

YEAR XXXIV N 03-04 MARCH APRIL 2017

MARIAPOLI

Newsletter of the focolare movement



*Family
at the forefront*
**In the light of
the charism
of Chiara
Lubich**

General Council
In Ottmaring take
responsibility together

Publishing Groups
Maximum trust
maximum
responsibility

Poste Italiane S.p.A. | Spedizione in abbonamento postale D.L. 353/2003 (conv. in L. 27/02/2004 n.46) art. 1, comma 2 e 3 | Aut. GIP/C/FM/33/2012 | taxe perçue | tassa riscossa Roma

The joy of the Risen One

[...] There is no resurrection without death. There is no joy of Jesus without love for Jesus Forsaken. If we do not have the joy of the resurrection it means that Jesus Forsaken is no longer the ideal of our life, of our present moment. In his place there is work, our ego, that wants to live when it should die, or our studies, activities, things, people...

In fact, the joy that God wants from us is special: it is the joy of Jesus the Risen One, that blossoms in suffering, that breaks forth from renunciation, that accompanies love.

It is a contagious joy, that is distinct, that affects, that attracts, that converts. It is therefore not an improvised joy, not a facade that is applied to delude oneself or to delude others.

In order to possess it then we have to make and remake everyday the choice of Him and to love Him the whole day: in the sufferings that come, in the renunciations, in the mortifications that our Christian and focolarina life require, in the penances that we cannot disregard.

To love Jesus Forsaken so that Jesus lives in us. Jesus in his abandonment gave himself totally; in



© CSC Audiovisivi

Chiara Lubich

the spirituality that is centered on Him, Jesus the Risen One must fully shine and the joy must bear witness to this.¹

[...] We must embrace Him always, generously and without hesitation, he who presents himself in the sufferings of every day, in the renunciations that the Christian life and all the virtues call for. Then the Risen One, who we hope is already in us due to the grace, will emanate in all his splendour; the gifts of his Spirit flow in our souls; it is an Easter that is constantly renewed; Jesus fully alive in each one of us.

But is Jesus lives in me, and he lives also in my neighbour, it is evident that, when we meet, we are already one, we are in perfect unity.

And what made all this possible?
The love for Jesus Forsaken.²

Chiara Lubich

1 From CHIARA LUBICH, *L'unità e Gesù Abbandonato (Unity and Jesus Forsaken)*, Città Nuova, Rome, October 2005, pag. 95

2 *Ibidem*, pag. 107

New publication You will be totally new

My life with Chiara Lubich

«Not all stories can expect to summarize, in its own small fragment, the sense and fulfillment of an epoch. But that of Luigina Nicolodi yes. It is the story of a person who lived through and actively participated in the salient stages of the Twentieth century. Through her autobiography we can enter into the social and cultural atmosphere of an era marked by many contradictions, rich in singular facts and common circumstances, embedded in a story that is centered on the choice of Luigina Nicolodi to adhere to the Focolare Movement since 1947: at that time it was just a group of young girls who, in Trent, were gathering around Chiara Lubich and which did not have any institutional guarantee to support the stability of the choice that each one was making, neither was there any assured financial security. The first focolarine, as they were called by the people, did not come from a common school, and they also did not have a clearly established itinerary in front of them.

They could not count on anything, and yet they had everything. Their choice to live the Gospel nourished their actions and touched the hearts of those whom they met. A community grew around them, which today is spread all over the world» (from *The Introduction of Alberto Lo Presti*).



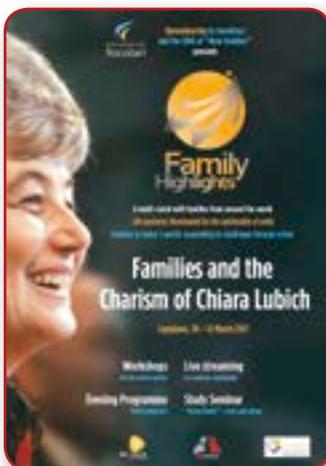
14 march 2017

A light for the family

Events and initiatives to remember Chiara Lubich nine years after her departure and to celebrate the 50° of the New Families

The event FamilyHighlights

The family laboratory of humanity. This is the realization that emerged from the multi-event «FamilyHighlights» (Loppiano, 10-12 march), the international meeting brought together more than a thousand people coming from the fifty Countries: parents of all ages, grandparents, young engaged couples. «FamilyHighlights» is a «journey to be lived all throughout 2017 and to be linked to many other manifestations all over the world», explained Maria and Gianni Salerno, the international delegates in-charge of the New Families. Events are already taking place in many parts of the world – like what had taken place in Loppiano, where, through reflections, experiences, artistic numbers, the contribution of the charism of Chiara to the family was highlighted – in line with the reflections that emerged from the Synod which were subsequently presented in the apostolic exhortation of Pope Francis *Amoris laetitia*. The programme, translated in 19 languages and transmitted via live streaming, went in depth on the reality of the family as a



story of relationships from “I” to “us”, love as an instrument and answer to the critical situations it faces and the family as the creative resource of the social fabric of all peoples, showing how the family or a network of families who know how to open themselves up to welcome others and to solidarity, can change the social context in which they live in.

Underlining the universality of the thoughts of Chiara by citing her words, Dr. Vinu Aram, the directress of the Shanti Ashram, a vast Hindu movement, and a member of the World Conference of religions for peace said: «to love the others as ourselves is the Golden Rule present in all the religions», and she exhorted everyone «to look at the world with the eyes of children because, she declared: there are still too many children who live in situations of poverty». We must therefore think about how to give them a better future. This is the aim that the Shanti Ashram would like to realize in India, in synergy also with AFNonlus, an association that was born from the New Families which works for the disadvantaged families and infants in the world.





12 march. Danilo and Anna Maria Zanzucchi in Loppiano

Maria Voce (Emmaus), president of the Focolare Movement, underlined this commitment in her intervention and encouraged everyone to go ahead. She indicated a series of concrete points to which the familie are called to live, such as to «circulate material and spiritual goods, so that others can learn the value of the culture of giving». She therefore underlined that the values inherent in family life: communion, faithfulness, fcundity, reciprocity, spirit of sacrifice «can become explosive novelities for the decrepit and sclerotic institutional structures and points of reference for a new social order». She then launched the invitation to «become fathers and mothers of humanity, offering a personal contribution to support and encourage universal fraternity».

The only way to begin building a united world is to «get to know each other better, to deepen the love among us, to help each other», commented Dianne and Innocent from Kigali in Rwanda married for 15 years, who together with Mary and Pourik of Dublin, were the first two families drawn by lots as twinning partners among the different families from all over the world. This is an initiative «that we would like to

extend to the other families in our respective territories», so as to intensify a «network that will answer to the needs from one side of the globe to the other».

The stories and the initiatives that emerged during the six *workshops* were dedicated to the relationship as a couple in the various stages of life, and to the parent-child educative experience, to the openness and solidarity in difficult situations and for disadvantaged peoples, and also for the 150 children and teens present.

A Study Center on the family is born



In the preceding days, in collaboration with the Sophia University Institute, a Semonar was held with around a hundred families, university professors and professionals in different fields on the theme: the «pact of reciprocity in family life, which generates trust and relationship». The different ambits of family life were examined as seen both internally (conjuality, parenthood, intergenerational), and externally (family-school alliance, family-social media dialogue, intercultural dimension and a comparison of the different models of a family).



«It was a very important occasion to discuss and to collaborate among us for the good of the family and of humanity», Rosa Maria and Josef Wieland, couple responsible for the families of Schönstatt said, which Pope Francis had also encouraged to work «to create a culture of encounter and of alliance». «This is what we are doing here, they affirmed: to create the family, ecclesial solidarity».



ourselves in an intellectual and cultural reflection», said Paolo and Barbara Rovea, who were among the coordinators. «The commitment of the 50 years of life of the New Families in the five

continents, with the group sharing, the journey of the young couples, those in difficulty, the accompaniment of the widow, of the separated, and couples in new unions, the initiatives to support infancy, are to be considered as a «laboratory that can be transformed into a scientific environment of observation».

The atmosphere is «full of freshness» commented Fr. Paolo Gentili, director of the National Office of the CEI for the family. «The efforts you are making here is to bring to fruition that which Chiara Lubich had intuited in a prophetic way, incarnating the pages of *Amoris laetitia*» (see also www.iu-sophia.org/_News_3998).



The Symposium moved in the direction of interdisciplinarity typical of the Sophia Institute, explained Eric and Neide Ouarque of Fortaleza in Brazil, who as a family are participating in the «Loreto» school and also the academic curriculum of Sophia. He is a *manager*, who would like to deepen his knowledge of the Economy of Communion which puts together economy and management with the Christian social doctrine, while she is a doctor with a Masters Degree in public health and is also a doctoral student in sociology. «It was a precious pearl for us to be able to make this experience which has helped us also as a couple, through a deeper and more profound sharing among us».

The interaction between research and experience, is the soul also of the new Study Center, whose birth was announced during the Symposium, and which will involve experts, academics and families from all over the world in collaboration with other international Universities. «The time is mature to engage

Parents and children in school

If the message of «FamilyHighlights» highlighted how the family, aware of its potentiality, has all the characteristics to face and to win over all the challenges of today, the school for Families held in Castel Gandolfo (13-17 march) hoped to give to the 500 participants the adequate instruments for this to happen. In an open dialogue, with activities for couples and going in depth, various topics were highlighted such as the communication of couples, affectivity, crisis and forgiveness, the culture of giving, finding the balance work-family, education, with a particular emphasis on dialogue and unity which are the foundation for the solidity of a couple and generators of the well-being of a family. «We come



«Family heart»

The family-focolare have in their heart the constant desire of realizing «that all may be one», striving above all to have always and almost constantly, the presence of Jesus among them

Emmaus in her greeting to the families of this school said: «May you always be lit fires, an indivisible unity». This does not necessarily mean that they must have a specific task within the Movement; rather we have the courage to say that maybe, precisely because they have no specific role or task, the family-focolare can more fully emerge in all its wealth, in the beauty of its mystical reality: to be that family, heart of the community where they live, who knows how to be the least and humble, who welcomes and supports everyone, who brings the warmth and light of Jesus present within the walls of its home, in the midst of the ice and darkness of the world.

from China – Lin said – we are happy to be here: from the communion of experiences from all over the world, I discovered that the moments of crisis and darkness are normal in the life of a couple, and by “making yourself one” with the persons living with you makes its easier to overcome difficulties». The initial stage of falling in love is transformed into a mature love nourished by the dynamics of forgiveness and of asking for pardon: a daily exercise that allows the relationship to be reborn: «We have been married for 27 years and we have 2 adult children». Joao and Rosina of Kenya explained. «This school has really touched

our heart. In just a short time we were able to shorten all the distances that have accumulated between us in all these years».

A school for those responsible for the family-focolares

On those same days, always at Castel Gandolfo the first school for those responsible for the family-focolares was also held with the aim of helping 35 families present to understand the delicate role of accompaniment: «you don't need to be an expert or better than the others», Maria and Raimondo Scotto said, «but rather you must develop the ability to walk together with the other families and to share the joys and sufferings of life». During the dialogue and group meeting they sought to deepen this reality in the different contexts all over the world. The situation in Europe is quite different from that of Africa, South America, Asia. Through the workshops to deepen these topics and through a stimulating presentation of Jesús Morán, it was underlined that even if the families who are accompanying others have had their own difficulties, it is for this reason that they are more able to understand the critical situations of a family without trying to direct or command them. The frequent presence of the Councillors of the Sections of the women and men focolarini gave a renewed focus on the roots of the family-focolare in the respective focolares to which they belong, and a new enthusiasm grew and matured to love and work for universal fraternity.

Giovanna Pieroni

read more about this in Mariapoli [online](http://www.focolare.org/notiziariomariapoli)
www.focolare.org/notiziariomariapoli

© Roberto Rigo



In Ottmaring Take responsibility together

The members of the General Council of the Focolare Movement gathered together from February 19 to 26 in the Little Town «Nuova Legge (New Commandment)» for their annual meeting

The choice of the Little Town of Ottmaring (Germany) was not by chance. This decision saw the convergence both of the commitment to be «going out» and also the reflection done within the Council, as well as the proposal to enter even more into the context of the dialogues which characterizes this journey – in this case it is above all the ecumenical one (see box).

To guide the work done during the week was the theme of this year: «Jesus Forsaken, the God of unity».

From the start, the preparation of the meeting was characterized by a journey of synodality. In the preceding months in fact, the centres of the various branches and movements worked to give their own contribution to the realization of the Guidelines that were elaborated by the Assembly. It was a sort of a balance sheet and a reflection of three points: how much has been done, the open challenges, the prospects for the coming three years.

