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MARIAPOLI

Newsletter of the focolare movement

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Delegates 2016

**Being together
for the world**

Ethiopia

The first pages di
un nuovo
focolare

**Cameroun
and Sweden**

In celebration
for the 50 years
of the Movement

Mercy the key word

20 November 2016: the jubilee year of Mercy concludes. A time of grace which has made us experience more intensely the love of the Father who has always gathered us to Him and the joy of forgiving our brothers and sisters. For Chiara, Mercy is a key word, the highest point of love. Let us draw once more from her thoughts so as to imprint this word in our hearts until it will remain indelible forever.



Florence, 17 May, 1986.
Chiara Lubich with Mother Teresa of Calcutta, icon of Mercy, proclaimed a saint on 4.09.2016

«I know: you will fail. I too, often and always fail But when I lift my gaze to Him whom I can see is powerless to defend himself because he is nailed to the cross out of an overflowing of love, I allow myself to be caressed by His infinite Mercy and I know that this is the only thing that must triumph in me. Why then is He infinitely merciful? For what reason? If not for our sins?».

From CHIARA LUBICH, Letters of the early times, Città Nuova, Rome, 2010, pag. 97 (1945)

«Jesus has the greatest need to make use of His Mercy. Well then, let us satisfy him and every time you feel weighed down by your miseries give them to him. He wants nothing more than to burn our miseries. He was made for this because he is the Saviour. And so why do you suffer when you can give him so many chances to save you? Why don't you, instead of looking at your soul, look instead at his thirst to consume and erase all miseries?».

Ibidem pag. 45 (1948)

«The first Focolare had an actual experience which was an application of this "being the first to love". It was not always easy for a group of girls to live love radically, especially at the beginning. We were like other people, even though we were sustained by a special gift from God, in order to begin the Movement. Dust could settle on us as well, on our rapport with one another, and our unity could wilt. That happened for example upon discovering others' faults and imperfections. When there was judgment, the flow of reciprocal love got cold.

We thought of making a pact among us to counter this situation one day. We called it the pact of mercy. We decided to see our neighbor

in a very new way when we met him or her each morning (in the Focolare, at school, at work...), really forgetting his blemishes, her defects, covering everything with love.

This meant approaching everyone with this complete amnesty in our heart, with this universal forgiveness.

Everyone took this strong commitment together. It helped us to always be the first to love in imitation of our merciful God who forgives and forgets. We are now sure that the Movement would not even have made it from Trent to Rovereto, which is a half-hour away, if it were not for this daily pact of forgiveness. Practically, the Movement would not have had the energy needed to spread.»

Castel Gandolfo, meeting of Muslim friends of the Movement, 1.11.2002

«We can imagine that the father of the prodigal son must have been very busy: he had to look after his farm, the farm workers, the family. But his main attitude was one of waiting. Who was he waiting for? The son who had left home. He would climb up to the tower of the house and look out across the fields far into the distance.... The Heavenly Father does likewise with us. Dear young people, imagine, if you can, God's divine, most sublime and dynamic trinitarian life, a very intense life, not the way we sometimes think of it. Imagine how committed he is in upholding creation, in finding places for those who arrive in heaven. And yet, do you know what he does first of all? He waits. He watches. For whom? For us, for me, for you, especially if we happen to be far from him.

One day, that son, whom the earthly father loved so much and waited for, after squandering all he had, decided to return home. The father embraced him, dressed him with expensive clothes, put a ring on his finger and prepared the fattened calf for a celebration. What should we conclude? That he wishes to see his son completely new. He doesn't want to remember him as he was before; and not only does he forgive him, but he even forgets his past. This is the love for him expressed in the parable. And this is the Father's love for us. If we return to him after having been a little naughty, he embraces us, he forgives us. But what is extraordinary is that he forgets. [. .]

I recently saw a documentary film. [. .] It presented and examined in detail a famous Rembrandt painting portraying the Father of that Gospel narration welcoming his son who had returned home. It is very beautiful in every detail. But what is most striking are the father's hands. That artist had an idea: he made one of the father's hands rather sturdy, strong, like the hand of a man; whereas the other is delicate, gentle, slender, like the hand of a woman. What did the artist want to say? That the love of the Father is both paternal and maternal. And this is the way we should think of him. We find everything in the Father – Father and Mother. And this is how we should think of it too».

To the youth in the cathedral of Paderborn (Germany), 12.6.1999

Chiara Lubich

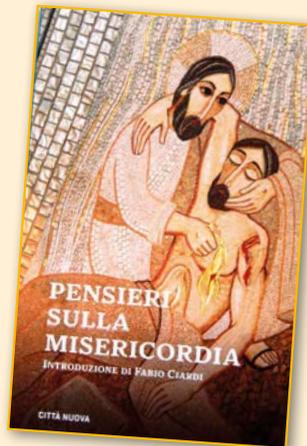
New publications

Thoughts on mercy

Introduction of Fabio Ciardi

The credibility of the Church passes through the road of mercy and compassion.

Mercy. This was the first word that Pope Francis said when he looked out the window onto St. Peter's Square for his first Sunday *Angelus*. A word that «changes everything...changes the world».



Through the most beautiful thoughts on mercy of the Fathers of the Church, of Saints, Blesseds and Popes, this book bears witness to the certainty imprinted in the heart of Christians that arouses infinite gratitude and hope: God loves me always, no matter what, immensely. He is close to me, he forgives me, he gives me the possibility of starting again and, after having experienced this merciful love, to be also merciful in return.

Delegates 2016

Being together for the world

There were three meetings this year which gathered together at the Center the Delegates of the Movement in the Zones together with those responsible for the small zones and some of the councilors of the zone center.

«We started from the reality of Jesus who, in his abandonment, became the window through which God sees man and through which man can see God. This meeting was the occasion to live concretely this very profound reality». This was how Friederike Koller and Ángel Bartol, central delegates of the Movement, began their summary of the three meetings of the Delegates of the Movement held at the Mariapolis Center of Castel Gandolfo. «And maybe in all of us – Angel continued – a new certainty was born that this Movement, which is a work of God, will go ahead not so much because of what each one is doing there where he or she is, but because of what God is doing also through us».

This year there was just one meeting in three stages for the Delegates of the Zones together with those responsible for the small zones and some councilors of the zone centers. «In the first meeting what emerged was a great communion, a great sharing and also the beauty of being a family, of acting in this way, in building relationships this way – Friederike said. The second was

characterized more by the depth of the relationship with God and also the joy of bearing witness and of spreading this life that comes from Him, and the importance of having everything begin from a single body united by a love that is stronger than death. In the third meeting, we experienced much light, much wisdom, that wisdom which comes from life. And above all, I would say, we experienced much unity, unity in variety».

If emmaus was able to be present physically in the first meeting, the second one began precisely when she was entering the operating room for a heart surgery: during this moment, just as during the third meeting, everyone prayed for her and lived for her and with her, with the certainty that, just as she had assured us: «We are united now more than ever». «An experience that guided us in this period and which



is something real– Angel explained. We experienced that we are truly one body, one soul, one heart wherein the Center and the Zones are just one reality that embraces the whole world, because it is the expression of that profound unity which unites us».

Among the strongest moments of each meeting was the theme on «The ecclesial genius of Chiara Lubich» presented by the co-president Jesús Morán. «I think that the ecclesial genius of Chiara – he said among other things – is the genius of all great founders».

Up to the ends of the earth

«Seeing the entire America together with Oceania and to see that the children of the



North America and Latin America

Charism of Chiara, are all over the world and live and strive to answer to the challenges of the Movement today and to find the answers for the Movement today is very beautiful. Each one is enriched by this experience» this is how Eduardo Sobral (Brazil) summarized the first meeting.

There were different topics that emerged. For Oceania what proved to be interesting were the deepening of the reforms that pope Francis is carrying out, also inculturation and the ways to come closer to the indigenous peoples or how to be living communities so as to face the challenges of secularization. In North America, once the new set-up has been completed, they will try to understand what is the most suitable strategy so as to incarnate the charism of unity. «Personally



– John Castañon said– I felt that Emmaus and Jesús, just like all the focolarini and the focolarine of the Center, have a lot of faith in us».

There are many difficulties, but also much life, which is what Emmaus had said about Latin America, a land rich in diversity. «The theme of the year for us from Venezuela is a source of great light – commented Roberta Munegato – because of the situation we are living in, of a great economic and social crisis, the high incidence of delinquency and extreme violence that touches us closely because two of our youth have died... Piero Pasolini once said: where there is more hatred, violence, horror, there God is present the most because he is Jesus Forsaken».

The days dedicated to Charetto (Fr. Foresi) and Foco (Igino Giordani) were very enriching. «So as to be able to go ahead, we must go out, because going out means going ahead, we have to fix our center of gravity well – Jesús said. The design of Charetto will help us to incarnate and to go out well in the Church ... and the design of Foco will help us to go out to humanity. What will we bring? We will bring the charism of Chiara. This is our center of gravity».



Africa - Asia

In the sign of the resurrection

«I would like to write to you my communion of soul but... I don't have the strength – this is what Emmaus shared at the opening of the second meeting just a few days after her operation - I can tell you that while I am immobile in dialogue with my Spouse, each time he comes to me, I feel that you are here with me and this presence is not a burden that I have to carry, but it is a wing that helps me to fly».

In the meeting that gathered together all the representatives of Asia, Africa and the Middle East what emerged was the value of inculturation and the respect for all peoples. The words of Chiara echoed strongly when she said that she saw Africa as the model «ahead of all the other continents, in indicating to them, like a star, the way to rediscovering the great values that man has often lost in today's world». A focalario from the Chinese zone affirmed: «I feel that I really have to take my hat off to the Africans. We have more than 3,000 years of history, but the logic of God is something else. Now I see them as an example for us, for inculturation». «Through the Charism, God puts each peoples where they should be – echoed an African focalario. For us it is also a responsibility».

