geographical areas. Among others, was the experience of a group of tomato growers in

Sicily. The application of a new regional law that does not allow public consultation on the local level would have brought about the loss of hundreds of jobs. Some members of the CaL went into action and succeeded in obtaining the declaration of constitutional illegitimacy of this regional law and the recognition of the right to participate in the decisions that are made regarding the territory, starting from the premise (pointed out by the Supreme Court) that no institutional subject can consider itself as the exclusive «Lord» of a given territory.

There was also the experience from the Amazons shared by someone from there who was able to recycle waste materials - a part of which were confiscated illegal goods - into raw materials that are used to sustain charitable associations.

And then there was also the experience of an Italian magistrate committed to fight against environmental pollution being perpetuated by the biggest firing range of Europe (situated in Sardinia), that caused the spread of certain types of tumours in people and animals. He had to make a long trip just to collect the testimony of a woman who could not leave the side of her seriously disabled son. Only to discover, upon his return to the office, that he had given a family that was living its own personal drama in solitude, a witness of human attention and care and the presence of a more conscious and aware State.

Maria Giovanna Rigatelli

(see also <http://comunionediritto.org>)

We would like to present the remembrance of some men and women members of the Focolare Movement Movimento he profiles that are not included here due to limited space. who have «departed» for Heaven in these past months. On Mariapolis online it is possible to read the complete version of the telegrams that Emmaus sent on the occasion of the departure of some of them or the expanded version of some of the profiles that are not included here due to limited space.

Doris Ronacher

*«The charity of Christ pushes us»
(cf 2 Cor 5,14)*

Doris, Austrian focolarina, concluded her «holy journey» in the fullness of peace on November 19, surrounded by much love.

There is a special gratitude to her from the Bangwa people and the family of Chiara in Madagascar, together with ours and of all those who have participated in the unfolding of the design of God in her life in these lands.

Doris was born in 1946 in a well to do family. After she finished her studies as a nurse, she met the Ideal through a friend and she immediately immerses herself in the divine adventure of unity. After her formation she went to Fontem, where she remained for 21 years. For another 13 years she was in Madagascar as the delegate of the Opera and in 2009 she returned to Fontem, with the same responsibility. Thanks to her «making one» the various vocations to the Opera are identified and multiply. Her «actions» expressed a readiness and a unique profundity, rooted in Jesus Forsaken,

In 2012, quite unexpectedly, during the meeting of the Delegates of the Opera in Rocca di Papa, the Spouse presented himself to her in the form of a serious illness. Doris never went back to Africa and in order to undergo three treatments for this aggressive illness she is transferred to the focolare center in Vienna. In July 2014 she wrote to Emmaus: «Life has become a game of love: whenever I experience a bit of darkness... due to not knowing how things will go, I am able to offer this immediately to the Spouse; and in many ways - through an e-mail, a telephone call or a person - He answers me immediately on the same day with a caress.». Doris had abandoned herself to His Love. She counted on the unity and the prayers of everyone. She maintained her sense of humour and, forgetting herself, continued to spread joy.



Messages reached her from all over the world. «In Fontem you were like a sister to me, someone to whom I could talk to and feel welcomed. You have supported me in an incredible way during difficult moments. With your selfless giving, the whole of Africa is grateful to you», «I learned candour

and humility from you». And after her departure for Heaven: «She was faithful up to the end, as a joyful spouse of Jesus Forsaken», «Her living the Desolate brought about the reversal of many situations and unexpected fruits».

Adán Calderara

«One body, one spirit, just as there is only one hope to which you are called» (Eph 4,4)

Adán, the first married focolarino of Uruguay, reached the home of the Father on November 17.

He was born in 1937 and while still young he became an active member of the Catholic Youth, something quite significant in a Country with a secular culture. His commitment was religious and at the same time social since he was sympathetic towards the Theology of Liberation.

He just became engaged to Silvina when he met the Ideal. When he became a married focolarino he also became the reference point for many and a bridge between the focolarino who were foreigners and the people of Uruguay. For tens of years he was the pillar of the New Families Movement together with Silvina, a Volunteer. They

had two children, Mónica and Alejandro (now a married focolarino) and, to answer to Chiara's desire that the orphanages be emptied, they decide to adopt Patricia, their third child.

In May 2001, after a serious and rapid illness, Silvina died. Adán shared: «We were always very much in love and we aimed at never losing the happiness of our marriage and our spiritual experience». And still: «Love triumphs over death. For me the presence of Silvina continues to accompany me because love is eternal».

In the years that followed, after the children were all settled, already retired and still full of life, he entered the focolare; always at the service, he nourished a preferential love for the virgin focolarini.