During the days spent in Ottmaring, starting from this precious contribution, to the



© Ursel Haaf x 3



© Maria Kny
Brigitte Pischner, Lutheran focolarina, with the pastor Susanne Kasch



In the center, Peter Dettwiller, pastor of the Reformed Church

moments in plenary, there were alternating group sessions that facilitated the identification of concrete paths to follow and to realize up to the end of the mandate.

Here are some examples that will allow you to participate in the horizons that are foreseen.

A challenging and determining topic was that of making use of human resources in relation to «That all may be one», to our irradiation throughout the world. Through a dialogue that has been taking place in these years on various levels and with the work of the Delegates of the Big Zones, some frontier Countries were identified wherein the presence of the Movement is considered as important in view of dialogue. Aside from the opening of new focolare centers, the possibility of temporary focolares that will involve all the members of the





In Ottmaring a new ecumenical awareness of the whole Movement

The anniversary of the 500 years of the Reformation was for the General Council a determining element in the choice of the venue for their meeting. The ecumenical dialogue, placed on the forefront by the Joint Declaration of October 2016, signed in Lund by Bishop Munib Younan, president of the World Lutheran Federation and by Pope Francis, demands a new assumption of responsibilities, a new enthusiasm. The appeal of Lund to the Lutheran and Catholic communities «to be more courageous and creative, happy and full of hope in their commitment to continue the great adventure that awaits us» could not but find a strong resonance during the retreat of the General Council in the Little Town «New Commandment» of Ottmaring. Here since 1968 a pilot experience has come to life of the co-existence of the members of the «Vereinigung vom gemeinsamen Leben – Association of community life (that originated from the Evangelical world) and the persons of the Focolare Movement.

The visit to the Little Town, but above all the profound experiences shared by its inhabitants, the questions, prepared us to face the underlying question: «Does the charism of unity – a gift for all the Churches – need to take new steps?».

The General Council together with some Evangelical representatives of Germany and Peter Dettwiller, a pastor of the Swiss

Reformed Church, took on a profound reflection and a sincere discussion around this topic.

On February 21, the «Declaration of Ottmaring» was printed (see complete text in various languages in *Mariapoli* online): «There should not be any person of the Focolare Movement – affirmed Emmaus – who, once he or she gets to know about this Declaration, thinks that the commitment to ecumenism regards only those Countries where there are Christians of various Churches, and that this does not touch him or her personally since they are quite comfortable in their Church and have no interest in such problems». We must have «a conversion of the heart, rather to begin to think ecumenically» in the whole Movement, so as to allow the spirit of Lund to emerge on all levels.

This visit to the city of Augsburg welcomed by the testimonies of the presence of Chiara Lubich, the vice-mayor Dr. Stefan Kiefer and the deaconess Susanne Kasch, helped to reinforce the urgency for something «new» that will bring us back the authenticity of the original source.

To crown these days was the meeting with the inhabitants of the Little Town. A great and almost incredulous joy was seen in their faces. No one hesitated to speak, whether they be evangelical or catholic, because everyone felt that they were looked at with «the eyes of the heart».

Emmaus confirmed the uniqueness of the vocation of Ottmaring, the cradle of our ecumenism, a «creative act of God» as defined by Brigitte Horneber, responsible for the Association of communal life.

Then a series of ideas from the members of the General Council that expressed the desire to take responsibility together for the development of the Little Town in the coming years: concrete proposals to be realized. The Centro «Uno (One)» will constantly follow its realization, and there was talk of holding a Summer School, in collaboration with the Abbà School and Sophia, also of the need to revive the School of ecumenism and many others.

Nella foto: 20 ottobre. Emmaus con, da dx, Walter Goll e sr. Petra Hahn della «Vereinigung» di Ottmaring

Movement was also considered. It is a new path that has already attracted generous support. Many lively local Communities are working for the irradiation, and we must work to help them to mature and grow in this direction.

The topics regarding the proclamation of the Ideal and the accompaniment of persons who feel a certain call are profoundly linked to one another. In this sense some points have been highlighted: the priority of witnessing to the Word lived, with the communion of experiences; to walk together in the ambit of the mass movements so as to give many the opportunity to come closer to the vocations of the Movement; the Volunteers and New Humanity, Gen and Youth for a united world, etc. should walk together; this is the strategy to Christianize society, to be immersed in it.

The reflection done on the new generations was especially timely. In fact, among other things there is a lively preparatory work being done in the Catholic Church for the Synod of Bishops in 2018 entitled:



Evangelical representatives from Germany

Of fundamental importance for a Movement that is called to announce the Ideal of unity in all latitudes, is the aspect of translation. They spoke of increasing the resources to invest in; how to facilitate and encourage the collaboration between the Translation Office and the translators linked online; how to coordinate among the various centres.

A priority which emerged – certainly not the least in importance – is that of focusing on the dialogues. The centres of dialogue will provide a specific subsidy for the first part that regards dialogue in general and for the second part that will deal with the deepening of each specific dialogue.

Many open sites wherein the recurring method is that of «taking responsibility together», with a vision that embraces the whole world. On many occasions gratitude was expressed for this week spent together that has been full of incentives, ideas, proposals, supported also by the unity of many who offered, prayed, lived.

«Being in Ottmaring has changed us» Jesús Morán said during the concluding meeting with the Little Town, referring above all to the ecumenical experience. «The fact that we feel that we are going back different from how we arrived – affirmed Emmaus – means that there is a beginning, not an end. Now this diversity must be seen, realized, shown, borne witness to».

prepared by the editorial board

read more in Mariapoli online
www.focolare.org/notiziariomariapoli



In the chapel of the Vereinigung vom gemeinsamen Leben

«The youth, faith and discernment of vocation». In this perspective we would like to continue to pay special attention to the formation of the assistants and animators. An important solicitation that comes from the Preparatory Document of the Synod (III,2) is that of considering the youth as subjects and not objects, in perfect consonance with the thoughts of Chiara Lubich.



In Augsburg with the vice-mayor Stefan Kiefer

© Maria Kny

Little Towns

Where the Invisible becomes visible

At Castel Gandolfo a week dedicated to the permanent Mariapolises from design to realization

The 25 little towns of the Movement in the world (see box) were the protagonists in a week-long meeting (February 5-12). Around a hundred people from the various vocations met at the Mariapolis Center of Castel Gandolfo to represent the little towns as person responsible or as collaborators. This was the first meeting and at the same time a step in the journey that included a

preparation of the programme, in collaboration with the little towns themselves. The contribution of the youth was precious. For this reason the gen boys and girls who are presently at the world gen center were also invited.

The objective of the meeting was to focus once again on the original design of each little town. Each one of them was born for a specific aim: some were more suited to welcoming the youth, others developed more the aspect of studies, others of witness, others of dialogue, etc. In a wide-ranging communion what emerged was the point of faithfulness to the original design without forgetting the demands and needs of today.

A common characteristic comes from the identical DNA that which makes them all venues of witness where members of the various vocations of the Movement live together permanently. Emmaus and Jesús clarified that this means «a specific testimony of the Movement as one; in the little towns the entire Movement is visible. This is seen not through of the houses, the small industries, the church, but through



Friederike Koller and Ángel Bartol, in the middle, with Vita Zanolini and Vitek Valtr

renewed awareness of the patrimony left by Chiara and her vision of the little town as a powerful means of irradiation.

Emmaus during the opening of the meeting, in expressing her joy explained, how we must look at the Little Towns today: «With the eyes of Chiara for the design of God, the inspiration; with the eyes of Fr. Foresi for the incarnation; with the eyes of Foco for humanity».

Vita Zanolini and Vitek Valtr, central delegates for the aspect of the «Azzurro (Blue)», point of reference also for the permanent Mariapolises, coordinated with the ad-hoc commission, the

Faro (Croazia)





the people who live with Jesus in the midst, who live the Pact, the seven aspects of the ideal in all their complete dimension». Aside from this they also hoped that «every little town, because it is the Movement, will be open not only to the dialogue that corresponds to its context, but to all the dialogues: ecumenical, interreligious and with people of good will. We must find all the occasions to live this openness». It will be important to see together how we can achieve these objectives.

In spite of the difference in size and consistency, every little town has the same dignity, each one complete in itself, with its own physiognomy.

During the meeting there were various activities and prospects presented by each one, showing also the critical points and the existing challenges. Time was also given presenting testimonies, sharing results of good practices, group work according to topics (gen schools, pre-school for focolarine and focolarini, centres of spirituality, families, formation of the branches, territory) and specific cultural projects (interreligious dialogue, ecumenism, inculturation, Sophia, ecology, EoC, social schools, industrial parks, art, sports, education, social actions).

Another matter that was addressed was the management model of the little towns. In

this regard what clearly emerged was the need for a wider form of responsibility, a governance shared with persons of the other branches. The new set-up of the Movement also poses the question for

Nation	City	Name	Inhabitants
Africa			
Cameroun	Fontem	CHIARA LUBICH	100
Ivory Coast	Man	VICTORIA	20
Kenya	Nairobi	PIERO	52
North America			
USA	New York	LUMINOSA	40
Latin America			
Argentina	O'Higgins	LIA	80
Brazil	Belem	GLORIA	135
	Recife	SANTA MARIA	178
	San Paolo	GINETTA	200
Mexico	Acatzingo	IL DIAMANTE	40
Asia			
Philippines	Tagaytay	PACE	120
Pakistan	Dalwal	SPERANZA	25
Thailandi	Nakhon	REGOLA D'ORO	-
	Ratchasima		
Europe			
Belgium	Rotselaar	VITA	50
Croatia	Krizevci	FARO	82
France	Bruyeres	GIULIO	42
Germany	Ottmaring	NUOVA LEGGE	120
Great Britain	Welwin G. City	BERNARD PAWLEY	45
Ireland	Kindarle	LIETA	20
Italy	Loppiano	RENATA	540
Netherlands	Marienkroon	MARIENKROON	64
Poland	Warsaw	FIORO	39
Portugal	Alenquer	ARCO IRIS	45
Czech Rep.	Prague	IL PATTO	80
Spain	Madrid	CASTELLO ESTERIORE	35



Fiore

Vita



© CSC Audiovisivi - Caris Mendes

the need of applying territorial strategies that implicate the relationship with the Zone and their own sustainability from an economic viewpoint.

Not all of the individual little towns have in themselves the ability to face the many concrete needs that must be addressed. Experience has shown that through a vital exchange and communion, it is easier to find solutions at times with the collaboration of experts, and if necessary also of people outside the Movement.

The unanimous desire to remain in contact among them was emphasized: every little town, in harmony with the others and in synergy with their respective Zone. This relationship must become more and more full, complete, because the growth of the Movement will depend on this osmosis. Aside from this, experience tells us how important reciprocity is and how much everyday experiences can give important cues for the solution of critical situations.

«At the end of the meeting – affirmed the two Councilors – characterized by a lot of communion, unity, sincere openness, we had the strong impression that they were no longer 25 little towns but just one Mariapolis spread throughout the world». Thanks to their

great potentialities someone used this happy phrase to describe them: «Places where the Invisible becomes visible».

The week-long meeting made everyone more conscious of the work that must be done which requires accompaniment, constancy, transparency, participation in everything, from the balance sheet to the venue. For this reason, one of the topics for the forthcoming meeting of the Delegates will be precisely the little towns, so as to continue to give form to the light that was generated from it.

The impressions shared by the participants spoke of having contemplated together the fruits of a prophecy of Chiara; of having discovered each little town in its diversity but «one» in their specific design; they emphasized the important role of the youth in building together with them the future of the little towns.

At the conclusion, a symbolic bouquet of 25 roses (to represent the 25 permanent Mariapolises), all different, all «in bloom», was brought to the chapel of the Center of the Movement, in front of the tomb of Chiara. An image which closed this week which many defined as one of foundation, with the flavour of things that will last.

prepared by the editorial board

read more about this in Mariapolis [online](http://www.focolare.org/notiziariomariapolis)
www.focolare.org/notiziariomariapolis

In Syria Yes to life, inspite of everything

In Damascus with 80 Syrian youth. Stories of scorching suffering and of hope, of heroic faith in the love of God

We for our beloved Syria on March 5 with great emotion, bringing with us the heart and love of the entire Movement. We land in Lebanon and from there we travel to that land which saw the beginning of the most ancient civilizations. Called the «garden of the world» by former visitors and tourists, it calls to mind the great Prophets: Abraham was born here.

After countless security checks and checkpoints with armed soldiers, we arrived that evening in Damascus; a little bit Aramaic, Roman and Arab, in 1979 it was declared a heritage site of humanity and elected the Arab cultural capital in 2008.