There were various themes common to all three meetings: from the reflection on the local communities, to the importance of working together for a greater effect and impact of the Charism... «In Burkina Faso – Aurora de Oliveira

said – we involved the various vocations of the Movement in the formation of the youth who come from three different countries. This is how we present ourselves: united precisely so as to give a gift of this Charism, together with other Movements and other Charisms».

Among the words of greetings that Emmaus during the meeting, one was especially for the Middle eastern countries: «This fruit of life that is born with the encounter with Jesus in a place where it seems that Jesus does not exist is precise-



ly the proof to the contrary. There will still be confusion, still war, still death, but ... it is just history which will pass. What remains is that Jesus exists and is present there. And so be happy, happy! A drop of this truly has the value of a forest!». «I am in Syria – Pascal Bedros said – but in spite of the tragedy there, the Ideal shines brightly always more and there are many people who want to live it. They are all very grateful to be a part of this family which has inherited this Charism, of which they that they are the frontliners».

«Meeting with your big Zones has been a great joy – Jesús said at the conclusion of the second meeting – with your emerging interreligious and intercultural societies. These are Zones that the Movement would like to give priority».



The great responsibility of a united Europe

«It was a beautiful coincidence even if I don't think it was just by chance, that the meeting began [...] on the feast day of Saint Teresa – Emmaus said at the opening of the third meeting – because wisdom is really needed to be able to give an answer to the problems that are shaking Europe». She then noted how the conclusion coincides with the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the arrival of the



Eastern Europe



Central Europe

Movement in Algeria «where together with the Muslims of the Movement we must bring ahead dialogue, the basis for solving all conflicts. It seems to me that this is a sign that the openness to other parts of the world must be a part of Europe: and the Mediterranean is a symbol of this...».

The third meeting showcased a very variegated continent: a young eastern Europe, a land of ecumenical and interreligious dialogue; a Central Europe that is the bridge between East and West; a Western Europe where the culture of unity seems to be the answer to all the challenges of society; an Italy where working together in the Movement and with others releases new potentialities. «It seems that God is asking us to make a new step towards humanity that is knocking at our doors– Federica Alloisio (Italy) said – a humanity that arrives on our shores, who is crying and waiting for a greater love that only we together can give it».

Children, teens and youth were the topics at the center of various moments. «The reciprocal trust among generations gives us hope: it will be precisely the youth, “midstream”, who will create, invent solutions to overcome the conflicts of our beloved and ancient Europe. I believe in this». This is one of the many impressions left on the website of the Mariapolis newsletter where they gave daily brief updates accompanied by interviews. Gratitude for being «to participate directly» in this «global communion» «... points of hidden light, but which lend support like the yeast in the Gospel».

And since we were gathered together from the whole Europe, a day was dedicated to this continent: «Maybe there were tensions, misunderstandings, prejudices from one side or the other of this big Europe – commented Christiane-Marie Goffinet (France). But I must say that it was also this power of Jesus Forsaken that called us to put aside our ways of thinking, mental categories so as to welcome the other as he or she is, free from everything». «It was evident and strong that in the charism of unity we have the DnA to be able to compose into one this multiplicity» added Ettore Coppola (Italy).

Europe and Islam was instead the theme that was widely deepened. «The instruments that we have with the Ideal are important. But in order to go ahead we need a deeper knowledge, we need to know the origin, to know the history, to love this culture».

From this meeting what strongly emerged was the potentiality and the responsibility of a united Europe and, in spite of the difficulties, there are many synergies for actions that involve all the members of the Movement with the gaze pointed towards «*That all may be one*»: to strengthen our commitment in «Together for Europe», to realize a Mariapolis for the whole Europe. to give life to temporary focales...

Ready to fly

«We almost – Emmaus said at the conclusion of the first meeting – discovered how beautiful the Center is when we look at it the way you do! And you too have discovered how beautiful your zones are seeing them as the Center sees them». And she added: «Jesus Forsaken is not the theme of the year, but the Spouse of our soul, the one whom Chiara presented to us and the encounter we are flying to as we fasten our seatbelts. And our seatbelts are *being together*, because we cannot make it

alone, and therefore let us fasten this seatbelt just as when we ride an airplane. But we fly safe and sure, borne by Him who is also the pilot of this airplane, and so he will bring us there where he wants, because He is waiting for us there».

*The communications team
Delegates meeting 2016*

Su Mariapoli online

www.focolare.org/notiziariomariapoli
tutto l'incontro, giorno per giorno,
anche con brevi video e fotogallery

In remembrance of Paul VI A bond that continues

In Brescia a testimony of the relationship between Pope Montini and the Focolare Movement

On the occasion of the «Montinian week», Maria Voce was invited last September 23, to illustrate a spiritual portrait of Paul VI, because of the significant bond that the Focolare Movement had with this Pontiff during the delicate and fecund period of his approval. «May this evening give us a breath of ecclesiality, of communion and of unity, so as to be able to bear witness to the love that Paul VI proclaimed to us, inviting us to be a living part of that civilization of love of which we all would like to be» - Fr. Alfredo Scaratti, parish priest of the Cathedral which was hosting the event, said during his introduction.

The community of the Movement worked with enthusiasm for this event that is a continuation of the convention held last March at the Catholic University, realized in collaboration with the Paul VI Institute.

The theme presented by Maria Voce (read in her absence by a focolarina) underlined in Paul VI the figure of a prophet, of the apostle and the

mediator, three aspects of his personality and his sanctity. With courage and wisdom he opened new roads through his witness of poverty, enhancing the value of the role of women and the laity, his openness to dialogue, the universal call to sanctity. Above all, his passion for the Church which was shared by Chiara Lubich was highlighted, through the reading of some passages of her thoughts that revealed themselves to be in perfect harmony with the soul of this great Pontiff. The promoter of the event, Fr. Pierantonio Lanzoni, defined it as «a marvelous testimony».

An actor from Brescia, Luciano Bertoli read the talk of Paolo VI to the gen on March 2, 1975. «You have re-opened our gen heart to find once more a friend of our times – one of those present said - just as Pope Francis is the friend of the youth of today». Some members of the Muslim community present said that they «discovered» Paul VI and would like to get to know his message more profoundly.

The local media also showed interest in the event (<http://www.focolaritalia.it/2016/09/25/brescia-ricorda-paolo-vi/>).

Rosi Bertolassi

A new focolare center The first pages in Ethiopia

**A warm welcome, blessings, celebration by the community
and the religious authorities for the opening of the women's focolare center**

They left in three from Nairobi (Kenya) on August 5, 2016 and they arrived in Ethiopia on July 29, 2008 . . . yes because in this country the calendar is different! Veronica Farias and Adriana Mendes from Brazil with Marita Machetta from Italy, are the three focolarine who arrived in Ethiopia to start the first focolare center in this country. They departed on the Feast day of Our Lady of the Snow: «The presence of Mary accompanied us every step of the way: in fact every important stage happened always on her feast day – Marita shared. It was a special gift to be able to participate in the birth of this new focolare, which together with the community, we had asked the Eternal Father for, many years ago».

Upon their arrival, they were housed in a com-

munity of religious sisters where the cousin of Legesse, an Ethiopian focolarino in Uganda, was also present. They were welcomed with the ceremony of coffee (*buna*) and with

the traditional bread (*dabo*) which warmed their hearts and revived their bodies, coming in contact with the low temperature of Addis Abeba, the capital. Then, during the first ten days, visits and encounters in various corners of the city. «It was the first and important impact with the people that Jesus was entrusting us - they shared. There were many special visits with the Cardinal, the Bishops, at the Nunciature, with religious men and women and the consecrated. We received many warm



Da destra: Marita, Dia, Adriana e Veronica

welcomes, blessings, precious advice, and there was much joy in knowing that the Focolare has finally arrived. There were many moments of profound communion with persons who have been here for a long time and they shared to us a great vitality, in spite of the numerous challenges». Two focolarine started to study *amarico*, the official language of Ethiopia, in an environment that was totally ecumenical. Once as they were job hunting, a religious greeted them saying: «Here come the smile of Chiara Lubich».

We experienced many of God's interventions, in the small and big things, up to the point of finding a house for the focolare with characteristics that went beyond all our expectations: safety, closeness to the school of *amarico* and to the Catholic Church... a house that even had a small chapel! «It is beautiful to experience so many touches of the love of God- Adriana said - and to see how life is simple when we place ourselves completely in His hands».

At the end of August, a fourth focolarina arrived: Diana (Dia) Asonganyi from Cameroun. She came with many precious gifts! «It is truly a gift of God for me – she said. I can feel that in every relationship there is the presence of God. I am grateful to Him for everything that He allows us to experience. The adventure continues, and together we can make it».

prepared by the editorial board



From the Little Town of Mafua Ndem Chiara Lubich A «royal» jubilee

Fontem (Cameroun) celebrates the fiftieth anniversary of the encounter between the Focolare Movement and the Bangwa people. Among the many initiatives, a trip to Italy of a delegation of Fon (native Bangwa Kings) to visit the places of Chiara and to pay her homage

Fifty years have passed since the first focolarini arrived in Fontem, a village in the heart of west Africa, where the infant mortality had reached 90% threatening the extinction of the people who had always lived there: the Bangwa. The professionalism and the spirit of unity which animated this little group who came from faraway, did not just bring a solution to the sanitary problem but, in time, transformed Fontem into a Little Town, symbol and model of fraternity for the whole of Africa. And not only.