In October the symptoms of a past illness begin to manifest itself once again. In the hospital, a psychologist asked him how he felt. Adán surprised her with his immediate reply: «I feel very good. And you know why? Because if I still have a little life left, at home there are many people who love me, and if I have to go to the other side there are also many people there who are waiting for me and who love me just as much».

After a few days he returned home and he was visibly happy. For a week he continued to get up in the morning and worked on his computer because he wanted to hurry and finish everything that he had started. Then he lost his lucidity, but nevertheless a focolarino shared

«it was as if Adán was able to generate the presence of Jesus in the midst with his essentiality, with his gaze, with a smile. Entering his room you have to put yourself

in front of God and if you are not there, you feel out of place».

Surrounded by the focolarini, his children and a grandchild, he peacefully left for Heaven.

His funeral reunited many in the community and numerous persons who were no longer in contact with the Opera for a long time.



Jeanne Vandriessche

«Walk in Charity» (Eph 5,2)

Jeanne, one of the first married focolarine of Belgium, left on November 22 at the age of 93. When she married Karel, also a married focolarino, she was 33 years old. Four children were born. In 1960 she met the focolarino and she understood that she had «found» what her heart had been longing for. She was profoundly fascinated by believing in the Love of God and in loving Jesus in every neighbour, something which gave new meaning to her life. In those years, there was still no focolare center in Belgium. Jeanne and Karel, together with the community, contributed in forming the first «stones» of the building of the Opera. They also took care of many marginalized people. They welcomed into their home an ex-prisoner and, with other families, taking turns, they tried to find work for him and continued to assist him through a thousand adventures up to the time of his death.



After having accepted the call to the focolare, which she considered «a choice», she described being a part of the focolare as like a «purifying bath» wherein all her humanity is covered with the supernatural. She wrote: «The vocation of the married focolarina is hard but beautiful, it greatly goes beyond everything that I could ever have dreamed of during the many years I spent searching for my way. Hard and beautiful together, because I feel that we are part of both the natural family and the focolare. Often we feel drawn by both; and it seems to me that this will always be our first Jesus Forsaken».

IResponsible for the New Families Movement together with her husband, she participated in the pains and the joys of many couples, helping them through her example, her words and in many concrete ways all those who were in difficulty. After the publication of the Encyclical *Humanae Vitae*, together with her husband and some other families of the Movement, they started to document and work towards finding answers for those who found it difficult and problematic to put it into

practice, offering an important contribution for many. The love for Jesus Forsaken opened her heart and enlarged it to understand every kind of diversity.

In time, her relationship with Karel becomes more and more refined. In every aspect of life they strive to achieve the «thought of Jesus» and to do everything so that He triumphs in their midst.

In 2007 they move to the Mariapolis Vita, giving a lively witness of joy and youthfulness of heart. Youth and adults who visited the Little Town found the freshness of the Gospel in their house. The more their health declined, the more you could see their reciprocal love grow and also their gratitude to Chiara for all that she had given them, for the greatness of the focolare and the life of the Opera.

The gratitude expressed by many was very moving.

Enza Persia

«Serve one another» (Gal. 5,13)

Volunteer of God of Castellammare di Stabia (Naples) she flew to Heaven unexpectedly on May 13 at the age of 77.

She was a young school teacher when she met the Ideal and she adhered to it with all her being. In school she bore witness to her choice of God through a special love for each of her students, who were conquered by this love. For the gen3 supercongress she was able to involve the whole school and more than a hundred students watched the live transmission of the vent in a parish theatre.



After having participated in the school for women Volunteers, she dedicated herself to the formation of a group of adherents, then she was entrusted with a nucleo. She accomplished these responsibilities with great dedication, in charity and in humility, always

turned towards those who were most in difficulty. Her house became the community's house.

She offered her service to the parish priest to be the bridge between the parish and the residents of her condominium: an extra-special occasion to build true and profound relationships with the neighbours.

When her health began to falter Enza realized that she needed assistance and so she employed a lady to live with her. With her too Enza built a beautiful relationship based on a profound spiritual understanding.

The past two years was characterized by a pure love for Jesus Forsaken, from her constant prayer, to the full unity with her nucleo and with the community. In the afternoon before her departure, her nucleo met at her house as had become their usual practice. The meeting was characterized by a strong presence of Jesus in the midst, a fruit also of the special communion of soul of Enza, who shared that she was at peace and in joy.

From the center of the women Volunteers

Zofia Kwapisz

«Amo dunque sono»

Zofia, volontaria di Varsavia (Polonia) lascia questa terra il 26 maggio all'età di 71 anni.

Durante gli studi, affascinata dalle conquiste della scienza, entra in una profonda crisi di fede. Concluso il dottorato in linguistica si dedica alla docenza universitaria e con Andrzej forma una bella famiglia allietata da tre figli: Tadeusz, Michal e Urzula.