Warm welcome, a celebratory dinner in the small focolare with typical Arab dishes. The next day, guided by the youth, we went to visit the great mosque of the Omayyadi and the Souq al Hamidiyeh, the most famous street market in the city. They the meetings began with the people of the Movement, especially with the youth.

«Yes to life, inspite of everything» is the title of the Meeting that reunited 80 Syrian youth from March 9 to 11 and which left an indelible mark in our heart.

Since 2011 Syria has been living a civil war that is extremely confusing, with a cost of more than 250,000 lives, 11 million people forced to leave their homes, 4 million refugees abroad.



The situation of the youth is a drama: the boys, called to the army, can remain in the service for up to eight years. Many of them die. The girls, in this situation, see their hopes of forming a family vanish...

What followed

was a succession of stories of scorching suffering and of hope, of a heroic faith in the love of God. There are those who have lost everything and now lives with his or her family in the refugee camp, there are



those who have seen their loved ones die. The gatherings to greet those who are leaving have stopped because it is too painful: one is accompanied by prayers, which together with love becomes the breath of life. During a meeting in focolare, in Aleppo, the explosion of missiles, the deafening sound of the war planes made us stop our meditation which we continued with the recitation of the Rosay. The commitment of the youth to generate life around them is strong: they organize festivals in the city, involving hundreds of persons, they rebuild a school



and a playground and garden in a small town, but this was never finished because of the war. They offer support to several refugee families...

An orphaned young girl who lived in a village had lost everything, and had to move to the city; her brother who was a soldier had disappeared and her younger brother suffers from multiple sclerosis. A young soldier experienced moments of fear and of courage during battle, he had to defend and shoot, he is overcome by stress, so he deserted the army. He could not bear the worries he had for his elderly parents. Now he is asking himself whether he should go back to the army because his desire to defend his country remains strong. In his limpid eyes you can see a well of infinite suffering; when he was greeted with the words: may you find peace here on earth, he said that he would only find it in Paradise. Stories of death and of life, transparency, simplicity and depth, a joyful celebration of very beautiful Arabic songs and dances ...

Jesus Forsaken resounded with strength as the one, also for us, in contact with a very profound reality of suffering-love. We renewed the commitment to live so that all may be one, just as Chiara with her first companions did in the midst of the bombings.

We brought with us a video of the greetings of many young people from all over the

world, of Emmaus and Jesús: many were crying due to the emotion experienced and they told us: «The whole world has forgotten us, but you came to bring the warmth of our family».

Accompanied by Roberto Almada, an expert in group dynamics and interpersonal relationships, we tackle certain strong topics such as one's dreams for the future, the wounds of the past, the creative possibilities of the present. And with dynamic exercises we found formulas to distinguish Christian joy from mere pleasure. The words of Chiara bloom once again in our heart: «the joy of a Christian is like a ray of sunshine that shines from a tear, a rose that blooms in a puddle of blood, the essence of love distilled by suffering ... that is why it has the apostolic power of a burst of Paradise».

We are in the places of the apostle Paul, touched by God along the road to Damascus, and we see the walls where one night he was secretly lowered down in a basket, escaping from capture and beginning his journey of the spreading of God's word in the world, in the midst of shipwrecks and persecution.

In our Syrian brothers and sisters we find the same strength of the first Christians, who in this tremendous war maintain their faith and hope, transmitting this to their «travelling companions».

Thank you, Syria, for this lesson of Christianity lived! If we were to summarize in just one word this unique and extraordinary experience that you have made us live, we will not hesitate to say: Life, with a capital «L»!

Maria Guaita, Marco De Salvo



Prepare to educate the child for the world

Schools of formation in the three Brazilian little towns for elementary school teachers, organized by the gen4 Centers in collaboration with the Italian University LUMSA and the Sophia University Institute

«To talk about education today in Brazil with a totally new vision is a real response to the tragic drama of Brazilian society. This formation is very important, because it gives us new hope and pushes us to do something for our Country starting with the children». This is the com-

ment of a taught present in one of the three schools of formation for elementary school educators, recently held in Brazil organized by the gen4 Centers in collaboration with the *Libera Università degli Studi Maria SS. Assunta* (LUMSA) of Rome and the Sophia University Institute. More than 500 people participated among whom were experts, gen3 and gen4 assistants, teachers, catechists, animators, families; diverse in age and vocation, not all belonged to the Focolare Movement. These latter ones

appreciated the content underlining their importance for an integral formation which is valid in all educational environments. A day was always dedicated to the protection of minors. These three schools are part of a wider «E d u x E d u Project», which means to educate ourselves to educate, the international project of formation for those involved in the education of children and teens, promoted by the gen 3 and gen4 Centers and the Teens for unity.

In Brazil it started from the vision of Chiara Lubich regarding children and from the reflection on education today in the light of the words of Pope Francis; the topics flowed from the relationship of Jesus Forsaken and the formators to the importance of educating children to interiority; they spoke of socio-affective development, the promotion of self-esteem, development of sexual identity, suffering in a child. Useful elements were also offered to be used during gen4 meetings. «The congress gave a vision of a new psychology of



the child – a woman Volunteer said. I saw the commitment of the Movement with regards to infancy and the child. Now I have a new vision and I would like to do something in my city. The themes on the psychology of the child have helped me to discern important aspects and not to look only at the spiritual side. I understood that to educate means to prepare the child to face the world ».

Among the objectives of the school is that of promoting the centrality of the community in the education of a child, with the certainty that, as a Ugandan proverb says, «it takes an entire village to educate a child». «Now I have a new perception of who a child is – a gen4 assistant said – how a “village” should be and what it means to grow up well. Formation is something very important. I feel that we must educate ourselves first of all before we can form the children».

At the end of every meeting a day programme was held for children, with 250 of them participating. Pedro, five years old, shared to his mother how much he enjoyed it, how he made many acts of love and that he would like to return to the Mariapolis Ginetta, or rather how he wanted to live there! Simultaneously, around 300 parents also participated in moments of going in depth in their child’s development. «The first thing I did when I arrived home – a father of a gen3 and a gen4 told us – was to ask for forgiveness from my son because of a strong reaction I had towards him when he was just two years old. My son said that he didn’t remember the incident, but that he was happy

New publication

The joy of sharing

Who are the gen4? How do they live?

These are some of the questions which they themselves answer in this DVD, prepared by the gen4 Centres, which presents, through experiences from various parts of the world, the life of children who live the spirituality of unity.



The DVD also contains interventions and experiences of the assistants and teachers. The task of the latter, which includes joys and sufferings, experiences and always new challenges, is highlighted also through the in-depth analyses of some experts, psychologists and educational psychologists. Among the characteristics of the formation of the new generations in the light of the Charism of unity, is the importance of reciprocal love in the educative relationship.

of my attitude. I understood the importance of asking for forgiveness from our children».

We were accompanied in this trip by Prof. Italo Fiorin, professor of the LUMSA and director of the School of Higher Education EIS of the same University. «Here among you – he said at the conclusion – I found a community made up of competence, but above all of faces, of relationships». It is hoped that in the future the Movement can be more and more involved in





the transmission of the Charism to the littlest ones, including the creation of a network of experts from different Zones for a greater coordination of the «EduxEdu Project» in the different Countries. For this reason, together with the LUMSA University, they are studying the possibility of offering, for those who are interested, not just the actual certificate of participation in the course, but also a certification of specific expertise.

It was noted with joy that the gen4 reality in Brazil is very much alive, thanks to the work of a team of gen4, gen3 assistants, adults in the local communities. The dice of the «art of loving» is very much spread. A gen 4 boy brought it to his father who is in prison for drug-trafficking, and he now throws it everyday with his companions in his prison cell.

A real treasure was that of building these moments of formation together with the Zone. The participation of Brazilian experts allowed us to offer a «inculturated» vision of the different themes presented. Aside from this, the launching of the «EduxEdu» project in a nation that is so culturally variegated, gave us the possibility of a verification under various aspects, especially with regards to content and methodology, identifying also the points to be improved. We were able to create a network that will ensure the continuity of the project in this Country.

Anna Lisa Innocenti with the gen4 Centres

Women and men Volunteers in Brazil

At the service of humanity

750 women and men Volunteers from all over Brazil were reunited from January 18 to 29 at the Mariapolis Ginetta with the presence of the delegates of the international centres, Patience Lobe and Paolo Mottironi, with some Councilors. A re-launching in living their vocation at the service of humanity

The women Volunteers

«We found again the enthusiasm of when we were gen, the joy of living for the Movement, to belong to God and to bring Him to the world following Chiara in this new light that pulls us along». Iga of Porto Alegre, well expressed what was experienced by the 438 women Volunteers, responsible for a nucleo and pre-nucleo, who met for the first time together now that Brazil has become just one Zone. They came from the North to the South of the Country, from 13 regions. Intense and profound days, lived in the spirit of dialogue and communion, deepening the various aspects of their vocation, called more than ever to day to embrace humanity and to answer to its needs.





Patience Lobe, international delegate of the women Volunteers, answered to the questions on the vocation with many of her experiences, making herself a living echo of Chiara and making them see the «dimension of the Opera». The councilors, Jacqueline Mendoza

from the Philippines and Maria Mercedes Ortega from Colombia also shared their experiences, highlighting the fruits of fraternity sown by the life of the women Volunteers in the world. The difficult socio-political situation that Brazil is passing through today profoundly affects the life

of everyone. The intervention of Vera Araújo, Brazilian focalarina sociologist of the Abba School, was very enlightening, as she examined the present situation, emphasizing the shadows and light that gave hope and contributed to reinforcing in each one the preferential love for Jesus Forsaken.



In dialogue with Patience Lobe...



... and with Paolo Mottironi (second from left)

The men Volunteers

There were more than 300 men Volunteers of God coming from the entire Brazil, also for them it was the first time together after this new configuration of the Movement. At the meeting— where the 60th anniversary of the birth of the Volunteers was celebrated – Paolo Mottironi, international delegate of the men Volunteers, and two councilors , Silvio Berti from Italy and Waldery Hilgeman from the Netherlands, were present.

Jesus Forsaken, the instruments of the collective spirituality, the attention for the Volunteers who are living in particularly difficult situations, were some of the main topics tackled. In moments of intense dialogue and exchange of experiences Paolo underlines some of the aspects of the vocation of a Volunteer, the incarnation in social realities strating from the local communities, the importance of forming the men Volunteers so that they feel that they are Work of Mary. Amtreasures of the Brazilian people, which expresses the profound happiness and the gratitude to God for the intense communion among all, beyond the social, political and cultural differences.

Geisa Maria Barra Cordeiro, Luis Henrique Marques



Women Volunteers of the «Southern Cone» The fulfillment of a long-awaited dream

**At the Mariapolis Lia in O'Higgins for
the first time all together the women
Volunteers of the zone of the Southern Cone**

500 women Volunteers together from the entire zone of the Southern Cone of Latin America (Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay and Chile): the fulfillment of a long-awaited dream that saw the breaking of borders and the experience of being one body!

Important moments made us get to know the life of the women Volunteers of the various zonette in their own environments. There was an intense communion with the exchange of experiences and deepening of the life of New Humanity.

In our heart we carried a great gratitude for Lia Brunet, Vittorio Sabbione and the many men and women Volunteers who are the roots of our small-great story that we want to continue to write. The wish, expressed in the title of the Congress, to make this year and always a «a flight of love in Jesus Forsaken» was sealed by us during a solemn moment, as we signed our renewed committment.

We wrote to Emmaus: «We want to thank you because we felt your presence among us as together with you we built this stage of our history».

*Gabriela Clivio and the women Volunteers
of the Southern Cone*



The Observatory on Poverty Leo Andringa (OPLA)

**An Observatory that looks
at poverty and development
according to the "lens" of "reciprocity"**

To keep alive the memory of Leo Andringa, who was among the first to intuit the thoughtfulness and consideration needed in the process of the distribution of aid to indigents, the EoC has decided to name the newly constituted "Observatory on poverty Leo Andringa" (OPLA) after him. Its headquarters is in the Lionello Bonfanti Industrial Park.

Objectives of OPLA, directed by Licia Paglione with the scientific coordination of Luca Crivelli, is to gather the "best-practices" (within and outside the EoC) in the fight against poverty, developing an approach inspired by the values of communion and reciprocity.

OPLA is born from the need to "monitor" the results of the EoC in contrast to the poverty and misery, and this not only from a material point of view, but also from a relational point of view, in the ability of the profits transformed into aid against poverty, to produce relationships of value, "relational goods", for those who are receiving this aid.



<http://osservatoriopovera.weebly.com>

Eoc and Pope Francis Give yourselves!