The celebrations for this important anniversary are already ongoing, involving the realities which in time came to life from the happy union of the Bangwa and the Focolare: a hospital with 120 beds in the departments of obstetrics, pediatrics, surgery, medicine (care of cases of sleeping sickness, malaria, tuberculosis, etc.), equipped with diagnostic laboratories and for



Rome, septembre 2016. The meeting with Pope Francis

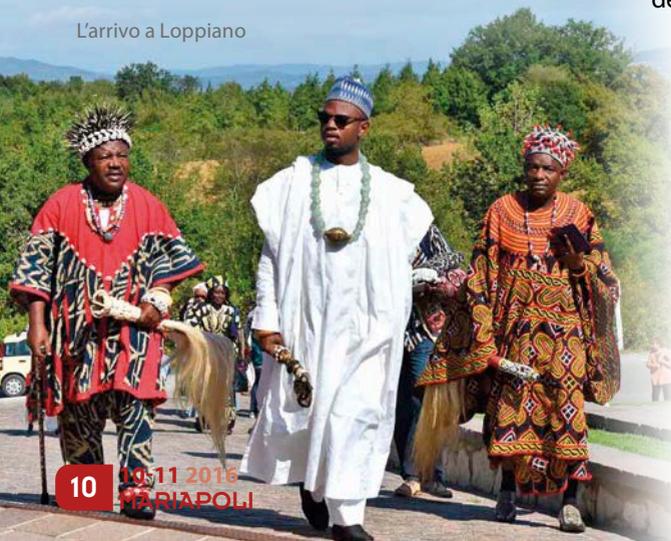
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specialist treatments; the boarding school «Our Lady Seat of Wisdom» frequented by 500 students of all ages and levels coming from various parts of Cameroun; a center to welcome groups and individuals who would like to make a communitarian formative experience open to dialogue, both ecumenical and interreligious.

The culmination of the celebration is planned from December 14 to 17, with an international convention, open spaces for testimonies and new prospects, and above all a lot of celebrations to mark the jubilee of this special Little Town dedicated to Chiara with the name given to her by the inhabitants themselves: Mafua Ndem (queen sent by God). Everything is being done in collaboration with the diocese of Mamfe and the Association of former students of the boarding school, many of whom have successful careers in various Countries.

In celebration of an anniversary that is so special to the Bangwa people, and which coincides with the year of Mercy of the universal Church, the different Fon of the region were able to realize a dream that they have been nurturing for some time now: to visit the tomb of «mama Chiara». And so in September a delegation of 34 persons began their journey to Italy: nine Fon and two Mafua (queens) accompanied by some dignitaries of the respective

L'arrivo a Loppiano





In Trent, in Piazza Capuccini

kingdoms and other personalities among whom were two mayors.

The visit began in Rome with the general audience in St. Peter's Square with the Holy Father, Pope Francis, who was visibly happy, greeted two representatives of the delegation: «Holy Father, we ask you to pray for Chiara Lubich so that she can intercede in favour of peace for our people, who owes much to the Focolare Movement and its foundress». They were able to thank the Pope for what the Church, «through the focolarini, has done for our people». Then an interesting press conference with around fifteen journalists, who then spread their testimony through radio, TV, news agencies and daily newspapers.

The visit to Loppiano was also a significant moment, which highlighted even more the specific characteristic of the Little Towns of the Movement and the attraction of the evangelical witness lived among their inhabitants. «I feel a greater responsibility to continue to share the spirituality of unity even more to my people» commented the Fon of Akum (vicepresident of the association of the Fon friends of the Movement). The councillor for international cooperation for peace and reconciliation of the Tuscany Region, Massimo Toschi, who was invited for the occasion, recalled his first visit to

the Little Town of Fontem, defining it as a «city of Peace».

During the visit to Trent, it was the mayor, Alessandro Andreatta who welcomed them: «If Chiara brought Trent to the world, we must thank her also because today, through your visit, she has brought the world to Trent». Then various meetings with civil and ecclesial personalities followed, with the Archbishop emeritus Mons. Luigi Bressan, Fr. Bonaventura Marinelli ofm, who has been close to the Movement since the beginning, and the focolare community of the city, among whom were some witnesses of the early times.

And finally the most important event: a homage in which the delegation paid to the tomb of Chiara. A moment of «heart to heart» with her, who did not hesitate, 50 years ago, to answer to the appeal for survival launched by their people and who all her life never forgot them. The Fon of Fonjemetaw then shared with the group and to those of the Center of the Movement who were present, the last visit of Chiara to Fontem in 2000, when she proposed



In Rocca di Papa at the tomb of Chiara

to the Bangwa people to ratify a pact to love one another just as Jesus had taught. «This is the testament of Chiara - the Fon specified - an inheritance that she gave us and the entire world. Therefore - he concluded - I invite you today to do the same among all of us present here, for all of humanity».

Eucharía Ezenwuba, Tim Bazzoli

Sweden An important stage

50 years of the presence of the Ideal of unity in Sweden. An occasion to thank God for the many mature fruits

«We are grateful to God together for all that was realized in these years through His help, for how the Ideal of unity has been able to build bridges in the field of ecumenical dialogue and for how it has involved people coming from different ethnic and cultural origins. This bears witness that unity is possible in spite of



the differences. This is an eloquent and urgent message for the world today that is torn by many conflicts». With these words from the message of Emmaus the celebrations for the fiftieth anniversary of the Focolare Movement in Sweden started on September 10, with the presence of Maria Verhegge and Henri-Louis Roche, delegates for western Europe.

During the ecumenical celebration presided by a Lutheran priest from the Swedish Church

and by a Catholic priest, in charge of ecumenism in the Diocese, the songs and prayers expressed gratitude to God for the Ideal of unity that arrived in this Country. The Catholic priest confided: «It was a touching moment to give the blessing together with a Lutheran pastor. These moments are not frequent. I felt the fullness of unity». The celebration concluded in a solemn way with the testament of Chiara «Be a family».

Around 200 people were present, many coming to meet the Movement for the first time. Different stands offered the opportunity to get to know more about the Movement and to walk through the history of its development in Sweden through photos and conversations with those who had lived in the focolare in Stockholm. What is the focolare. It is living the Word locally and globally, Dialogues, Sophia University Institute, Economy of Communion, the World of the youth - these were some of the aspects presented. The corner for children was very lively and participative.

Among the numerous messages received, an important one came from Lella Sebesti, the first focolarina who came to bring the spirituality of unity in the Country: «We rejoiced and suffered together, but we had always seen God at work. We are grateful for these 50 years of life of the kingdom of heaven here on



In Tagaytay A gift for Asia

Two focolarini ordained to the priesthood in an atmosphere of celebration of the fiftieth year of the arrival of the Ideal of unity in Manila, from where it spread to the whole Asian continent

earth, of the transformation of our life. But above all we must feel urged to look to the future and to be distributors of joy throughout Scandinavia... Soon in paradise we will share many things with one another, of how even our weaknesses were useful to God to make us more merciful». The message of another pioneer, Fr. Eraldo Carpanese, was also very much appreciated. There were many, among whom were priests and religious, who expressed their gratitude for the presence of the focolare.

For dinner there was a special touch: an Asian buffet prepared by some Chinese, Vietnamese and Thai members of the Movement.

We were overjoyed with the presence of representatives of some Catholic Movements: Communion and Liberation, Charismatics, Neocatechumenals, Schönstatt. A priest commented: «Only you of the focolare are able to put together other Movements».

For the occasion a special four-page insert was printed in our magazine *Enad Värld*, with some references to the story of the Movement in the world and in Sweden.

«I encourage you therefore to go ahead with enthusiasm along the way of the spirituality of communion – which Chiara has opened to us through the charism that God has given her – because in these times which is so much influenced by individualism, we must make love grow among everyone as a visible sign of fraternity». These concluding words of the message of Emmaus gave us a new push to go ahead on the road that lay before us, towards the realization of a united world, starting from our Nordic Countries.

The focolarine and focolarini of Stockholm



Chiu Boc Tay (on the left) and Froi Fajardo

This year the entire Asian continent is celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the arrival of Guido Mirti (Cengia) and Giovanna Vernuccio (Giò), who in February of 1966, together with some focolarini and focolarine, gave life to the first two focolare centers in Asia, in Manila, Philippines. From there, in a matter of just a few years, the Work of Mary reached almost all the Countries of this vast continent and also Australia.

In this context of celebration and joy, on September 3 at the Mariapolis Peace of Tagaytay (Philippines), the ordination of two Asian focolarini, Chun Boc Tay and Froi Fajardo took place.

Chun, born in China and moved to the Philippines at the age of 12, did not have any religious belief. He met the Ideal of unity in 1969 at the university through his professor who was a focolarino, Silvio Daneo. He was a member of the very first group of Filipino gen. Many remember him as a very committed and serious gen, who was always beside Cengia. In '73 he felt the call of Jesus to follow Him as a



Tagaytay, 3 september, 2016. Chun and Froi with the Bishops and concelebrating priests and the Buddhist monks who came for the ordination

focolarino. This is what he shared during his ordination: «This is a moment to renew my “yes” which I told Jesus when I entered the focolare, a “yes” to a new service, but inherent in our call

to follow Jesus as focolarini. The preparation was done with Jesus in the midst, just as was everything else, thanks to everyone in the Little City. I place myself once again in the hands of Mary so that I can live my vocation as a focolarino well and now also as her priest. I consider as a treasure every word of Emmaus: «that being “priests of

Mary” may be fully realized in you...» and priests of Jesus: «...we are nothing outside the focolarino team».

Froi comes from a very religious family, well-off, coming from the northern Philippines. He met the Movement through some of his friends in '83. In '84 he went to Loppiano to begin the first permanent gen school together with other gen from different countries. The following year he participated in the Genfest, working intensely for its preparation. In the meantime the call to follow Jesus as a focolarino grew and matured in him. This is how Froi described his journey leading to his priestly ordination: «When I gave my life to God in the focolare, I found myself in the fullness of my

vocation. I didn't lack anything. The request of the Work of Mary to prepare myself for the ordination gave me great joy: I can love more, I can serve more! When I was in Loppiano, Cengia proposed that I study Theology after the School of formation. But in the end I studied Business Administration first and then Theology!».