Nel 1984 una collega le parla dell'Ideale. «Dopo anni di smarrimento – così descrive la sua conversione – finalmente comincia per me una nuova tappa: scoperta della bellezza dell'Ideale, sviluppo della vita spirituale. Là dove c'era il deserto fioriscono i fiori. Prima il mio motto



Angela (Lillina) De Cimma

«Draw me to follow you, let us run...»
(Cant 1,1-4)

Lillina, one of the first Volunteers of God of the Zonetta of Naples, reached the heavenly Mariapolis on July 2 at 79 years old. She met the Ideal when she was a young and passionate elementary school teacher and she adhered to it with enthusiasm. The life of the Opera became her own. She would sell *Città Nuova* at the doors of the parishes or she would run to wherever there was the need to care for or to listen to someone. Her house became a meeting place and a place to welcome people who were just passing through, even for long periods of time.

She spent some time at the school of formation for women Volunteers in Loppiano, and a year at the Center of the Movement, at the service of the women Volunteers all over the world and also working at the former Mariapolis Center in Rocca di Papa.

When she returned to the Zone, she became the first delegate of New Humanity, being always attentive to the social problems within the territory and with a special concern

era: "cogito ergo sum", ma ora, grazie a Chiara è "amo ergo sum": più amo, più sono in Dio. Ho deciso di vivere per Lui». Nel 1990 Zofia diventa volontaria di Dio. L'amore è la sua scelta prioritaria: in famiglia, con gli amici, nell'ambiente di lavoro che tanto ha in cuore. Con grande tenerezza e sensibilità sa farsi uno con tutti, costruendo ponti e aiutando altri a fare altrettanto.

Nel febbraio 2014 sopraggiunge la malattia: «Presto inizierò il trattamento - scrive alle volontarie - e sono pronta a compiere al meglio la volontà di Dio. Il mio proposito: non concentrarsi sulla malattia, ma vivere di più per gli altri». In luglio: «Ogni giorno ho motivo per ringraziare Dio per la vastità delle grazie che mi dona. A chi viene a trovarmi cerco di

for the least. In school she had a predilection for those students in difficulty and she worked to seek the treatment - sometimes even sending them abroad - of the most serious cases. The fruits of her commitment were visible to everyone and some of her experiences were published in a book (Cimma-Lubrano, *Signuri signuri*, Città Nuova, 1978).

She felt that Jesus was calling her to a more intimate union with Him and on July 2, 1976 she formally seals this with her consecration to Him. It is a year that she renews every year on that date, the feast of the Madonna of the Graces. Lillina continued her race of love, even when her health began to decline. To those who would ask her what the secret of her peace was in spite of the extreme pain, she answered: «Suffering has an incalculable value. I am very happy!».

On July 2, the day of the renewal of her consecration to God, while her sister and two Volunteers were with her, she continued to repeat: «I can see the Madonna, I want to go». An peacefully she took «flight».

from the center of the women Volunteers



trasmettere la grazia di vivere la malattia e la morte, condotta per mano da Dio-Amore». E in dicembre, nonostante i forti dolori: «Sono felice di essere della famiglia di Chiara: un organismo vivente e gioioso perché fra noi c'è la presenza di Gesù. Prima di trovare l'Opera non avrei mai immaginato che si potessero condividere anche i momenti più difficili della malattia, fino alla partenza definitiva».

La sua corrispondenza con il nucleo continua davvero fino alla fine: «La mia croce - scrive pochi giorni prima della "partenza" - è leggera (perché la portate con me) e il giogo dolce (perché sperimento tanto amore). Così la mia anima canta, piena di gratitudine e di grande gioia».

Malgosia Bober

Salwa Issawi

«*Remain in my love*»
(Jn 15,9)

Salwa, a Volunteer from Haifa (Holy Land), departed for Heaven on November 2 at only 55 years old. She met the Ideal when she was still very young and immediately launched herself in the gen life. She was always at the service of everyone at home with her mother who was a widow, her sisters and brothers, her nieces and nephews, who felt that she was more of a sister rather than an aunt. Even when she became a Volunteer of God, she was always the first to come with a gift during birthdays or in preparing food for the focolare and for other people. In 1996 Chiara confirmed her name «Salwa» which in arabic means «that which consoles and comforts».

At 47 years old she was diagnosed with a serious illness. One of the first effects was the impossibility of moving one leg, but she continued to attend her nucleo meetings where she shared her experiences which were really going against the current. She shared: «I started to feel happy about the illness, not for the illness itself but because I feel that Jesus is allowing me to participate in his cross and his sufferings». Her relationship with God intensified: «Lord – she prayed - I don't know what will happen today, I only know that everything has been prepared by Your love for me. That's why I am not afraid and I will not allow the pain to crush me. I offer you every difficulty and I ask you to give me the strength to bear them...».