**A historical moment for the EoC 25 years after its launching.
The meeting with Pope Francis marks a stage for today and for the future
not only for the Economy of Communion but for Economy in a wider sense**



years ago, gave you in Brazil when in front of the scandal of the inequality in the city of San Paolo, she asked the entrepreneurs to become agents of communion». The Pontiff spoke clearly and challenged the entrepreneurs

On February 4 , 1200 including entrepreneurs, professors of the faculty of Economic and students, representatives of the various realities of the Economy of Communion and persons interested in various aspects of such a project, coming from 54 Countries of the world, gathered at the Paul VI Hall in the Vatican, to present themselves to Pope Francis and to listen to his words.

«I have been genuinely interested in your project for some time», affirmed the Pope, as he continued: «Economy and communion. Two words that the present culture keeps separated and often considers them as opposites. Two words that instead you have united, accepting the invitation that Chiara Lubich, twenty five



not to be satisfied with little: «The “no” to an economy that kills becomes a “yes” to an economy that brings life because it shares, it includes the poor, it uses profits to create communion».

Those present felt totally in tune with the words of Pope Francis because the



Pope Francis. When capitalism makes the seeking of profit its only purpose, it runs the risk of becoming an idolatrous framework, a form of worship. The 'goddess of fortune' is increasingly the new divinity of a certain finance and of the whole system of gambling which is destroying millions of the world's families, and which you rightly oppose. This idolatrous worship is a surrogate for eternal life. Individual products (cars, telephones ...) get old and wear out, but if I have money or credit I can immediately buy others, deluding myself of conquering death.

Thus, one understands the ethical and spiritual value of your choice to pool profits. The best and most practical way to avoid making an idol of money is to share it with others, above all with the poor, or to enable young people to study and work, overcoming the idolatrous temptation with communion. When you share and donate your profits, you are performing an act of lofty spirituality, saying to money through deeds: you are not God.

project of the EoC proposes itself as a «yes» an economy that is different and which is an alternative to capitalism, to gaining profit at all costs. Luigino Bruni, international coordinator of the EoC project, emphasized that «today a better world is unthinkable without economy, but a better world needs a new economy». We must radically rethink the concept of profit which must be put in common to create a more widespread wealth.

The Pope launched an invitation then to widely spread the strategy of self-giving: «Economy of Communion will have a future if you give it to everyone and not just keep it in your own house. Give it to everyone, first of all to the poor and to the youth, who are the ones who are most in need of this and who will know how to make the gift that they have received

bear fruit! To have life in abundance we must learn how to give: not just the profits of the enterprises, but you yourselves. The first gift of the entrepreneur is himself ».

An entrepreneur observed: «It may be easy to consider oneself already "on the safe side", among the "good" ones, because we share our profits and we treat our employees well. The words of the Pope "give yourselves", really shook me. I can no longer be at peace, I must commit myself firsthand».

A Bootcamp of five days

The audience with Pope Francis was inserted within a formative and informative event with the participation of around 500 people, which was held from February 1 to 5 at the Mariapolis Center of Castel Gandolfo. It was a formation and a very fruitful exchange among entrepreneurs of early times of EoC and the new-entrepreneurs, guided by the network of «incubators», already spread on a world-wide scale. Luigino Bruni outlined a balance sheet of the first 25 years of life of the EoC and it was the occasion to define pathways and projects for the period of 2018-2020. The youth, present



in a good number, made some interesting proposals: to meet by field of commitment and interest so as to get to know better the entrepreneurial experiences of their own sector; to offer sustenance and impetus to the entrepreneurs of EoC through the internet; to welcome needs and to create suitable instruments to keep everyone linked up, to give inputs and to facilitate exchanges. There are 860 committed businesses spread all over the world which are quite heterogeneous in the services they provide.

Luigino Bruni explained, in some interviews, the way such businesses act, ready to «share the profits not only among the labourers but also outside the business as well, thinking of those in need, expanding their production beyond their own borders, for the common good, no longer in a theoretical way but in a concrete way ». He observed: «The Pope said very strong words against an economy that kills, that excludes, rejects, pollutes. Even the Economy of Communion of Chiara Lubich contains within it a very profound criticism against capitalism». «While the multinationals talk but do something else, we, with great serenity are what we claim to be».

Being an entrepreneur one can live a life of flourishing humanity and excellence. This was shown by an entrepreneur who shared an experience that everyone agreed, on how «being a part of this network of the EoC is not just a way of doing business, but rather it is also and above all a way of life that penetrates into your family, in everything you do. To be an entrepreneur today is very difficult, it is a choice that requires strength». And he added: «I decided to do it because it the way I want to spend my life». What followed was a series of concrete choices, starting from that of being transparent in the management of funds bot externally and internally with the employees. «We work according to the market rules and the law like everyone else, but



we choose to put the person at the center and not only the business».

Spread in the five continents, the entrepreneurs and those committed in the EoC project with their businesses and associations often truly go against

the current simply by paying their taxes regularly or by paying just wages to their dependents. The entrepreneurs of the EoC are certain: «We cannot keep only for ourselves that which we have received. The Pope trusts us and so we must have this same trust also in those around us».

The meeting with Pope Francis marked a stage for today and for the future not only of the Economy of Communion but of economy as a whole. The invitation he gave to be «salt, light, leaven of another kind of economy» which does not only care for the victims of a wrong system, but builds a new one where there will no longer be victims, was welcomed by everyone with great joy and commitment.

prepared by Rosi Bertolassi

Vedi <http://www.edc-online.org/>

Maria Voce. For the Movement it means to look at a particular thing with a universal gaze. Deep down the Economy of Communion is not the whole Movement, but it is also the whole Movement because it represents all of the charism of the Movement in a colour, in an aspect, which is then the first aspect for us, the aspect of economy ... But look at what the charism of a colour can do! Multiplied by the infinite colours of human activity, imagine what the charism that God gave to Chiara can do for the world today! Therefore I think that a greater awareness and commitment is needed because if this can be done for economy, it can be done in all fields. And it must be done, because the Pope wants it.

Publishing Houses

Maximum trust, maximum responsibility

Meeting of the different editions of *Città Nuova* in the world.
The invitation to be «diviners», searchers of God and of the signs of unity



This will also be one of the focal points in the coming years. The development of digital technology and social media has by now become irreversible and these are becoming more and more important in the journalistic and publishing fields.

The choice of some magazines of *Città nuova* – like the French and Argentinian editions and lately even the German one – to include in each issue a special *dossier* the deepening of a specific theme is being followed with great attention. In other publishing houses instead they are debating on the question of either eventually reducing the paper copies and even stopping it altogether and to orient themselves towards the digital. For everyone it is of great importance not to lose sight of their professionalism that requires a solid formation and a continuous qualified updating.

The intervention of the copresidente Jesús Morán on the cultural background in which editorial work today is being done was welcomed with great attention. Jesús compared the communicators to «diviners» (those who know how to find underground water sources) who «look for unity, God, not to preach about it, but to discover and share it». According to Morán society is going towards a «post-global» era because «globalization is not happening as we expected, and in fact it has happened on many levels that only a few decide for everyone». In this new phase of the Movement it could – also through its *media* – offer the paradigm of relationship, or rather the experience of an «us» substantiated with relationship, interculture and interreligious dialogue.

«Your work is sacred ground, where it is necessary to enter with delicateness». This affirmation of MAria Voce did a lot of good to representatives of the 25 publishing houses of the Focolare Movement, gathered together from March 24 to 26 at Castel Gandolfo. It was just as comforting the profound gratitude expressed by the President to them for their «important work in the Movement and for the Movement».

There were 58 in all, among editors, writers and various collaborators who during these days discussed the all-important question: how to adequately position their work in a mediatic world in rapid transformation so that the world-wide «family» of the publishing houses of the Focolare Movement will be able to do its job well and in a sustainable manner? The results of the group work and the plenary sessions included both the local and international dimensions.

On the local level: the publishing houses in the last two years tried to come closer to the communities of the Movement: they felt that they had to continue this commitment. Some publishing houses were able to successfully realize some projects of inserting some youth collaborators in the editorial and literary work.



Much time was given to the question of how to make better use of the wealth that the presence of the Movement in the publishing field all over the world brings. Various experiments that were tried out in these past years proves to be unsustainable. In these days they examined new technical possibilities of sharing data and information. Of great help could also be the setting up of an «international secretariat» that was mapped out among the publishing groups. The model was a working group made up of six persons from all over the world which had contributed to the communion and to the work done among the publishing houses during these past two years and which had also prepared this meeting. The contribution of this group was considered so precious that they wanted to continue this experience. They are now studying what could be the most effective ways for the international projects and an international group will be set-up to begin a project study.

In the final exchange Maria Voce admitted that the work of the publishing houses may «at times not be fully and sufficiently

appreciated». «A charism instead needs an instrument of communication», underlined the co-president Morán. As a consequence the commitment of the Focolare Movement in the field of publishing is truly indispensable. The «how» of this commitment is the task of the publishing houses. «We put our maximum trust in you – affirmed Maria Voce. The Center of the Movement remains absolutely open to all the proposals as long as they come from a responsible commitment with regards to one's own *mission*».

The President especially encouraged the publishing houses to involve the youth. «They have something to say», she affirmed. She added that «intergenerationality» must become a specific characteristic of the editorial work, in the same way that internationality is.

Joachim Schwind

«Città Nuova» in the world

The 33 publishing
houses
and magazines of the
Focolare Movement
in the different
continents

Latin America 4
North America 1
Western Europe 9
Eastern Europe 7
Africa 5
Asia 6



Being Church

«Go out of the encampment»

Reading between the lines of the Meeting of Bishops friends of the Focolare Movement

The drama of the Christians in Syria, hunger and violence in some regions of Northern Kenya, divisions in society and in the Church of Salvador, and still: the challenges for the Church in a secularized society such as Austria, poverty and the lack of resources ... These are some of the scenarios where the participants of the recent Meeting of Bishops friends of the Focolare Movement (Castel Gandolfo, March 6-10) come from; scenarios that opened up to a new hope in contact with the reality of Jesus Forsaken who was the thread that linked the entire meeting.

There were 48 participants, while others, in this first week of Lent, were busy with the annual retreats of their own Bishops' Conferences. Moreover, Pope Francis too, during those days had his Spiritual Exercises, together with Cardinals and Bishops of the Roman Curia, at the Casa del Divin Maestro in Ariccia, on the other side of the lake of Albano.



Presentation of the «Evangelii Gaudium» Center.
From the right is mons. Piero Coda, Bishop
Giuseppe Petrocchi, Fr. Emilio Rocchi

– he wrote – goes to the heart of our faith and of our ministry as Pastors, helping to turn the eyes of the heart and of the mind to Jesus crucified». He drew an immediate consequence: «Such a vision pushes us to “go out of the encampment” (Heb 13, 13) in order to go towards the existential, cultural and social peripheries where our people live». «It is there, in fact– he explained – that we encounter in an important way His face and we can take care of His wounds, which

we recognize open in the countless wounds of our brothers and sisters». Thus «we sow the joy of the Gospel, curing the wounds with a balsam of the mercy of God, that comes flowing in Jesus the Risen One, source of new life for all».

Emmaus spoke of Jesus Forsaken in the charism of Chiara answering to some questions: «How

did Chiara discover Jesus Forsaken?», «How can we not become blocked by suffering and pass with Him to the Resurrection?», «What are the major faces of Jesus Forsaken that you can see in humanity today, during your trips as president



If this time it was not possible to meet him during an audience, Pope Francis nevertheless made his presence felt with a heartwarming letter personally signed by him. «The theme around which your days of study are based on

of the Movement, and how is the Movement answering to them?», «What did it mean for you to hear Chiara speak of those difficult years when the Church was studying the Movement for a long time before approving it?», «In what way is Jesus Forsaken the key to unity not only with God but also among people? »

Jesús Morán, in a very much appreciated historical, theological and cultural reflection, dwelt instead on the Ideal of Chiara as «a charisma for post-modernity»: centered in Jesus Forsaken and in God Love, in Jesus in the midst and in «*that all may be one*», this answers the challenge of unity in a time in which the Church and culture are struggling with an emptying of the meaning of God, of the truth and the human person.

Piero Coda who penetrated in the genesis and the mission of the Church in the New

Testament highlighted how it was born from the trauma of Jesus on the Cross. With Him, one is called to find one's own security and identity in a constant exodus «outside the encampment» (cf. Heb 13); to relive self-despoliation so as to be «a city according to

the Gospel of Christ»: non excluding, but open and hospitable (cf. Phil 2); to «make yourself

everything to everyone», taking upon oneself the consequences even tragic ones of the actions of others (1 Cor 9; Rm 9).