The entire Mariapolis Peace welcomed with open arms the numerous groups of our intern members and adherents coming from Thailand, Vietnam, Indonesia, Myanmar, Singapore, Korea, Hong Kong and the Philippines. Also present were three Buddhist monks from Thailand. During the ordination ceremony on September 3, three Filipino bishops of the Movement took part, around 50 priests of various nationalities concelebrated and more than six hundred people participated. The three Buddhist monks were very attentive throughout the ceremony. Their presence was important; the phrase of Chiara chosen for the occasion was: *«The priest today cannot but be a man of dialogue... builders of unity “so that all may be one”».*

Cecilia Caro, Giuseppe Arsi



For the focolarini and the focolarine Let yourselves be surprised

For the first time, in august, a school for focolarine, focolarini, and married focolarine and focolarini who are entrusted with the task-service of being «helpers» to the Delegates of the Zone for the focolarini and focolarine, together with those «entrusted» with the married focolarini



In the Little Town of Montet (Switzerland) from august 22 to 31, a school was built day by day, by the invited focolarini and focolarine with the task of being «helpers» to the Delegates of the Zone for the focolarini and focolarine, together with those «entrusted» with the married focolarini. From the start it was proposed to let each one be surprised by the Holy Spirit. And it was really what happened. The experience began with the greetings to the school of Bruno Venturini, that was recorded just a short while before he left for the heavenly Mariapolis: «We wait for Him with great joy». And the telephone call of Palmira Frizzera, one of the first companions of Chiara Lubich: «You have a grace that we did not have and it will be a grace for

the growth of the whole Work of Mary.» A grace which was expressed also through the participation of Friederike Koller and Ángel Bartol, central delegates, who were present throughout the school.

On the first day, the feastday of Mary the Queen, after the presentation of the 107 participants coming from all the continents, Emmaus recalled that on August 22, 1958, precisely in Switzerland, the consecration of all peoples to Mary took place. She invited everyone to place themselves in her hands «because - she said - (Mary) knows how to help us help others, she is the principal Helper».

Pope Francis advised the youth who were gathered for the WYD in Krakow (Poland), to «install well the navigator», and so the leitmotiv of the school was the meditations, root and foundation of each day, and some specific themes, gradually developed with competence and clarity by our experts, participated and integrated by testimonies and experiences made in the various focolares in the world. All those present were thus able to draw from the wisdom of the Charism, expressed as formation and accompaniment.





Emmaus and Jesús, through an intense exchange of personal experiences or of the Zone, in answering to the different questions prepared by the various working groups gave many indications and important clarifications.

The Word of life of the month «You have only one Teacher and you are all brothers and sisters» (Mt 23,8) guided the day. Every lesson, every sharing, helped to clarify that everything contributes to the enhancement of the focolare as the venue and experience of sanctification. In this perspective the figure of the «helper» and the one «entrusted» have emerged in their specificity, which is only that of service, also because this is the heart and core of the focolare, its true builder is Jesus in the midst. It is Him who gives the light to accompany, to understand the design of God on every person, and He is always the point of reference of every focolarino and focolarina and of the whole focolare.

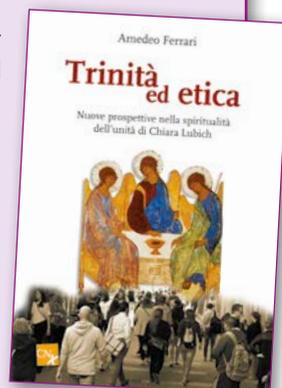
The service of the «helper/entrusted» can thus be modeled on this expression of the Gospel: «for them I sanctify myself» (Jn 13,19). In this way the importance of the instruments of the collective spirituality were highlighted, including the communion of experiences on the Word of life, which is fundamental for the life of unity.

The theme of the year on Jesus Forsaken that Emmaus gave to the focolarini who were concluding their period of formation in Montet was also included in the programme. This was the most suitable reality to explain our sanctity and the journey of those who have taken up the responsibility in the Movement as «helper» and «entrusted».

Teresa Rychwalska, Carlos Saura

New publications Trinity and ethics

Fr. Amadeo Ferrari is publishing the results of a profound and inspired research that he has done in a span of several years, on the moral vision that flows from the charism of unity. We met with him and asked him some question regarding this volume *Trinità ed etica* (Trinity and ethics) Città Nuova, 2016.



1) In what way is your ethics proposal linked to a paschal dimension?

The trinitarian ethics flows precisely from the mystery of death and resurrection experienced by Jesus and through which the whole of humanity is recreated as a «new creature». So that this novelty of life develops in each one and the entire ecclesial and social body, it is necessary for the believer to live in his daily life the paschal passage of death and resurrection. There are three realities that will allow him to do this: love that makes one pass from death to life; to live the ascetic part and the resurrection part of the Word of life, Jesus crucified and risen loved in all one's personal and social situations, of disunity and of suffering, so as to recompose the unity with God and with the neighbour.

2) What role does the Golden Rule have in a world in which cultural pluralism is the trend?

There is now a positive reaction to cultural and ethic pluralism in the search for a wise norm that is universally recognized and which can illuminate the behaviour of people of different races, cultures and religions. The golden rule present in almost all religions, which Confucius proposed as an ethical principle to his followers and which Jesus confirmed as something that contains all the law and the prophets, seems to be an adequate answer. The golden rule is recognized as a natural moral norm valid for everyone. The constant reference to it could continue to give a notable contribution to overcoming cultural and ethical pluralism.

At the Vinea Mea of Loppiano

«Hold the focolare dearly»

In Loppiano a school to concretize the guidelines which emerged in the general Assembly and in that of the priest focolarini

«I arrived in Loppiano with my (presumed) identity of a priest focolarino; I left Loppiano as *Opera* that truly contains my priest focolarino identity». This impression, written by one of the participants (but there are many other similar ones that can be cited) expresses quite well the experience lived in Loppiano at the end of August. A school which gathered 41 priest focolarini from 17 Countries. It was the first of four stages that are planned up to 2019, which will take up in rotation the seven aspects. The true planner of the programme was Jesus in the midst, who built the «house» on four pillars.

First. *Paradise '49*. Theme presented in four lessons introduced by Sergio Rondinara. Francisco Canzani and Renata Simon, responsible for the aspect «Wisdom and Studies» (Indigo), offered a collection of writings (*points of light on dialogue* and the *Resurrecion of Rome*) to explain the dialogues. Jesús Morán spoke of the ecclesial genius of Chiara. From this talk one could also see the same roots of *Paradise*. A profound communion followed, together and in the individual focolares, so as to be able to receive well the treasure that was given to all.

Second. The assistance given by the persons responsible for the five dialogues. Their presentations formed the basis for an exercise in dialogue, listening and sharing. Chiara had described the priest as a «man of dialogue», a topic which brought forth a profound echo from the participants. The combination of *Paradise* and *dialogues* highlighted the aspect of the Indigo,

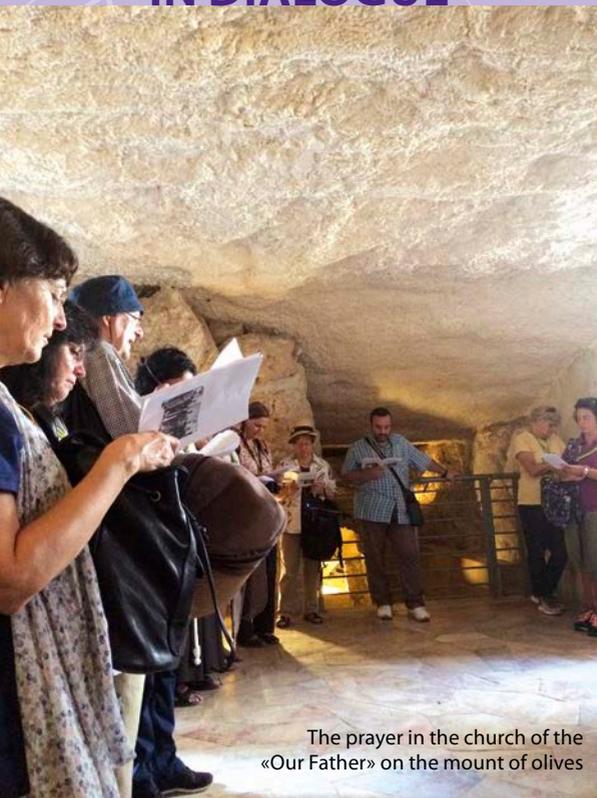
one of the colours chosen to begin the thorough deepening of the colours. The other, the Violet (Unity and means of communication), presented by Cecilia Capuzzi and Paolo Loriga, gave the interior disposition or the soul one should have in facing the challenges of today.

Third. The experience of being in the *Heart of the Movement*, was possible due to the context of Loppiano, in the presence of the co-president and the central delegates. There were important moments of communion made possible during the dinner/evening that the focolares of the priests spent with the different focolares of Loppiano, during the concert of the Gen Verde and during the Masses celebrated at the Theotokos. Sameiro Freitas and Marco Bartolomei, responsible for the Parish and Diocesan Movement, presented how the parishes are truly Church thanks to the light and the incarnation of the Ideal of unity. Jesús explained in depth our identity and vocation. Encouraged also by the priest Volunteers, we identified the path to take in order to deepen our vocation to unity.

Fourth. Focolare life. The environment of the *Vinea Mea* made this easy for us to experience. The motto that Chiara gave to the priests echoed all throughout: «to hold the focolare dearly». Moments of relaxation, meals prepared and eaten together, prayers in common, all contributed to build the «we» that we had proposed to do.

Fr. Antonio Bacelar





The prayer in the church of the «Our Father» on the mount of olives

The Abbà School in the Holy Land In the places where Jesus lived

An important experience
in contact with the wounds of humanity

living unity to the fullest and thus to acquire an always more luminous light to guide our work. Emmaus gave a specific meaning to our trip: «To go to a frontier land and to enter into the wound of humanity». In this regard, there were several important meetings: with Fr. Pierbattista Pizzaballa, ofm, ex-Guardian and present apostolic Administrator, who introduced us into the reality of the Church in the Middle East, its political and social situation, the hot topics of this world in conflict; with the

Every place is a place of the Lord, but when he was incarnated, he chose a particular land, Galilee, with its cities and villages: Nazareth, Canaan, Capernaum, the the lake of Tiberius and its hills; Judea, Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Jericho. Names that we learned and got to know from the Gospels and which are dear to us even without having been there. With the ascension into heaven Jesus permanently left his land and one does not need to go there any longer just to meet him. Nevertheless he had left indelible traces, that the invasions, wars and destruction were not able to erase. Together with «history» there is also a «geography» of salvation.