The treatment, which was quite heavy, brought her a lot of suffering, up to the point of being near death, but finally the illness seemed to go into remission. Salwa was able to go back to being of service to others just as before even if she had to face the bitter surprise of having been fired from her job. She took care of her elderly and sick mother with great care and also of an aunt who was living in a hospice.

In the spring of 2015 the illness returned: it was a heavy blow, but Salwa faced it with a great docility and without complaint. The women Volunteers and the focolarine often went to visit her in order to assure her the presence of Jesus in the midst and to pray with her. Since the treatments were not bringing any results and her suffering were unbearable, Salwa had to be brought



to the hospital. The Muslim woman who assisted her, the nurses, the doctors and also the families of other patients were surprised at her peace. Moments of darkness were not lacking, wherein she said that she was not able to pray but then, together with whoever was with her, she gathered what little strength she had to start a song to Mary or to recite the rosary.

The church was jampacked at her funeral. In Haifa it is not customary for women to accompany the deceased to the cemetery, but with the permission of the family, the women Volunteers and the focolarine do so, praying and singing for her up to the end.

Corres Kwak

Rina Deglane de Murillo

«*Blessed is the servant whom the master finds awake upon his return*» (Lk 12,37)



«Rina was a totalitarian, strong, intelligent woman. Her radicalness in her way of life had always been and continues to be a push for us to live for God». This is the way the women Volunteers of Arequipa (Perú) remember her, a year after her departure for paradise last December 4, 2014 at the age of 65.

Rina met the Ideal when she was 47 years old together with her husband Willy and her daughter Maria Grazia, adhering immediately to it. From that moment on she placed at the service of the Opera all her life, the wealth of her humanity, her profession as a teacher. She knew how to welcome everyone without measure or distinction, with love, wisdom and righteousness.

Soon after, together with her husband, she was entrusted with a group of New Families, which she followed with dedication, taking

Our relatives

The following passed on to the Next life: **Donetta, mother of Donatella Rafanelli**, focolarina in Moscow; **Livio, brother of Franca Peraro**, focolarina in Mexico, and of **Silvia**, married focolarina in Trent; **Andreina, mother of Daniela Campanini**, focolarina in the Zonetta di Lazio South; **Aldo, father of Eleonora Pandolfi**, focolarina in the Roman Mariapolis; **Peppino, brother of Imma Buono**, focolarina in Cadine (Italy); the brother of **Juliana (Lia) Pimentel Coelho**, focolarina in João Pessoa (Brazil); **Amalia, mother of Marcello Catalucci**, focolarino in Milan; **Yvonne, mother of Agnès Vuignier**, focolarina in Belgium; **Bogumila, mother of Krystyna Kebede**, focolarina in Krakow and of **Zofia**, married focolarina in Poznan; **Herbert, father of Mariola Kozubek**, focolarina in the Mariapolis Fiore and of **Danusia and Ewa**, married focolarine in Krakow (Poland).

upon herself all their anxieties so as to bring them to God. She placed her time, her home, her attention at the disposition of all, having a preferential love for all the people of the community who would come to visit her, giving advice and at the same time respecting the feelings of each one.

She concluded her holy journey in less than two months after being diagnosed with a serious illness. Rina prepared herself for the final goal by preparing every detail for the future of her husband and her daughter. She continued to work with responsibility, even bringing to the hospital the homework of the students that needed to be checked. She never stopped serving the others up to the end. She left an inheritance of a life lived in the joy of love.

Lidia Erbetta

Words of life 2016

January | «You are called to proclaim the marvelous works of the Lord» (*cf 1 Pt 2,9*).

February | «As a mother comforts her child,so will I comfort you » (*Is 66,13*).

March | «The kingdom of God has come to you » (*Lk 11,20*).

April | «Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me» (*Mt 25,40*).

May | «He will live with them. They will be his people, and he himself will be "God among them"» (*Rev 21,3*).

June | «Be in peace with one another» (*Mt 9,50*).

July | «Be kind and compassionate to one another,forgiving each other, just as God forgave you in Christ» (*Eph 4,32*).

August | «You have only one Teacher and you are all brothers» (*Mt 23,8*).

September | «Everything is yours! But you are of Christ and Christ is of God» (*1 Cor 3, 22-23*).

October | «Forgive the offenses of your neighbour and then by your prayer your sins will be forgiven» (*Sir 28,2*).

November | «I can do everything through him who gives me strength » (*Phil 4,13*).

December | «He comes to save you» (*Is 35,4*).

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