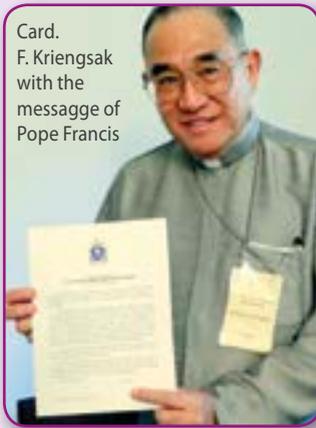
In line with this vision the first steps of the «*Evangelii Gaudium*» Centre were presented, born within the ambit of the Sophia University Institute in Loppiano, that hopes to become a laboratory of formation, study and research working in the perspective of the «new evangelization» to which the Church is called today.

Jesus Forsaken, therefore, as light and as spirituality, but also was doctrine and source of a new ecclesial practice. But everything cannot but hinge upon one's personal commitment. This was addressed by the strong experiences of some Bishops, starting from that of Mons. Klaus Hemmerle, presented with a *powerpoint*, and that which was shared in a WebEx link-up with Beirut by Mons. Armando Bortolaso.

The Bishops met twice in groups by language for moments of workshop centered on the question «With a God who loves up to the point of the abandonment, what style of Church and pastoral work would you choose?». It was an occasion for a wide-ranging sharing of sufferings and challenges but also courageous experiences that generated communion and peace in situations that at times desperate. This fraternal link was sealed by the pact of reciprocal love.

Who could, extended those days with a trip to Loppiano, coinciding with the event «*FamilyHighLights*» on Chiara and the family.

Fr. Hubertus Blaumeiser



Card.
F. Kriengsak
with the
message of
Pope Francis

Visita al Palazzo pontificio di Castel Gandolfo



To meet the challenges of today

A pastoral programme that is born from the Charism

Sharing experiences on pastoral work and to draw from them the lines of action.
Around fifty participants in the Seminar held from February 15 to 17

«My meeting with the Ideal of unity came during the period of the dictatorship in Brazil in 1975 and two dimensions of the Charism touched my heart: the communion of goods and Jesus Forsaken. I worked during the first 15 years of my life as a priest with the movement for the homeless and landless. Within this context, with a lot of conflicts, my experience in the pathways of the Church was illuminated by the charism of unity...». Fr. Vilson Groh, class of '50 comes from Brazil and during his life committed to social action, he «saved» thousands of street children and youth and started tens of civil institutions for the care and rehabilitation of minors at risk.

Instead Fr. Sergio P. comes from Italy from a totally different experience. At the age of 29 he finds himself for the first time in a parish: «The profound experience I made is that of feeling that I can be fruitful. I felt in my heart a very strong call and the possibility of answering it by generating the ecclesial community and in it the Focolare Movement. So I began simply to love whoever I met in the parish. A love with new characteristics for me».

For Fr. Ludovit of Slovakia he needed passion: «Being in the parish and doing various



activities for children, teens, youth and families, I realized that there must be a primary element, at least a person who is passionate, or I would say someone or better some people, with a passion within so that divine love will start to circulate among the people».

In the opening of the seminar Mons. Piero Coda, rector of the Sophia University Institute summarizing in ten points what the Church is living four years after the election of Pope Francis, recalled the desire of Chiara to leave as her legacy only the Gospel: «The challenge of the *kaïros* of our times in this historical moment is to live the Gospel as Pope Francis said, so as to ignite the fire in the heart of the world. This is our joy».

But the spark that truly ignites the community shoots out when the love that is shared becomes reciprocal: among priests, among them and the laity, among the laity themselves. Fr. Kelemen of Romania shared: «I arrived in

Fermo (Italia)



Slovacchia

the parish of Gheorgheni ten years ago. There I found some people of the Movement, who already years ago came to know the spirituality. With them we began the meetings of the Word of life. Then, together, we went to the Mariapolises. There were possibilities not only to be together and to work together, but more



than this: reciprocal love grew among us».

Then too there are communities where not only small groups try to build the Christian community, but entire parishes, linked among themselves in the same diocese. Fr. Mario Cataldi, from Ascoli shared: «The diocese has around 120.000 inhabitants distributed in 70 parishes. The Diocesan Movement is present in 23 parishes with a varied presence: from entire communities of 50 up to 100 members and small groups. There are around 600 adherents of various ages who come to the meetings. They grow in the life of unity participating in the courses of formation at the end of the year for different ages. Obviously throughout the years there have been thousands of people who were formed in the Ideal of unity and who continue to form the foundation of a community present in almost all of the social and ecclesial activities».

We can go on and on, sharing around twenty experiences from Asia to Latin America, from Africa to Romania, on different topics: from the Montini High School in Milan comes the experience of Fr. Ruedi with the refugees in Basilea (Switzerland) or that of San Nguyen in a small village of North Vietnam, and on to who was at the gen school of Loppiano for many year.

Many ideas for a pastoral programme that is born from the Charism of unity. The intervention of Mons. Giuseppe Petrocchi, archbishop of Aquila (Italy), was masterful wherein he reiterated that, in a Movement that is entitled to Mary, it is essential that that which characterizes mary be present: giving life to Jesus – the incarnation – bringing it in all the expressions of the Church and of society. Not in a virtual way but concretely, through the life itself of the Movement: «If I want the Ideal to reach everyone – he suggested – I must also guarantee that this sacramental instrument, which is the Work of Mary, is formed and acts, otherwise this Ideal given (to others) without linking (them) to the Movement risks being dispersed, evaporates».

A seminar that opened untold horizons to transmit to the world the immense gift that God had given to Chiara for the Church and for society.

Prepared by the centres of the priest focolarini, priest Volunteers, gens and the secretariat of the Parish and Diocesan Movements

The materials of the seminar can be found in the website: <http://mpmd.focolare.org>, (nome: mpmd, password: orsola), under the heading **Notizie e aggiornamenti** (News and updating)

Romania

Vietnam



In the New Set-up «Journey» to the international Center of the Focolare Movement

Vari compiti e i diversi i ruoli. Qualche nota per capirne di più



The question of Sandro, who was passing through in those days, was inspired by the report given by a commission (see box) who is in charge of the operation of the Centre of the Movement. The Movement all over the world is trying to adapt its structures so as to concentrate more on its own specific goals. The enthusiasm of Sandro comes from the fact that it is not only the «peripheries» who are seriously committed to this but the Centre of the Movement as well.

This commission has been operational since September 2015.

The work did not start from zero because already in the previous six years the first steps were taken for a reorganization. In

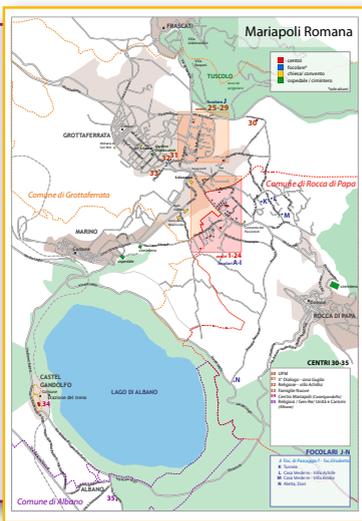


«Why do we know so little about it in the Zones?» The question, asked by Sandro, an Italian focolarino, Saturday January 21, in the Mariapolis Centre of Castel Gandolfo, is valid. The meeting in which he was taking part is one of the usual updating of the so-called «Roman Mariapolis», a little city that is «visible and invisible» with a specificity for what it safeguards: the international Centre of the Work of Mary which is at the service of the whole Movement in the world. It is made up of about 600 inhabitants of all the vocations of the Movement, among whom are the men and women collaborators of the Centre or the central offices of the various branches. The first focolarini just as many of the pioneers of the Ideal now have their «home» here. Here you will also find the «case verdi» for those who are passing through a difficult moment healthwise.



2013 an office was set up with a general overview of all the collaborators at the Centre. This commission also took care of their professional formation, but at

the same time studying the means to better coordinate the employment of those working in the various sectors part-time. In 2015 a central acquisitions office was set up and also an office for technical coordination.



Commission for the operation of the Center

Ángel Bartol (central Delegate at the Centre of the Movement)

Stefania Bustaggi (Secretary of the Council at the Centre of the Focolarine)

Genny English (Coordination of the personnel at the Centre of the Movement)

Alberto Frassinetti (expert on business organization)

Laly Hernández (Press Office of the Focolare Movement)

Friederike Koller (central Delegate at the Centre of the Movement)

Gusti Oggenfuss (Councilor Zone Centre DACH, Vienna)

Delia Pairetti (Mariapolis Centre of Castel Gandolfo)

Carlos Saura (Councilor at the Centre of the Focolarini)

With notable commitment many offices and services were moved so as to facilitate synergies and optimize the resources. The offices of the dialogues, for example, were grouped in the same house, just as the editorial staff of the media at the Cebtre. The different offices engaged with the youth (gen, Youth for a united world, gens and genre), the ecclesial branches (priests, religious men and women) or of social involvement (New Humanity and the Inundations) intensified their collaboration, often also in common venues. Programmes for professional updating were started, such as courses on the use of the computer and on methods of team work.

After the Assembly of 2014, the reform of the structures continued. One of the priorities of the president Maria Voce is to harmonize the offices and services of the international Centre by reinforcing the link with one of the

seven «aspects» and in this way overcoming a certain fragmentation, that was also due to historical motives. During the time of Chiara Lubich, for example, the monthly telephone conference call «Collegamento CH» was an instrument directly linked to the President. Now this too – like the other media – is linked to the aspect of the «Violet» or «Unity and the means of communication».

Another need, just as important, is that of involving fewer men and women focolarini, if possible, in the administrative tasks so that they can be more free to carry out their vocation as «specialists of unity in the “frontiers” of dialogue» as expressed by the co-president Jesús Morán. This will require a streamlining of the administration and a decentralization of the services with a consequent reduction of personnel at the international Centre.

According to the Guidelines of the last Assembly the working group developed the criteria for the reform of the structures: faithfulness to the Charism of the Movement must be guaranteed; the changes have to favour communion; what is important is the good of each person; according to the principle of subsidiarity the central services must perform only the tasks that cannot be assumed on other levels; all



the steps to be taken are examined according to their economic sustainability; every proposal must consider graduality.

With the help of the surveys made at the Centre and in the Zones, the Commission, with the assistance of different experts, is trying to identify the indispensable tasks of every service

in order to understand what is truly necessary in order to carry it out.

In June the Commission will present its proposals to the President, the Co-president and to the Genreal Council. In September also to the delegates of the Movement on the Zones will be involved in this work.

Joachim Schwind

Word of life

How the commentary which helps us to live the Gospel is born

«If by an absurd hypothesis all the copies of the Gospel on earth were destroyed, we want to live in such a way that we can rewrite the Gospel with our life»¹. This conviction, also quite demanding, accompanied the life of all those who in various ways came close to the Focolare Movement from the very beginning, when, due to the effects of the Second World War, «everything crumbled». The «Word» was lived one by one with a particular attention, it was the «clothing» that one wore as soon as he or she woke up. It was brought within one's heart and put into practice whenever possible.

Chiara Lubich, bore witness to it in an infinite number of ways, narrating fascinating stories of fruits, discoveries, effects. Personal and collective conversions which she did not hesitate to define as «revolutions».

«Enter into the Gospel», put it into practice, incarnate one word after another so as to «re-evangelize ourselves». A dynamics which had one clear goal: to become «another little Jesus who walks on earth»². This is where the attraction and the meaning lies. Today like yesterday.

This is the only goal of that small piece of paper called the *Word of life* which carries a commentary of a phrase of the Scripture that we often find in our hands.

Today this commentary, written by different people, is born from an exchange among and a common reflection by a group of people, diverse in age, formation, culture, origins, who

strive to constantly put the Word in the center of their lives. A kind of laboratory wherein one of the members gathers the fruit of this communion and composes the text – in this moment it is being done by Letizia Magri* – in the light of the spirituality of communion and of the experience of it made by the members of the Focolare. What emerges, basically, is a suggestion and a contribution destined for whoever is willing to «open the door» to the Word and, already in the entrance, is able to catch a whiff of its perfume.

«Live, live, live the Word» was the passion that Chiara transmitted to many. A passion which through the power of the collective spirituality made her say: «For us it is not enough to live it by oneself. No: it is necessary to share it with each other then also to reciprocally share our experiences on it»³. In this way, it continues, one became «evangelized» not only due to one's personal efforts in living the word, «but so as to welcome in oneself the light and the experience of the other». The result? We become evangelized as individuals and as a community, to become «more and more Jesus, individually and collectively». And where Jesus lives, also through us, the world will receive light and the strength to transform itself.