And so, as the Abbà School, we decided to go on a pilgrimage, from august 21 to 28, to visit the places of our origin. The aim was to grow in unity among us so as to truly form a body (the «Soul»!) which is capable of



Some members of the Abbà School with Fr. P. Pizzaballa (in the middle), apostolic administrator of Jerusalem

community of Bethlehem; with a small group of Jews in Jerusalem; with the community in Galilee and with people of other Movements with whom the members of the Focolare were in contact. Particularly profound was the meeting with the focolarine and thefocolarini of the Holy land, with whom we were able to share our experience and above all to read some pages of Paradise '49 which have guided us in those days.

Together with the Gospels we had in fact as our guide a precious book: the experience of Chiara Lubich in 1949-50, which shed light on the mysteries of Jesus, helping us to relive them in the places where they happened. «When we read together the texts of Paradise in those places – one of us said – they came to life. The annunciation, the incarnation, the birth of Jesus, his hidden and public life, the Way of the Cross, the abandonment, the Resurrection... were no longer events of 2000 years ago, but actual and present realities, that Chiara explained to us from within, making us enter into the experience almost physically. It was as if she had opened a door that made us penetrate those realities».

Since the first day we felt welcomed by the Madonna who accompanied us the entire time guiding us herself along the same steps of Jesus. Whether in Jerusalem, in the place of his tomb, or in Nazareth, at the fountain of the Virgin, we found ourselves celebrating the feast of the Assumption with the Orthodox Church – it was not something we planned.

Some moments will remain unforgettable, like the visit to the church of the «Lord's Prayer (Our Father)» in the mount of olives. Was it really the place where Jesus taught his disciples to pray? In that moment for us, the historical authenticity was not important: we sang the «Our Father» and something great happened. As we pronounced that word – it is not by chance that we call ourselves the Abbà School – we felt Jesus beside us, and that with him we were turning towards the Father, we felt ourselves brothers

and sisters among us as never before, all one. «I experienced a very strong union with God – one of us wrote – a moment of profound intimacy with the Father. It was natural for me to reconsecrate myself totally to Him, asking him for many things, talking to him. His presence surrounded me. There was no need for words, but only to enjoy being with Him. His gift to me for which I am very grateful».

We stayed for almost a week in Jerusalem, where the great mysteries that we relived took place: at the Cenacle, on the steps that led to Cedron, on the rock where the cross of Jesus was raised, in the place of his Resurrection... It was as if we met him in every street corner, in the concreteness of his life; not a Jesus of 2000 years ago, but him alive today.

The last day found us on the lake of Tiberius, in Nazareth, on the mount of the beatitudes, on Mount Tabor, as if we too welcomed the invitation made by the angels after the Resurrection: «The Master is waiting for you in Galilee», there where everything began. After the experience of Jerusalem, where we relived the event of Jesus's passion, death and Resurrection, it was a rediscovery of our vocation, like that of Mary in the house in Nazareth, like that of the Apostles beside the lake, and to decide once again to follow him with a greater awareness, ready to go wherever He would bring us.

Fr. Fabio Ciardi



Along the shore of the lake of Tiberius

At the Mariapolis Ginetta

The paradigm of fraternity

A course from which cultural novelties emerged in answer to the challenges of the Latin American continent

«Seeing that practical and intellectual life can be lived within a trinitarian logic was a great novelty. It was a big relief for me to discover that fraternity is the most effective road, even if it is arduous, for the peripheries of the world today». «I understood that it is necessary to review the foundations of our certainties, to understand one another through the gaze of the other: politician, scientist, man».



These are two of the many impressions written by the youth at the end of the «Curso de Férias» (Summer School), held from July 25 to 31 at the Mariapolis Ginetta (Brazil), with the aim of proposing to the young participants a cultural novelty: the paradigm of fraternity applied to the social, economic sciences, in culture, as an answer to the great challenges of the Latin American continent.

It was organized by the newly born Sophia Academic Center for Latin America and the Caribbean (Sophia ACL) set-up last year. The participants were young university students or those who graduated recently. There were 60 Brazilians and 11 from the other Countries (Mexico, Colombia, Perú, Argentina, Chile, Paraguay).

To see these students so full of life - many of them committed to actions that are already bringing profound changes in their environments - and thirsty for wisdom, gives hope and encouragement to the development of the «Sophia ACL» project.

The Course was preceded by a two-day seminar participated by 33 professors of various disciplines who came from various parts of Brazil and from Mexico, Colombia, Bolivia and Argentina.

The Seminar and the «Curso de Férias» marked a step forward for the so-called «cultural project» of the Movement of which «Sophia ACL» is an expression. This body, which was recharged by taking advantage of every possibility of communion, is now the secure base from which another step can be taken: to deepen together the urgent questions of our continent with the awareness that a new road is opening up that will bring forth the specific contributions that we can give to our peoples and to other continents.

The managing Council of Sophia ACL



Medicine Dialogue Communion

In Prague with the youth in the biomedical field



In Prague (Czech Republic) students and young professional in the different ambits of the biomedical field coming from six Countries

The topics ranged from professionalism, to medical formation, from informed consent to research ethics. This took place at the Summer school entitled «The evolution of biomedicine: challenges in ethics and professionalism» held from September 9 to 12 at the Mariapolis Center of Vinor near Prague (Czech Republic). The participants, from different health professions (doctors, dental practitioners, physiotherapists, technicians, dieticians, etc...), came from Slovakia, Slovenia, Hungary, Austria, Belgium, Italy.

The topics, proposed and studied in depth in the preceding month by a commission formed by some youth, nourished a school made up of students and young professional in the area of biomedicine which also became a venue for human and professional formation also because of the contribution coming from different cultural perspectives, the various experiences and expertise of the participants, the possibility of dialogue, sharing and revision or

reworking with the adults and experts present or linked at a distance. «A great experience both professionally and vitally – the participants commented – an experience that gives us hope».

Flavia Caretta



A dental clinic for children

Some of the participants at the Summer School were involved as presenters, together with the professors. Among them were also two dental assistants working with Dr. Elisabeth Danner from Austria, who presented together with her an innovative project. Here are some excerpts of their experience.

«I have been working for around sixteen years as a dentist in a clinic which is part of a public health structure in Graz, Austria. While I pursued with much ambition my career in dental surgery, I realized that almost nobody wanted to take care of children's dental needs because they required more time, but above all because more than 70% of them come from 28 different nations, 12 of which are outside Europe;

these children often come from precarious economic situations and cannot speak and understand the German language well. For this reason, the children are often sent to the hospital and subjected to general anesthesia for simple dental procedures. I felt the importance of taking the responsibility to care for them, but I immediately encountered administrative

and organizational obstacles as I attempted to set-up a clinic that was suitable for children. I did not give up and, thanks also to the collaboration of my assistants, in a matter of a few years, using simple and economical instruments, we were able to develop a new approach to treat them. The method, which we called "PDAC-Personalized Dental Approaches in Children" allows us now to reduce drastically the number of children sent to the hospital for dental care. We were able to present this method to dental congresses and during lessons for dentistry students garnering appreciation and the possibility of its diffusion».

New Humanity Ecumenism and Church

Issue number 223 of our magazine on culture has just been printed

After the issues of Luther (NU221), and on the 25 years of the Economy of Communion (NU222), this time it is the turn of the Church as seen from the point of view of ecumenical dialogue. The Focus of NU223 presents a preview of the fruits of the long standing work done by the movement «Faith and Constitution», of the Ecumenical Council of Churches, in order to arrive at a common vision as Church among the different Christian confessions. This issue was prepared by Joan Patricia Back (Pavi), our expert on ecumenism. Focus presents a never before published and precious document: the official response of the Focolare Movement to the invitation which came from the CEC requesting for its position on the work that has been done. Our contribution was signed Emmaus Voce and Jesús Morán, aside from our other experts.

This issue is completed by three interesting essays. The first is by Card. Kurt Koch, president of the Pontifical Council for Christian Unity, that presents ecumenism under the pontificate of Francis. The second is by the sociologist Gennaro Iorio,

who examines the emerging paradigm of sharing in the era of the third industrial revolution. The last is by the economist Anouk Grevin who leads

us in the discovery of giving as a resource and dimension of human labour. Issue number 223 begins with an editorial by Alberto Lo Presti, which proposes some reflections on the summer that has been marked by tragic events caused by global terrorism. The pearls of the spirituality of unity are manifested in an essay of the Claudio Guerrieri on the combination of truth and dialogue in Chiara Lubich, and another splendid passage from the Story of

Light, which is the story of Chiara Lubich written by Iginio Giordani.

The editorial board has been receiving many requests regarding the previous issues, above all with regards to the Story of Light, the fascinating and never before published story of Chiara written by Foco. You may write to the secretariat of the Board for whatever clarifications you need with regards to subscribing to New Humanity. Please contact telephone no. 06.94798313 – Christina Roth (from Monday to Friday, office hours).

prepared by the editorial board



Paulo José Melo

To rise up higher

Focolarino from Portugal, at 61 years old he reached the heavenly Mariapolis after an unexpected manifestation of a serious illness during the fullness of his life at the service of the Movement.

Since his youth he was sensitive to the problems of society, and his contact with the poor areas in Lisbon was what urged him to join an extreme leftist group. In 1973 he met the Ideal of unity and he immediately committed himself to living and sharing this with others also through the concerts of the gen band to which he belonged. Soon he felt the call of God to leave everything «to be his disciple» and after graduating with a degree in Economy, he left for Loppiano in '77. He wrote to Chiara: «I am greatly overjoyed in thinking that God sees my life as an embroidery seen from above. The knots and mistakes seen from below are like the nails that I put on the mountainside in order to climb up higher. And I want to go always higher because I want to reach the place where He wants me to be; detached from the world and from myself so that He can be my God and my all ...».