Victoria Gómez

* Married ocolarina, with a degree in biological Sciences from the «La Sapienza» university of Rome. She pursued a masteral course on marriage and the family at the Lateran University John Paul II Institute. She is in-charge of topics on the family in the New Families Movement.

1 Cfr. CHIARA LUBICH, *La Parola di Dio* (The Word of God), Città Nuova, Rome 2011, p. 18

2 Ecco come vorrei i gen 3 (This is how I wish the gen3 to be), in «GEN 3», March 1974

3 CHIARA LUBICH, *Una via nuova. La spiritualità dell'unità* (A new way. The spirituality of unity), Città Nuova, Rome 2002, p. 41

The voice of the Movements Still and always more Europe

Events in più more than 50 cities of the continent for «Together» for Europe



«Still and always more Europe» is the title of the meeting in Trieste which on the evening of March 24, wanted to unite itself to «Together for Europe» (a network of Movements and Christian communities of various Churches) which – on the occasion of the 60° anniversary of the Treaty of Rome – made its voice heard in 54 European cities calling for a more united continent. The youth of Trieste spoke clearly: «For us a united Europe is a reality which we cannot do without. It has even become difficult for us to think that once this wasn't so». The presence of politicians, the moving letter of the Jewish community sent for the occasion, the warm greetings of the Adventist Pastor, the various experiences shared, the atmosphere of a common heartfelt and fraternal celebration, all gave an encouraging sign of hope to «Together...» of Trieste.

From Szeged, Hungary, in the place of worship of the Baptist community they wrote us: «The fraternal communion truly opened our hearts and we felt that we were an organic part of this great dream of unity».

The meetings and vigils in 17 cities of Slovenia spoke of a Country in the frontline for a new Europe.

The ecumenical and international Vigil in Rome naturally had a particular flavour and not just because of the fact that the almost 800 participants of various Churches gathered in an ancient Basilica which conserves the relics of the Apostles, but also because the presence of the heads of State and of the Government of the European Union with the corresponding Ambassadors, together with the representatives of various Christian Churches and a numerous group of Movements and Communities attracted the attention of the whole Continent to the Italian capital and gave hope that the realization of the wishes of Pope Francis «to discern the way for a "new European humanism"» is not far away.

What could be the contribution of the Focolare Movement in this journey? Jesús Morán, the co-president replied: «I believe that the contribution of the Focolare Movement is a fundamental passage. To pass from union to unity. Union is usually an agreement between different realities which could also happen on a superficial level. Unity is something more profound, which has its roots in the being of peoples. We as a Movement which has the charism of unity we can help Europe to make this leap».

Ilona Tóth

24 march. The ecumenical and international Vigil in Rome



For the 500 years of the Reform In dialogue with Martin Luther in Piedmont

At 500 years from the start of the protestant Reform a meeting to bear witness to the path walked together and to take inspiration from the rich figure of Luther so as to continue this journey with renewed passion



In Bra, with the Pastor Paolo Ricca (on the right)

and introduced the lifesblood that runs in his theology, the simplicity with which Pastor Heiner presented the life of the Lutheran commu-

nity in Italy and particularly in Turin, were in themselves luminous examples of fraternal dialogue. It is interesting to note that in Turin the Lutheran Church is welcomed for their worship services by the Minor Brothers of the Church of St. Anthony of Padua: an occasion of practical ecumenism lived, with sharing and reciprocal participation in various initiatives.

In Bra 150 people coming from the whole province of Cuneo filled the baroque Church of the Battuti Bianchi: representing civil society, including journalists, all the parish priests of the city, the rector of the Shrine of the Madonna of flowers, the local religious orders, Catholic and Reformed citizens. Noteworthy speaker was the Waldensian Pastor Paolo Ricca who spontaneously commented on the event calling it a unique and absolutely new moment! A spiritual, ecclesial and cultural springtime.

In both the evenings the common impression was that of writing a historical page in that ecumenical dialogue, the dialogue of life and of the people, which was begun already in 1960 by Chiara Lubich. Just as Pastor Bludau hoped «... now it is up to us to reunite that which historical events have separated so as to live together the Christian faith in an apostolic and universal Church, as professed in our common Creed».

Daniela Bignone, Fabrizio Fracchia



In Turin. From the right Pastore Heiner Bludau, dean of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Italy with Fr. Hubertus Blaumeiser

To celebrate the important anniversary of the 500 years from the beginning of the Reform, the Focolare Movement present in Piedmont and Valle d'Aosta organized on February 1, two evenings, one in Turin and the other in Bra in the province of Cuneo. High profile speakers made both of the moments evenings rich in culture and profound spirituality.

In Turin 150 people followed with great interest the contributions of Fr. Hubertus Blaumeiser, Catholic expert on Martin Luther and member of the Center of interdisciplinary studies «Abbà School» and of Heiner Bludau, pastor of the Lutheran Community of Turin and dean of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Italy. Based on the provocative title «What does Luther have to say today» what followed were interesting interventions and the answers to the many questions of an attentive and interested audience.

The delicateness with which Fr. Hubertus proposed the polyedricity of the figure of Luther



In dialogue Muslims and Christians, challenge and commitment

Together, in Baar, Switzerland, a meeting with 160 people, to discover themselves always more like brothers and sisters

The even of January 29 was certainly not improvised. The atmosphere of the family was evident among the 160 participants, of whom at least 90 were Muslims. The gathering manifested the interweaving of relationships built in time, as they lived together there an important milestone in their common journey.

The programme was planned and realized in full agreement among the Muslims and the Christians, of more than 15 nationalities, among whom were several Imams and presidents of Islamic communities in Switzerland with some of their friends from Austria. The keynote address of Prof. Adnane Mokrani – Algerian-Tunisian theologian who is living in Rome for many years, and who has been working tirelessly with the Focolare Movement for interreligious dialogue – presented with courage and intelligence, the present-day situation and the possible numerous points of encounter among the two religions. From his words one could feel his respect for what Pope Francis is doing: «As a Muslim committed to Muslim-Christian dialogue, I am very grateful to Pope Francis, a world renowned religious leader whose voice is heard in spite of the difficulties. The Pope has defended the Muslims on different occasions». Many of the Muslim exponents congratulated Prof. Mokrani for having been able to express what they too had in their hearts.

The update made by Gwénaelle Delalande from the international center of dialogue on the «spirit of Assisi» and on the meeting of Muslims and Christians in Algeria (see Mariapoli 12/2016) increased the hope for a more united world.

The participants, especially the Muslims, were able to express also the anguish they experience due to terrorism. Someone confided that here he felt profoundly understood and that this kind of atmosphere allows the negative that is very much common in the media and in society in general to be transformed.

The presence of the youth was important to confirm how much the new generations, in contrast to the few who become radical, feel the need of living a constructive dialogue for the future of humanity. A young Muslim girl commented: «Here I found a new life, a righteous life, just, full of peace. It is an atmosphere that must be shared to the whole world». Another Muslim youth confided: «I rediscovered my religion».

Beside the worrisome acts of violence highlighted by the mass media and the dangerous spread of a mental intransigence that leads to exclusion, there are also islands of dialogue and places of peace that are growing. We must have the courage to create them, and also to discover and to promote and enhance them.

Tersa Wehrle, Markus Moll



Philippines

A school of oriental religions

One of the prerogatives of the Mariapolis Peace of Tagaytay is that of having in its territory a School of oriental religions (S.O.R.), as a center of formation, dialogue and witness, opened in 1982 from an idea of Chiara Lubich during her first visit to Asia



© Roberto Samson

From March 2 to 5, a fitting conclusion to the celebration of the 50° anniversary of the arrival of the Focolare Movement in Asia, more than 200 persons coming from the Philippines, Pakistan, India, Myanmar, Thailandia, Vietnam, China and Taiwan, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, South Korea, Japan - met in Tagaytay to give life to the course entitled: «Harmony among peoples and religions today». To welcome this heterogeneous group of scholars and of witnesses are Lolita Castillo and Roberto Signor, co-directors of S.O.R., Nar Plaras and Chun Boc Tay, persons responsible for the Little Town and four Councilors coming from Rome: Renata Simon and Francisco Canzani, in-charge of the aspect of studies, and Rita Moussallem and Roberto Catalano from the center of interreligious dialogue.

In his intervention, Card. Luis Antonio Tagle, archbishop of Manila and president of Caritas Internationalis, referring to the conciliar documents *Nostra Aetate* and *Lumen Gentium* encouraged the audience to look for what is common among all the religions of the world, affirming that «to become agents

of harmony we must be agile, open to change and know how to recognize and acknowledge diversity». The young prelate then underlined that we must not be afraid of the unknown but that we must also «mediate the differences accepting the antitheses. And when you are faced with a possible conflict, you must know how to choose the weaker one, acting with calmness and without haste, because there is a time for everything». This doesn't mean not doing anything, the Cardinal affirmed, as he expressed the thoughts of Edmund Chia, former executive secretary of the office for interreligious dialogue of the Federation of Asia Bishops' Conferences: «Those who work in silence are like water which is able to change the form of even the most gigantic rocks». Practically - affirmed Card. Tagle - «the best way to express the truth is to follow the law of graduality, becoming protagonists of an active non-violence, working for harmony with a heart prepared for dialogue by welcoming diversity». His were words found great consonance with the vision and the practices of the interreligious dialogue of the Focolare Movement.

The faces of Asia at S.O.R.

Bishop Roberto Mallari, dean of S.O.R. and bishop of San Jose, Philippines, in his opening remarks, described the developments of S.O.R. from 2001 to today. In the four days of the school that followed, the

In these days, after the course ended, Roberto Mussi, [...] gave me the transcript of an intervention of Chiara Lubich in which she explained to some of her closest collaborators how she understood the need for formation courses on interreligious dialogue for Christians and, above all for Catholics.

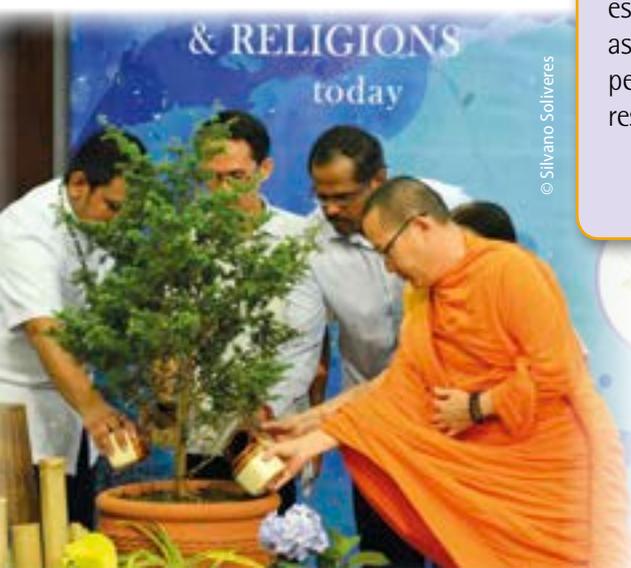
Reading it once again, one understands what a charism is and, above all, what a charismatic person is: one who knows how to read the signs of the times, before others are able to grasp them. Today it seems like the egg of Columbus. It is so evident today that the formation to dialogue means to work for the present and the future of humanity. But in 1982, who could have predicted it? Chiara had seen this with a crystalline clarity, at the end of her trip to Japan, where she had spoke to thousands of Buddhists. [...]

The S.O.R. was born from this prophecy: a Catholic woman who speaks to Buddhists and who intuitively that if one wants to continue along this road one must study each other, one must learn the different cultures, above all one must understand how to encounter each other. [...] Behind the faces of this S.O.R. there is the realization of that prophecy of Chiara Lubich, that was difficult to foresee and to imagine, maybe even to believe. Some had the courage to take up this challenge and years later, without making much noise, the S.O.R. had formed tens, hundreds of people who believe that dialogue is possible, especially in Asia. Here problems are not lacking, but as Card, Tagle so masterfully said, here one can experience the possibility of harmony, to also show the rest of the world that dialogue is possible.

*from the blog of Roberto Catalano in www.cittanuova.it
<http://whydntwedialogue.blogspot.it>*

With regards to dialogue with Buddhism, some experts, among whom Fr. Am Mijares from the Philippines, led a fruitful exchange of experiences which showed that there will always be communalities and differences but what does not diminish is the desire to take

various dialogues with the different Religions were presented, starting from the Hindu-Christian one. The experiences of our Hindu friends Dr. Meenal Katarnkar of Anam Prem, and Dr. Lalita Namjoshi of KJ Somaiya University were very interesting, and especially the common projects in the social field of Focolare and the Gandhian Movements in the south of India (Shanti Ashram).





on the challenge of dialogue. A talk of Fr. Raph Ling from Taiwan on Taoism, and presentation of Charetto Yan, focolarino, gave an insight from the point of view of Chinese culture.

Fr. William Larousse MM, author of several books on dialogue with Islam and an expert on the FABC (Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences) gave a well-documented talk of importance, which was followed by a dance-prayer typical of the Tausug people, performed by a Muslim family from the Philippines. The event ended with the signing of a document that expressed the commitment of all the participants to live the «Golden Rule» in a journey of peace and reconciliation, of solidarity and of inclusion.

Jose Aranas

In dialogue Suffering shared

A reflection together with the friends of non-religious convictions on the meaning of suffering

Why is there suffering? What do I do when it comes knocking strongly at our door? These are questions that must be answered sooner or later, because suffering, as Chiara wrote, «is the second bread of man». It is a very intimate part of a human being so as to become «the possibility of mutual understanding between people of different convictions, precisely because of their common vulnerability and the awareness of their finiteness». This is also what was affirmed by Marina Sozzi, thanatologist (a person engaged in the scientific study of death and the practices associated with it, including the study of the needs of the terminally ill and their families), bioethicist, one of the relators at the Convention entitled «The meaning of suffering» held in Castel Gandolfo from March 24 to 26, 2017, with the presence of 200 people coming from all the continents and of various cultures.

Suffering is an experience that cannot be avoided, nor can it be demanded from others. Nothing is as personal as suffering: physical suffering, emotional and mental suffering, suffering that grips us in that existential solitude which often accompanies our life, social suffering... «Suffering can make us close ourselves up or open us up to the needs of the others», commented Emmaus Maria

Voce. And it is precisely in the key of opening up to the other as suggested by her that for three days, adults and youth, professionals and experts, decided to deepen a theme - that of suffering - that is unrivaled in complexity and delicateness.

Through the contributions of experts in



various disciplines: psychology, medicine, philosophy, art, etc. they reflected on the impact of suffering in all its different faces in order to discover its meaning, through the sharing of thoughts and experiences. It was in this intense and heartfelt communion that in the end the participants were able to reach a conclusion that was widely shared by all: «The connection, the relationship, the sharing, the participation are the actions that are most able to give a meaning to suffering, whether personal or social».

Luciana Scalacci, one of the first to be a part of this network of people of non-religious convictions that began more than 30 years ago around the Focolare Movement, confirmed: «...when I found myself in a life-threatening situation due to a very serious health problem I had the strength to believe that I would get well because of the presence of many friends who gave me their affection and shared my suffering». But there is also a personal action that can be done in front of suffering, declared Damjana Zupan, psychologist with no religious convictions from Slovenia: to enter with courage into the suffering, to know it and to welcome it. In this way, and she explained this through her personal experience: «...every encounter with suffering made me aware that without it I would never have discovered that the goal of suffering is love».

But which sufferings are fought and which are accepted? The conviction of the participants was unanimous: most of the social sufferings can be avoided through a political awareness that will influence the will of the people and orient them towards justice and the common good. In practice, one needs to commit oneself also in the civil



field, to win over evil with good, to transform hatred into love for the neighbour, and all these even in the absence of any religious belief. Jesús Morán also expressed his encouragement in the same way: «Believers and non-believers – affirmed the co-president of the Focolare Movement- can go together in unity to address the needs of humanity in the moment in which they, taking upon them-

selves the sufferings of the others, create a sort of lay transcendence, which is possible through the common experience of suffering and of love». This affirmation was confirmed also by the experience of Pierre, one of the participants from France: «Even if I don't have any religious belief – he emphasized - I believe in the charism of Chiara. A belief which is expressed, in a secular way, by striving to realize the dream of building fraternity on the world. I understood that when one understands this idea then everything opens up, all the barriers collapse».

Then there are personal sufferings, unbearable, which Paolo Taiti, a doctor, spoke about: «Reading in the gospels the narration of the passion of Christ I saw a story of violence inflicted on a man by other men ... That cry: "...why did you abandon me?", is an absence of a connection, an abandonment... Today too the solution to unexplainable suffering comes from the connection, the relationship, this humanity must be maintained. No one must ask us: "why did you abandon me?"; this would mean that we have refused to listen, to help, to see». No one should ever be abandoned in his suffering. Maybe this is the strongest message of this meeting: only sharing can give meaning to suffering, whether personal or social.

prepared by Vida Rus and Andrew Camilleri

Gen3 dell'Angola Like in a concert



«The Country is big», the Angolan gen 3 shared, «there are great distances from one province to the other. In spite of this we try to maintain the communication and sharing with the focal centers. For many of us it is really a challenge to participate in this congress, because the economic situation of our Country doesn't help us».

Since November the whole community has been helping in the preparations for the congress. 44 teens coming from different parts of the national territory, 11 assistants and Capuchin Father Gabriele who celebrated the Mass everyday for the gen3 boys in the church of the nearby village, arrived in the very beautiful island of Mussulo, the ideal place to spend the

Simultaneously with the congress of the European gen3 boys, the national congress of the gen3 boys of Angola was held in the island of Mussulo

last days of the year (from December 27 to January 1st, 2017) together.

Through experiences and the discovery of Jesus Forsaken shared by a video of Dori, one of the first companions of Chiara, the teens were able to get to know and to live one of the most important points in the life of a gen and the theme of the year. «I was able to understand well the theme of the year- Hildo said. What touched me is that the topics were all linked to each other by this theme because to love Jesus Forsaken means to embrace the needs of the other».

With the help of Fr. Gabriele and the assistants it was in fact made possible

to present the fundamental aspects of the gen3 life, to listen to the story of blessed Chiara Luce Badano and to talk about some important present day topics such as the use of mass media and the problem of pornography.

There were also moments of games, sports and above all music which reminded the gen3 of what Agostino Spolti, person responsible for the gen3 at the Center, wished for them in his message: «The gen3 must be in concert, each one must be like an instrument played well, so as to make those who see them say: "Look! There is Jesus in the midst!". So then, like in a concert, when everyone plays the instruments well, there is harmony».

the gen3 boys of Angola



In Nicaragua

The community is consolidated

An original group of people coming from the most diverse parts of the world to live together with the community that becomes the protagonist



«Come let me introduce you to the people who are always happy» - this is what Felix, a 13-year old Nicaraguan boy told his friend Dayana, 15 years old, at the arrival of the tempo-

The foundation of this original coexistence - distinct in their place of residence, but in the fullest unity during the activities held in the "casita" (little house), the house of the focolare - was the de-

Movement in Nicaragua and at the same time to reassure them that they are not alone. In the following days one meeting followed after another with persons of every vocation, age, profession. Many brought fruits, bread, cheese, a basket of fish, given not so much to us as persons, but to Jesus who, because of the reciprocal love lived among all, was present among us.

But the most beautiful "fruits" were precisely those who visited us, whether they came for the first time or those who already knew the Movement, but were not able to continue this experience. Now they came to tell us that they have come back "home", their decision to start again, in unity, their journey to God».

«On the Saturday of the last week-end - continued Jorge - we had the meeting of the youth among whom was Dayana, who didn't know us. A short while after the meeting ended, we saw her going to the "casita" with seven of her friends who were not able to arrive on time. When it was time to



rary focolare in Managua, which was opened from January 19 to February 6. The composition of this focolare was really original: with Oscar, married focolarino and his wife Marissa (who come periodically from Costa Rica to accompany the community), Daniel and Rosa, family-focolare from Argentina, parents of four children, in Nicaragua for the first time, Paolo (Italian) and Jorge (from Costa Rica) from the focolare of San José (Costa Rica). Roberto from the focolare of Bologna (Italy) would have joined them but he had to stay home due to a fractured arm.

sire to build among everyone that «family» which Chiara had indicated in her spiritual testament. And it was precisely this legacy lived that freed and irradiated the Ideal in all its power and novelty of life in all those local people united in this extraordinary adventure.

«The community of Managua - Paolo shared - welcomed the temporary focolare with great warmth, preparing with care the "casita" and making space in their own homes to welcome us. The first meeting was with the members of the community, to confirm them as being responsible for the

leave Dayana told us: "When you come back next time I will bring you a people".

«Sunday began with a gathering of families - Oscar and Marissa explained

- simultaneously with that of the gen3 and gen4 boys and girls. In the afternoon a celebration sealed an experience that was about to end for us, but which continues with

full vigour in the community which has now become the protagonist».

*Oscar and Marissa Porras,
Daniel and Rosa Schiavone,
Paolo Di Biase, Jorge Valerio*

Novelty CSC media Scartati (On the Edge)

CSC media has just finished a video that is a bit different from the usual formation materials.

We asked Heraldo Souza, Brazilian focolarino to tell us something about it

The title of the video is Scartati (On the Edge). Three true stories related by three actors: Alessio De Caprio, Italian, Rafael Reyes Loyo from Mexico and Sarah Finch from Great Britain.

They are stories of those who are or who feel that they are rejected by the others or by life. The protagonists in the fullness of their suffering encounter Jesus who on the cross cries out: «My God, my God why have you forsaken me?». From «rejects» they discover themselves «chosen» by God to pass from death to life, from suffering to Love, as expressed by some of the passages of Chiara Lubich that are inserted in the stories.

How did this project come about? I came to CSC media in February 2016. The audiovisual center of the Movement was interrogating itself on how to come up with new ways of expressing the wealth of the charism of Chiara Lubich. I shared with them a dream that was



born from my passion for the cinema and... for Jesus Forsaken. During the school of the focolarini, from the communion I had with another focolarino which I shared with Michel Vandeleene, an audiovisual project took shape but which we had to eventually put on hold. It was as if God put us on «pause». This project was reborn in CSCmedia.

And its realization? To share the idea was a challenge: we are of different sensitivities, cultures, languages. But this video is not supposed to communicate my vision of Jesus Forsaken but that of Jesus among us. We read and reread the material elaborated, in a dynamics of giving and receiving. The project changed and grew with the contribution of many. The images of two of Ciro's works, a focolarino sculptor, travel in the video together with the words of the meditations of Chiara.

How will this product be distributed? On the website www.focolare.org/scartati, the trailer and link for social media may be viewed. The video is available in Italian, Spanish and English in DVD format or as a file. Contact: scartati.csc@gmail.com

prepared by the editorial board

Card. Miloslav Vlk

*A great legacy that must be collected.
From a window-washing priest to a
Cardinal and moderator of the Bishops
friends of the Focolare Movement*

On March 18, in Prague, Card. Vlk, at 84 years old left for Heaven after an illness welcomed in a spirit of faith and lived always turned towards God whom he loved so much during his lifetime. Because of the originality of his story during the times of socialism, because of the depth of his soul, for the many responsibilities that he took on in the spirit of collegiality among Bishops and in unity with the Holy Father, Vlk is one of the well-known and much-loved figures of our times, in the Catholic Church and beyond.

After graduation, the young Vlk left his job as an archivist to study Theology and to become a priest. During his trip to the GDR (at that time East Germany) some priests spoke to him about the Focolare Movement and Miloslav embraced the spirituality of communion that they spoke of with enthusiasm. That young priest, well-educated and with a great influence on the youth, disturbed the communist regime who then revoked his permission to practice as a Catholic priest. Reduced to a layman, Chiara accepted his request to live in the focolare center of Prague and chose for him the Word of life: «*Pro eis sanctifico me ipsum*» [«I sanctify myself for them» (Jn 17,19)]. As his job, armed with a pail, a stick and a sponge, for ten years he went around the streets of Prague washing shop windows. «I could not preach, nor distribute the



sacraments publicly – the Cardinal recalled – but looking at the cross, I understood that mio High Priest, Jesus, when He was on the cross could hardly speak and had his hands nailed down». A lady remembered having seen him sometimes, with his hat drawn down over his face and wearing dark glasses, put down his stick and, after looking around, he took the risk of «hearing confession on the sidewalk or of talking to persons in difficulty».

When the regime collapsed (1989), he once again became a parish priest. In '90 he is consecrated Bishop with an episcopal motto chosen by him: «*Ut omnes unum sint*» [that all may be one] (Jn 17,21) and in '91 he was nominated as Archbishop of Prague. From '92 to 2000 he was the head of the Czech Bishops' Conference and from '93 to 2001 president of the Council of the European Bishops' Conferences. On November 26, '94 he was elevated as Cardinal.

After the death of Bishop Klaus Hemmerle, in January of '94 Chiara asked him to assume the role of moderator of the Bishops friends of the Focolare Movement, a responsibility that he carried for 18 years, convening and supporting the numerous meetings for Catholic bishops and those of various Churches that were held in Castel Gandolfo (Rome) or in other significant international locations. In January of this year, upon the news of his illness, he received an unexpected and affectionate telephone call from Pope Francis.