After the school he went back to Portugal and remained there for 18 years. Then he went to Nairobi as the co-responsible for the Zone of East Africa and then, from 2009, for that of Congo. In all those he met, Paulo left a strong witness of radicalness, generosity and wisdom, all rooted in his interior life. He wrote: «There are moments in which everything around me is silent and what remains is a personal, quiet, in effable



conversation of the creature with his Creator. Even in the midst of the things of God, it seems that in those moments my life comes a little bit closer to the design of God [...]. The sun sets in Nairobi. The sky is blue. The

clouds are golden white. Within me peace, desire for sanctity...» (to Chiara in 1998). His letters often go back to the importance of living a true life of family in the focolare: «In focolare there is Jesus in the midst and for me this is the most beautiful and the most important thing. Certainly we can always improve ... especially in our communion», «In my heart I have only one concern: that Jesus may be born in us and among us». In 2014 he confided to Emmaus: «I feel the joy and enthusiasm of being a focolarino and to serve God in this Opera. It is the same as what I experienced when I was 22 years old and I left for Loppiano, but now with a little bit more experience, the successes and failures. I left for Africa in 1997 and the experiences that I have lived and continue to live there are so enriching. It has been a gift for my life as a person and as a focolarino which I hope everyone can have the same to experience». After Africa Paulo returned to Portugal and assumed the co-responsibility for the small zone. It was here that he received the news of a relentless illness. In a short time he took flight towards God, detached from everything as he had always tried to do, continuing to make his Word of life shine: «Whoever does not renounce all his possessions, cannot be my disciple» (Lk 14,33).

At the news of his departure for Heaven, the community of Kinshasa (Congo), profoundly grateful for all that he had given them during his five-year stay, organized a ceremony which is usually done when the deceased is present: a solemn Mass, numerous testimonies and the symbolic send-off to accompany him to join his ancestors. After pouring



palm wine into a hole in the ground, these words were pronounced: «Here we are to thank you for the time spent together. And since you have lived according to the teachings of our ancestors, our clan now takes you as our model: we promise you to live the way you did. We know that you have reached the village of our ancestors. Now we ask you to come and share with us this palm wine as

a sign of our beautiful memories. We greet you and we ask you to greet also all our people who are with you in the village of our ancestors». How can we not see, in these expressions of ancient wisdom, a consonance with one of the truths that we recite in the Creed regarding the communion of saints that links earth and heaven and with the love that continues and unites us beyond death?

Paola Squillante

«He made streams gush forth from the stone» [Ps 78 (77),16]]

The life of Paola, focolarina of the Roman Mariapolis, left behind a legacy of the freshness of her gift to God, the love for everyone and the strength with which she faced her illness; obvious fruits of a total adhesion to the Gospel. Hers was a choice, that was made with insight, with the sensitivity and intelligence which characterized her, in the desire to be a gift for the others.

Born in Naples (Italy), she met the Movement when she was 20 years old and after just three months she wrote to Chiara: «Before, nothing satisfied the demands of my soul, now I have an inner joy that I have never experienced before. I want nothing more than to love and to love Jesus Forsaken, to work for His glory and for "That all may be one". If Jesus will call me to follow you in your way, he would have filled my soul to overflowing with joy ». A year later Paola was already in the focolare. From 1978 to '83 she was responsible for the focolare center in Genoa and in the next nine years in Turin. She was a witness and a companion in the Holy Journey of some gen: Alberto Michelotti and Carlo Grisolia, now servants of God, and Chiara Luce Badano, now Blessed, whom she followed closely, with her characteristic trademark of communion, of becoming saints together.

What followed for Paola after were years of strong experiences of darkness and light, of suffering and love which bear witness to her faithfulness to the Spouse. In '94 she is called to the Center to work in the New Humanity Secretariat. Here, her marked ability to create relationships, even with the neighbours, and her great generosity became evident. The fervour with which



she worked in the Office that followed the activities in memory of Chiara Luce Badano was very conspicuous.

The experience of her illness which began in 2003, was marked by repeated surgical interventions. Her body underwent great trials, but Paola, who by then learned to live with

suffering and pain, offered this for everyone. «I know that I can no longer go back – she confided to her focolare - I have entered into the wound of Jesus Forsaken. I have no other bonds except the love of God that makes me experience His mercy in such a certain way». She moved to the Casa Verde and many came to visit her, among whom were Eli, Gis, Aletta and, at the end of August, also Emmaus who saw that she was ready for her meeting with Jesus. On September 13, at the age of 73, surrounded by her focolare and her family members, she joined the Spouse of her soul, in the fullness of peace of someone who has given Him everything.

Filippo Mazzonetto

My days are in His hands

A native of the province of Padua (Italy) Filippo received his formation in the school of the Cavanis Fathers where he finished his studies in Theology. In 1959, during a period of



searching for his way of life, someone invited him to the Mariapolis in Fiera di Primiero: an experience which led him to the choice of giving himself to God in the way of the focolare. A teacher by profession, after the school of Loppiano he entered the focolare in Milan, where he remained until he reached retirement age. He went back to Loppiano to teach Italian to the focolarini from other countries and for three years he lived with a focolarino with a serious disability.

He gave an accounting of his life: «As the years pass a lot of useless things also fall like the dead leaves of autumn. I feel that I am walking along the pathways of the Lord with a greater awareness. God now speaks to me in a different way, without any intermediaries». and still: «For some years now some health issues have begun. Just recently a more serious condition has manifested itself for which no cure has yet been found. It seems that my life is about to enter into a bottleneck, but at the same time I feel that God is closer to me and that my days are in His hands». Chiara in '67 had given him a new name: *Vis* (abbreviation of «*Virgo Potens*»), and a Word of life: «The mouth of the just will speak wisdom» [cfr Ps 48 (49),4]. «This verb in the “future” tense – Filippo often commented – gives me a lot of hope that sooner or later some crumbs of wisdom will come to me».

For how he serenely lived his life, for the constant love he had for his companions in the focolare and for many, we can say that Filippo truly «spoke wisdom». He left for Heaven peacefully on August 29 at the age of 84, a few minutes after the celebration of the Mass in his room.

Giuseppe (Beppe) Gritti

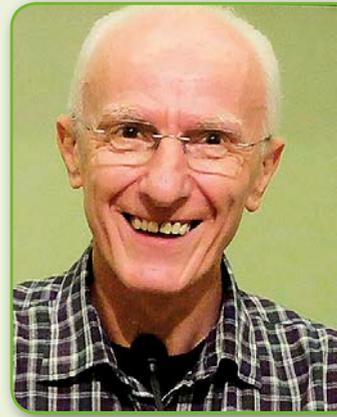
I feel like an expert in receiving mercy

Born in Bergamo (Italy), Beppe was still small when his family moved to Sesto San Giovanni (Milan) where, at 13 years old, he met the Ideal of Chiara. He immediately committed all of himself, going from discovery to discovery, with a great enthusiasm that characterized him. He became a gen with conviction, a revolutionary.

His desire to love everyone made him open his eyes also to his relationship with his father with whom he seldom conversed. «I sat on my bed – he shared – I told him of my discovery, and I finally tried to love him seriously, the way he was! In this love I found the joy of feeling like a son once more and he too, as he interested himself in my work, my studies, sports and the gen, he felt himself a complete father!».

«Yes» is his «battle name», a «yes» that he always said and which brought him to the decision to give himself completely to God in the focolare. This life for Beppe was so intense, and he was helped by the Word of life that he received from Chiara: «The disciple will be perfect, if he will be like the Teacher» (cf Lk 6,40). He had many talents: artistic, managerial, human and spiritual, which he all placed in common in the various Zones where he lived, particularly in the almost 20 years spent in Milan and in those spent in Latin America: Venezuela, Argentina, Mexico, Perù. This is what he wrote to Chiara in '94: «I worl in the Città Nuova publishing house for more than 20 years now. Unity with the Spouse and the communion with the focolarini have sustained me, protected and pushed me forward! How many experiences of providence! And how I have felt you close beside me in the car as I drove all over Lombardy to bring the Ideal printed on my face and on paper!» During his difficult moments he wrote: «... I am a poor gut, a real sinner... I feel like an expert in receiving mercy...».

In 2015 he was in the focolare in Perù, where he had found work as a professor of Italian at the University. It was there that a serious illness manifested itself. He returned to Italy. As the illness progressed he experienced moments of darkness, which he was able to overcome by increasing his faith in God and entrusted himself to Him. On September 8 he flew to Heaven peacefully at the age of 64, precisely on the day dedicated to the birth of Mary.



Steffanie (Steffi) Maria Schörnig

*«I ask Jesus that He takes shape
in me more and more»*

Steffi was one of the first married focolarinas of the former GDR (East Germany). After the Second World War, the new geo-political configuration of Germany forced her to leave her region, Silesia, and to move to Leipzig. Upon the death of her mother and brother, the loss of their home and, in a certain sense, also her homeland, now she had only God to rely on. She met the Movement, together with her fiancé Winfried, and she throws herself fully in living the Ideal. After their marriage, upon the request of the Movement, they took



care of the focolarini who came to work in the Catholic hospital in Leipzig. When the wall was built between the two Germanies, they worked tirelessly to spread the spirituality of unity behind the Iron Curtain.

Steffi and Winfried – who, as doctors, were able to lend their services also to Saint John Paul II – are experts in the natural method of family planning: thus they had many occasions to build many relationships in spite of their big family (six children), taking on various roles of responsibility in the Movement and in the Church especially in accompanying persons with no religious convictions. In 1989 Steffi was finally able to attend the school of the married focolarina at the Center. «I experienced for the first time – she wrote to Chiara – this atmosphere that fills me with joy; and I assure you my unity so that the transformation of the world will be realized... I choose only Jesus Forsaken». In '96 she declared: «In every holy Mass I ask Jesus to take shape more and more in me, so that I can be transformed into the Soul always more».

In the final years of her life, Jesus Forsaken became Steffi's constant companion. The loss of her husband was very painful for her. An illness

greatly reduced her mobility. When she could no longer speak, her eyes spoke for her. Her trust in Mary made her peaceful up to the end. On September 7, at 81 years old, she serenely went to meet the Father.

Carmela Ripà Bogi

Her generous and totalitarian yes

Married focolarina of the early times, she was born and lived in Pescara (Italy). Carmela reached the heavenly Mariapolis on September 15 at the age of 94. She was a teacher by profession, and she was known for her relationship with many children and parents who found in her a teacher, a mother and a guide. In 1945 she married Nicola and their family was enriched by six children.



When she met the Ideal, which happened in the Mariapolis at Fiera di Primiero, she discovered the reality of God Love and her «yes» to Him was generous and totalitarian. From then on Carmela welcomed the call to give herself to God as a married focolarina. «Following you in the way - she wrote to Chiara in '60 - I feel that the Lord is making me more and more ready to be that instrument which allows Him to use it, moment by moment, according to His will. May my life be for His glory, nothing else matters to me anymore ...». Her children and all those she meets are attracted and taken in by the new life that together with Nicola, also a married focolarino, transmit in their condominium, in the parish, in the city. Their house became a venue for meeting and sharing the Ideal. Many young people found in her a concrete support in the difficult moments especially during the years of protests. Together with her husband they prepared engaged couples for marriage and take care of families in difficult relationships.

The trials that Carmela faced in special unity with Jesus Forsaken were not lacking: health problems of her children; the unexpected death

of her grandchild Francesca, and later of her son Roberto, father of the child. Humble, delicate, always loving, hers was a fruitful faithfulness, which, in the midst of life's difficulties, made her able to keep her sense of wonder at the things of God and which pushed her onwards to «That all may be one».

Rafael (Rafa) Gordillo

«I cannot imagine life that is not according to the charism of unity»

Married focolarino of Tucumán (Argentina), Rafa (a name given to him by Chiara Lubich which means «*raffinare l'amore* (refine love)»), left for the heavenly Mariapolis on September 22 at 66 years old. Immediately after their wedding, from which five children were born, with his wife Lucrecia they met the Movement and from that moment Rafa's life changed completely. He wrote to Chiara: «I can peacefully say that I cannot imagine life in any other way if not according to the charim of Unity...» and after some time spent as a Volunteer, in 1994 he felt the call to become a part of the focolare.



Humble, lovable, peaceful, always with a ready smile, everyone felt at ease with him. Rafa knew how to listen, always ready to understand, to help, to build. He was respected by everyone as an honest professional, who through simple words knew how to suggest the most convenient proposal.

He loved order, and during the final months of his life, unaware of what was to come, he put in order all the documents of the family. An illness unexpectedly manifested itself which proved to be quite serious, and he had many doubts about the surgical procedure that was proposed to him, but then he meekly entrusted himself to the doctors. Unfortunately he was not able to survive the post-operation phase and returned to the House of the Father.

Up to the end Rafa had in his heart the launching of the EoC that was to be held in salta, a city where he had gone many times to follow-up all the details of the vent. As soon as they learned of «departure», they wrote from Salta: «we cannot imagine Tucumán without you. In the immense pain of your loss, we were able to transmit the project of the EoC to almost 300 people». The Word of life that Chiara gave him and which had always guided him is: «He died for everyone, so that all those who live don't live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again for them» (2Cor 5,15).

Myriam Bassot



A strong call to give everything to God

Married focolarina of France, Myriam already had four children when in 1969 she met the Ideal in a very delicate moment of her married life. «I discovered Mary – she

wrote – her greatness. I strongly felt the call to give everything to God».

Myriam is remembered as a strong woman of the Gospel, tenacious in the midst of family trials, as well as during her chronic illness which in succeeding stages made her progressively dependent on others. In January '88 she wrote to Chiara: «This illness could have been a "Herod" for me that would like to kill Jesus in me, because it makes everything difficult and it tries to discourage me. But today I have enormous faith. Having married God, I said and repeated my "yes", abandoning myself totally to Him».

After a meeting in Castel Gandolfo in '92 she wrote: «I leave with this proposal: with the help of the Holy Spirit, I will be nothing, a nothingness of love so as to let Jesus live, the Risen One, and so as to be in the Soul, which means in Unity. This is what will produce light for the advancement of "That all may be one"». Living

with Mary Desolate was her strength. She spoke about this with simplicity, with evident conviction. At the same time she gave a great contribution to numerous realities of the Movement: from the Mariapolis Center of St. Pierre de Chartreuse in the Alps, to ecumenism, to the Little Town of Arny, near Paris, where she moved to in 2007. She also experienced some moments of darkness, with the loss of her memory and her points of reference. From 2016 she became bedridden, but she recovered her clarity of mind. Up to the end she gave a strong witness of the Ideal also to the gen3 and gen4 girls who would go to visit her.

Surrounded by her four children, grandchildren and great grandchildren, at 84 years old, Myriam reached Heaven on September 29, peacefully and conscious up to the end. The Word of life she received from Chiara in 1975 is: «Take courage: I have won the world!» (Jn 16,33).

Fr. Domenico Ferri

A pastor who was always loving to everyone

Priest focolarino of the diocese of Sora (Lazio, Italy), Fr. Domenico offered his service to the Movement living with particular intensity in the Parish Movement with other two (Fr. Cosimino Franzuto and Fr. Gennaro Avellino) and contributing in this way to its founding in his Zone. As a guide and orientation for his life, Chiara gave him the Word: «Joyful in hope, atrong in tribulation, persevering on prayer» (Rm 12,12). From Gaeta they give a unanimous testimony of his generous dedication in the congresses and in the

formation meetings of the Movement, his great capacity to love, his specific gift of guaranteeing the presence of the Risen One in the community.

It was Jesus in the midst, as assured to him by the priests of his focolare, that helped him to overcome the difficult moments of an illness that on August 14, at the age of 76, brought him to take flight towards the resurrection. His funeral, celebrated in the parish church of di Pescosolido



(Frosinone), was the warm goodbye of his people for a pastor who was always loving towards everyone.

Fr. Antonio Bacelar e d. Franco Quattrociocchi

Fr. Fernando Garcia Casco

«The Lord guides all his steps» (Prov. 16, 9)

Priest focolarino of Venado Tuerto (Argentina) he met the Movement when he was still a seminarian through the magazine *Ciudad Nueva*. He participated in a Mariapolis and immediately decided to make his own the spirituality of unity and to become a member of the Movement. Parish priest and professor in his diocese, he dedicated himself to the newly born prelatore of Deán Funes, where, among his other responsibilities, he also took care of youth and vocational pastoral work. He structured his mission in the light of the testament of Jesus: «that all may be one». There were very many people who, thanks to him, found Jesus or renewed their choice to follow Him.

Fr. Fernando also knew how to open himself up to dialogue with pastors and members of other Churches. He had a great love for the women and men focolarini, admiring their vocation. For everyone he was a brother who was always available, ready to risk everything also for whoever was beside him, a true «refuge of sinners». Accompanying the father of a focolarina in the final stage of his life, he was able to bring him to receive his first communion at the age of 76.

The testimony of a focolarino is meaningful: «Fr. Fernando was a father for whoever was looking for comfort, an untiring builder of relationships, a pastor who knew how to give hope and to offer the vision of God. In my many years in Argentina I always saw him giving himself and looking for those who were in the peripheries... whether among the clergy or among the people. For this reason everyone felt accepted and welcomed by him». Fr. Fernando returned to the house of the Father on September 28 at 73 years old.

Fr. Gustavo de Fina



Renato Romersi

«Your Father who is in heaven, knows what you need» (Mt 6, 8)

A jack of all trades (he was a fireman, a tram driver, ticket inspector, porter, collector...), Renato was the promoter and head also of the sports and ecclesial associations, always ready to take on the problems of the others until he could find a solution. He was born in Piacenza (Italy) in 1933, with a degree in accounting from night school. At 31 years old he participated in the his Mariapolis and with enthusiasm he decided to dedicate all his energies to the Ideal. He married Vanna and their home became a place that welcomed those who were in need materially and for many who needed spiritual guidance. They had four children.

He became a Volunteer of God and soon he became the regional delegate. Due to his religious, civic and social commitments he was a point of reference for the Movement in his city and not only. In '70 he was elected to the Town

Council and for 10 years he bore witness to his team spirit, and also to his truthfulness even if at times it was uncomfortable. He was active in the parish and also a member and animator of the Parish Council, and with his wife they gave preparatory courses before marriage. After he retired he dedicated himself for almost twenty years to

the spread of Città Nuova. He was also among the founding partners of the Igino Giordani Center of Piacenza.

In 2006 an illness comes that seemed to be successfully treated. But after nine months, the illness returns which Renato faced with uncommon serenity. «For the others - he said - this suffering is only pain, but for me it serves to increase my union with God, for me it is Paradise». That Paradise which he reached on May 3, leaving as his legacy his final words: «Love, Love, Love»: emblem and synthesis of his spiritual and physical life.

Silvio Berti



Gilda Victoria A. Dannug

Model of how to live communion



Volunteer of the Mariapolis Peace of Tagaytay (Philippines), wife of Macdain also a Volunteer, and mother of four children, in 1994 Gilda began her collaboration with SINAG, an association started by some women Volunteers of (Manila) to assist and visit indigents confined in the government hospitals. She lends her service with generosity and sharing her talents, but after some time, due to health reasons, she had to limit herself to working in the secretariat.

In 2001, she moved from Manila to the Mariapolis Peace where the climate is cleaner and cooler which could help in her condition. Her husband and family remain in Manila due to their work and so she has to employ helpers to assist her. She took this as the occasion to form them in the life of prayer and the sacraments while being a witness of an authentic Christian life. Once, at midnight, a neighbour knocked on her door asking for a big amount of money due to a sudden emergency. Without hesitation, Gilda gave her the amount needed.

In the final two years of her life, her health deteriorated and so she had to go back to Manila to be cared for by her husband and children. Nevertheless, she continued to be a model in living the communion of goods in her nucleo, inserting in an envelope, together with her monetary contribution, also her written experiences. For example, that time when she asked a neighbour to prepare the meals for a sick Volunteer, and paying her for this.

When she was hospitalized in serious condition, five Volunteers of the Mariapolis Peace together with a priest rushed to her side. Gilda was in the intensive care unit and she asked for the anointing of the sick. Her face was illuminated with a special joy, and she offered everything for the Movement and for «that all may be one». After a few days, on March 4, God called her at the age of 73.

Pilarita Geronimo



Alba Franchi Galluzzo

«Yes, always, with joy»

Born and raised in Prato (Italy), after years with the gen, in 1991, Alba joined the Volunteers. She married Giulio whom she loved tenderly up to the end. She worked with her mother, an adherent of the Movement, to manage a clothing shop, very much aware that her first responsibility was to «keep Jesus in the midst with her and to love those who entered their shop». She had a reserved but transparent, and everyone felt loved and welcomed by Alba. She never said a word out of place, never a judgement, always intent in highlighting the positive in others.

When she got sick she wrote: «It is my encounter with Jesus Forsaken, a person, spouse of my soul». She entrusted herself to God, trying to allay the fears and worries of those around her. After a night of terrible pain she wrote: «I feel privileged. I want to spend my life for God, so that the goal to which I was called "that all may be one" will be realized here on earth».

Two days before her «departure», which happened on May 29 on the eve of her 54th birthday, she participated in a Mass of the community. She was doing fine and no one imagined that her condition would suddenly deteriorate. She left in the hearts of everyone the joyful testimony of a soul who had truly believed in God-Love.

Gabriella Petrini

Juliano and Rafael. He faced the two years of his illness with great courage and interior strength, abandoning himself in the arms of Mary.

In November 2015, at his last retreat, he confided to his nucleo members: «I live from day to day, offering everything with joy for the Movement. I am not afraid to die because I believe in the resurrection».

For some time their nucleo meetings were held in his engineering office on Sunday morning so as to Juliano to experience the grace of Jesus in the midst up to the end. The testimonies shared about him speak of him as a friend, a brother who knew how to «create family» with everyone, of a man with a big heart, simple, generous, all pervaded by the perfume of the Ideal.

Marcelo Tenorio ed i volontari della zonetta del Paraná

Dina Pizzolato

Cheerful, witty and with a rare wisdom

From the province of Treviso (Italy), Dina migrated to Switzerland due to her work, where she felt the call to a consecrated life. For ten years she lived as a religious in France and then in Rome, but due to her desire to live her faith more concretely, incarnated in society and also due to her poor health, she had to return to her hometown, where she worked as a skilled labourer. She involved herself as a union representative. She met the Movement, welcomed the spirituality and in 1973 she became a Volunteer.

Already responsible for a nucleo and delegate of the small zone, in '85 she was called to Loppiano to stay in the Visitation, the recently started school for the women Volunteers. She stayed there for 15 years, giving herself with great generosity, working with her muscles and loving the Volunteers coming from different countries all over the world with a heart rich in humanity.

At 65 years old, she returned to the Zone, inserting herself fully into the local reality. She worked to provide home care service and as president of the association for the Third Age. She was a volunteer in Caritas, animator of association «Friends of the Heart», extraordinary Eucharistic minister, member of the Pastoral Council, catechist, companion in the kindergarten school bus



Juliano Silveira

A friend and a brother

A Volunteer of the small zone of Paraná (Brazil), on February 22, Juliano concluded his Holy Journey. He had just turned 50. Married to Tania, they lived in the city of Cascavel together with their two children,

of the parish and promoter of initiatives of solidarity, such as the purchase of beds and wheelchairs for the sick and disabled. Her wit as a well-rounded person was illuminated by a rare wisdom. As one responsible for a nucleo she knew how to value, support or even correct with the love of a mother. In 2010, after a Congress in Castel Gandolfo, she wrote: «...everything led me to renew the many “yeses” that I have said throughout my life with a new awareness and to review all my life woven by the Love of God, also the moments that were more difficult or dark. I felt an immense gratitude and I renewed my commitment to no longer live to love but to live being love».

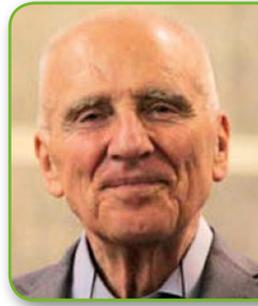
In 2013, struck by an unforeseen and unexpected illness and supported by unity, dina says her yes once again. She wrote: «I am experiencing a new, profound, intimate relationship with God, but also with the madonna, a moment of particular grace». Gradually, her physical strength fades but not her ability to love, alive up to the end. She left for the heavenly Mariapolis at 82 on April 2.

Paola Rita Soccol

and religion. Nevio also met with Mons. Martinelli, bishop of Tripoli and a great friend of the Movement, who having understood the deepest desire of Nevio to be able to receive the Eucharist everyday, entrusted to his care a small pyx with consecrated hosts. Nevio never stopped remembering with emotion the trust the Bishop had in him and the possibility, even in the middle of the desert, to have in his residence. the living presence of Jesus.

The final years of Nevio were dedicated to his family and at the service of the sick as a hospital volunteer in San Donato Milanese (Italy). At 80 years old, on May 9. he left for Paradise.

Paolo Mottironi



Nevio Del Zotto

Beyond every barrier

A smile and a witty remark: this was the typical greeting of Nevio, a Volunteer of God with the soul of a child of the Gospel. In the '70s, after meeting the Ideal, he left as a technician of ENI to work in the oil fields of Africa and the Middle East. He was worried not so much because he had to live in the desert or in the middle of the sea, but because he would no longer be able to remain in contact with the people of the Movement who helped him a lot in his spiritual life. He was overjoyed when during one of his trips he met Giando Catarinella, a focolarino doctor. From that moment on he began to change his travel itinerary to be able to meet him as often as possible. These meetings have a determining effect in the way Nevio would live the years to come as he went all over the world. They gave him the certainty that he would never be alone no matter where he went ... he may be isolated but never alone in his efforts to live the Gospel.

His commitment to love everyone led him to go beyond all barriers: his boss was a brother to love just as the lowest janitor of whatever race, culture

In www.focolare.org/notiziariomariapoli you may find a more extended profiles and others

Our relatives

The following passed on to the Next life: **Paul, father of Ruth Mburu**, focolarina in Onitsha (Nigeria); **Nina, mother of Francesco Lazzoni**, focolarino at the Roman Mariapolis and of Fr. **Giovanni Mannini**, religious in Chiavari (Italy); **Dora, mother of Edevaldo Santini**, focolarino in Bauru (Brazil); **Armando, father of Cesare Cesarini**, focolarino in Palermo; **Antonina, mother of Francesco Curella**, focolarino in Ancona; **Annick, mother of Therese Clayette**, focolarina in Nantes (France); **Becky, sister of Melinda Michels**, focolarina at the Roman Mariapolis; **Eraldo, brother of Solam Burgos da Silva**, focolarina in Arequipa (Perù); **Antonio Luiz, father of Solange Sabin (Sole)**, focolarina in Bethlehem (Holy Land); **Gabriella, mother of Roberta Alvino**, focolarina in Valencia (Spain); **Maria Luisa, mother of Anabel Santaolla**, focolarina at the Mariapolis Center Luminosa (Spain); **Raffaele, brother of Teresa Cifaldi**, focolarina in Verona (Italy); **Francesco, father of Gianmario Maddalena**, focolarino at the Roman Mariapolis.

Errata corrige. In n. 7-8-9/2016 the exact date of the «departure» of Bruno Venturini (pag. 40) is August 2 and not the 1st as erroneously indicated. In the profile of Fr. Louis Lei Xavier (pag. 44) the correction should be: «Tecris, now councilor at the Center of the focolarine», instead of «Agnes, central delegate of the focolarine». We apologize for the unintentional mistakes.

INDEX

SPIRITUALITY

- 2 Thought of Chiara Lubich. *Mercy, the key word*
- 3 *Thoughts on mercy*

EVENTS

- 4 Meeting of Delegates 2016. Being together for the world
- 8 In Brescia in remembrance of Paolo VI. A bond that continues
- 9 The opening of the focolare center in Ethiopia
- 10 In Fontem a «royal» jubilee. The visit of a delegation of Bangwa Fon in Italy in the places of Chiara

THE PEOPLE OF CHIARA

- 12 In Sweden the celebration of the 50° of the arrival of the Focolare Movement
- 13 Tagaytay (Philippines). The ordination of two focolarino priests a gift for Asia

AT THE CENTER

- 15 Let ourselves be surprised. A School for the «helpers» and the «entrusted» for the men and women focolarini
- 16 New publication. *Trinità ed etica (Trinity and ethics)*
- 17 «Hold the focolare dearly». With the priest focolarini at the Vinea Mea of Loppiano

IN DIALOGUE

- 18 In the Holy Land. The Abbà School in the places where Jesus lived
- 20 Sophia Latin America and the Caribbean. «Curso de Férias» at the Mariapolis Ginetta in Brazil
- 21 Youth in the field of biomedicine in Vinor (Prague - Czech Republic)
- 22 The new issue of *Nuova Umanità* (New Humanity). Ecumenism and Church

TESTIMONIES

- 23 Paulo José Melo. Paola Squillante. Filippo Mazzonetto. Giuseppe (Beppe) Gritti. Steffanie (Steffi) Maria Schörnig. Carmela Ripà Bogi. Rafael (Rafa) Gordillo. Myriam Bassot. Fr. Domenico Ferri. Fr. Fernando Garcia Casco. Renato Romersi. Gilda Victoria A. Dannug. Alba Franchi Galluzzo. Dina Pizzolato. Juliano Silveira. Nevio Del Zotto. Our relatives

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Ai sensi del D. Lgs. N. 196/2003 per la tutela dei dati personali, comunichiamo che gli indirizzi dei nominativi a cui viene inviato Mariapoli fanno parte dell'archivio del Notiziario Mariapoli, gestito da PAFOM, esclusivamente per la finalità dell'invio di tale periodico. I dati possono essere comunicati a terzi incaricati per la spedizione.