«It is edifying – wrote Emmaus as she gave the news of Card. Vlk's departure to the focolare centers – how he lived this last period wherein his strength gradually diminished, in a constant attitude



Bishops Klaus Hemmerle and
Miloslav Vlk with Chiara Lubich



means to have God in the first place and gave us the key to making the Church ever more beautiful, united and alive!».

«In gratitude and glory to God for the precious gift that Card. Miloslav has been – continued Emmaus in her telegram to the focalare center of the world – we know think of him in the bosom of the Father, beside Chiara and mons. Hemmerle and let us entrust to him the Church and the Work of Mary, especially the branch of the Bishops friends».

of gratitude to God for the gifts he had received from Him, in a special way for the charism of unity».

A chorus of prayers accompanied Miloslav in his last days: from the diocesan community, the members of the Focolare Movement, from his friends of various Christian denominations, from Jews and Muslims with whom he had journeyed together in dialogue for many years. The woman Volunteer doctor who remained close to him in this period, aside from hearing him constantly repeat: «Thank you, thank you!», heard what his last words were: «The most beautiful King is Jesus on the cross».

In the telegram of condolence to Card. Dominik Duka, archbishop of Prague, Pope Francis wrote among other things: «I remember with admiration his tenacious faithfulness to Christ, in spite of the deprivations and persecutions against the Church, as well as his fecund and numerous apostolic activities animated by the desire to bear witness to the joy of the Gospel, promoting an authentic ecclesial renewal faithful and always docile to the inspirations of the Holy Spirit».

At the solemn funeral Mass celebrated in the Cathedral of Prague, Card. Francis Xavier Kriengsak Kovithavanij, archbishop of Bangkok, who took his place as moderator of the Bishops friends of the Focolare Movement, brought the greetings of all of them, affirming that for each one of them «Card. Miloslav was a friend, a brother, a father. In our meetings he made us experience the freshness of the Gospel lived and the joy of being, around Jesus, a family of true brothers. In the spirit of the Second Vatican Council, he worked tirelessly for Christian unity and for communion among bishops and with the Pope. Thank you, Miloslav. Through your heroic witness you showed what it



Lund (Sweden), 31 October, 2016. Card. Vlk with Card. Kriengsak Kovithavanij, together with the Lutheran bishop Krause (second from right) at the opening of the year of celebration for the 500 years of the Reform

mons. Jozef Zlatňanský

«Truth, justice, love»

Mons. Josef, known also as Fr. Giuseppe, was one of the young and talented Slovak seminarians who in the years 1945-47 were invited by their Bishops to study in Rome. With the rise of the communist regime, that preceded his re-entry in his country, Fr. Giuseppe worked as parish priest in Tavodo, a small village of Trent, and it is here that he came to know the spirituality of unity which he tried his best to spread. In '64



he returned to Rome to work as the secretary of a famous theologian and at the same he worked closely with Incontri Romani to bring rare groups of Slovaks touring the Eternal City to get to know the Christian Rome and also the Focolare Movement. This is what happened to a group of youth who came to Rome for a week in '69, which Fr. Giuseppe continued to form also during the summer when he went back to Slovakia, promising to send them the Word of life through the Vatican Radio. It was a promise that he kept for decades.

Due to his abilities he was called to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith where, from '84 he became the Undersecretary, and one of the closest collaborators of then prefect Card. Ratzinger. In '97 he was nominated Bishop and Secretary of the permanent Pontifical Commission for Eastern Europe. The episcopal motto chosen by him: «Truth, justice, love».

Mons. Zlatnanský had a close relationship with Chiara Lubich, whom he accompanied also in important events such as the doctorate h.c. in Theology conferred to her in 2003 by the University of Trnava (Slovakia).

In 2006 Mons. Giuseppe returned to his city of birth in Slovakia. In spite of his now limited physical strength, in collaboration with other experts he worked for the translation into Slovak of the Catechism of the Catholic Church. All those who came to visit him in his house in Topolcianky were welcomed with open arms and with joy: it was a meeting with a fate. In January he was struck by a serious illness. Emmaus immediately informed the focolarini in Slovakia, and asked them to bring to Mons. Zlatnanský her gratitude for everything that he did for the Work of Mary. His departure for the House of the Father was in the 11th of February at the age of 90. During the funeral Mass, Mons. Viliam Judák, bishop of Nitra, said: «We have the impression of saying goodbye not only to a person, but to an entire generation of priests and religious». We can truly say: «Thank you Fr. Giuseppe and... until we meet again!».

Martin Uher

Antonia Benaglio

«Seek first the kingdom of God and its justice, and the rest will be given to you in abundance» (Mt 6,33)

Born in 1930 in the province of Bergamo (Italy), at 14 years old, due to the death of her mother, Antonia had to stop studying to take care of the family. At 21 years old she met the spirituality of the Movement and was fascinated by the reality of God-Love: «I didn't sleep that night – she wrote – and when the bells tolled at five o'clock I got up silently. And just as the first Mass was starting I found myself in the confessional, after several years». In her first Mariapolis she discovered that the aim of the Movement is to contribute to the realization of the testament of Jesus «That all may be one». «I understood – she continued – that I was also born for that page of the Gospel and that, having only one life, I could not but spend it for unity. And I never turned back».

«It is now thirteen days that I am in the focolare – she wrote to Chiara Lubich, from Milan, October 4, '59 – and I thank God with all my soul for the gift of the vocation which in these days I have experienced its greatness as never before». And subsequently: «In the Pact that I renew everyday I place into your hands my reconsecration to Jesus Forsaken for "That all may be one"». Her living the Ideal is characterized by a profound charity and by her giving space to the others, giving them value. In '79 she left Milan and moved to Turin as person co-responsible of the Zone, a responsibility which she fulfils until '92, with humility, wisdom and a big heart, guiding everyone to God. After a period of time spent in the secretariat of Chiara, she was elected as the Councilor at the Center of the Movement for the aspect of Communion of goods, economy and work up to 2008, together Bruno Venturini (see *Mariapoli* 7-8/9).



In the final years she was in the focolare «Casa Agape» of Loppiano. The illness which she had for some time interfered with her daily life removing some of her intellectual abilities but without taking away her capacity to love. In fact, she continued to give herself and to be of service, untiring in her desire to be of help maintaining that attitude of welcome and openness that created the family. And during her final days she could no longer sing the praises of Mary with her beautiful voice, the focolarina who accompanied her did this around her bed. On February 21, after the celebration of the Eucharist, she passed peacefully from earth to Heaven, leaving the legacy of a constant love for God and her continuous and silent giving of herself to the others.

Gianni Caso

A man of law who made the Gospel the law of his life

Focolarino, judge, a man of vast culture, Gianni was born in Campania (Italy) in 1930. While he was studying jurisprudence and working hard as a court clerk in the Tribunal, because of his solid Christian formation he became in-charge of the youth of the Catholic Action of Naples. After his graduation, during military service, he got to know a focolarino who made a subscription to *Città Nuova* for him and in '59 he participated in the Mariapolis of Fiera di Primiero. In a passionate talk of Bruna Tomasi (one of the first companions of Chiara) Gianni discovered in the Ideal a particular consonance with the lay, civil, political vocation that he felt in his heart. When he became a judge in the court of Milan, he chose this location so as to be closer to and to get to know more about the life of the focolare. In '65 he attended the school of the focolarini in Loppiano and afterwards he returned to his job as a judge living now in the focolare.

In '68 he became a judge in Alto Adige where he worked for the nascent New Humanity Movement in the Zone and successively, becoming



a member of the Court of Appeals of Rome, he continued to work at the Center of the Movement. Even if he was still quite young, he was entrusted with a delicate and risky appeal process against the Red Brigade for the kidnapping and murder of Aldo Moro, a very important Italian politician. Everyday, he was escorted by a security team from and to the focolare in an armored vehicle. Then, in his own car he would drive alone to Mass. One evening, guided by a sort of divine inspiration he changed his usual route, and thus he avoided being kidnapped by terrorists who were waiting for him in his usual route.

Gianni continued to work for New Humanity, realizing important initiatives regarding the problem of justice in Italy, in Europe, and on the questions regarding the penal system. He travelled to China and to Latin America, bringing his experience in the human, ethical and juridical fields. When he was nominated to the Court of Appeals Chiara wrote to him: «... I hope that your work will always be enlivened by the Ideal. The desire that you feel to grow and to live in fullness [...] is certainly a grace that you have received: strive then to correspond to this gift of God Gianni! I am with you in this new appointment».

At the start of the years 2000 Gianni is involved in keeping together a group of scholars and professionals in the field of law: thus the Inundation «Communion and law» was born, which in the succeeding years would organize international congresses, conventions and summer schools dedicated especially to the youth.

«... In the search for a foundation for life that is always fleeting – he wrote to Chiara – to give an eternal substance to this humanity which, as you have said, continually ruins everything, it seems to me that you have given a definitive and absolute answer with the mystery of Jesus Forsaken. He is the answer to the eternal problems of man [...] He is the source of his new creation, his eternal regeneration. [...] Christ did not call me [...] to human perfection but to a divine perfection: to

discover that the height, the depth, the width, the length of the mystery of Christ = mystery hidden for centuries in God. [...] I do not want to choose Jesus Forsaken because of the fruits of resurrection derived from Him, but for Himself, out of love for Him, because I want to love Him ...».

In 2015, he stops working for the Inundations, but Gianni continued to follow its work at a distance, he continued to write, study, discuss, up to the end. Upon the news of his death at 87 years old on March 16, countless echoes were heard from all over the world from those who knew and loved him: family members, fellow judges, and those who worked in the field of justice, common people, all grateful for this man of law who had made the Gospel the law of his life, allowing himself to be guided especially by a passage that Chiara herself had chosen for him: «Whoever among you wants to be first must be the servant of all» (Mk 10,44).

Fr. Marino Merlo

«Jesus In the midst, the only Teacher»

Missionary of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate (Omi), Fr. Marino met the ideal in the early fifties at the Mariapolis of Fiera di Primiero. From then on his entire life was constantly oriented towards edifying the presence of Jesus in the midst, «the only Teacher», as he often loved to call Him. A life totally spent in profound relationship with God, in the patient building of the community and in the formation of people.

In the years he spent in the community of Marino (Rome), thanks to the charism of unity, shared with the other Oblates, he found the right paradigm suitable for starting something totally new: «When we began in 1967-68 – he recalled – those were the years of global revolution, where everything of the past seemed to crumble, even within our religious institutions. In just a short time, the formation houses of the Oblates closed down. We had to start again. It was just the moment before the Second vatican Council, there was the need to leave the securities of the past and to start a new journey: a grace that was awaiting us». Thus began the extraordinary adventure

destined to provide new oxygen for the Oblates of the whole Italy. Fr. Marino was nominated the master of novices, a responsibility that he carried out up to '83, when he became the provincial superior. After some years during which he visited and encouraged the Italian Omi missionaries spread all over the world, he arrived at the formation Center of Frascati-Vermicino, to continue to dedicate himself to formation, an activity which he began in his youth when he was in the community of Florence and which he has continued to do all his life. On May 23, 2016 he reached Heaven at 87 years old.

«Jesus, thank you for having revealed to me your Abandoned Love – he wrote in 2007 – Jesus my “yes” today is for this Love that you want to relive in me... all that I ask You is to help me to recognize You immediately...». In March '72 he wrote: «In a few days it will be Good Friday: I re-consecrate my self to Jesus Forsaken as if it were the first time. I see everything so new and different! In Jesus Forsaken the whole world belongs to me like an immensity of Love ... Now I understand why my life as a consecrated person and a priest must be a distillate of Jesus Forsaken: such love!».

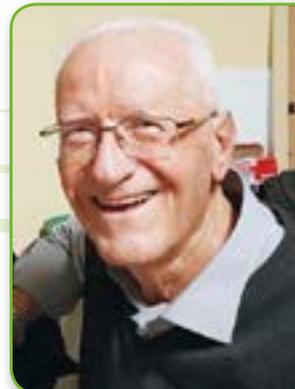
The Center of the men Religious



Fr. Luigi (Gino) Galante

«We have put our hope in the living God» (1Tm 4,10)

Priest focolarino of Matera (Italy), man of culture, professor and theologian, Fr. Gino was always attentive to the needs of the weakest and the least. Generous, happy, diligent



pastor, person of reference for many youth, he put listening, gratuity, gift as the basis of every relationship. From his meeting the Ideal in 1968 he is always present in the meetings at the Center, often leading the singing with his great ability to involve everyone. For years he was responsible for the priest focolarini of the Zone.

In 1977 he wrote: «Jesus in the midst is truly paradise on earth; in Him everything draws light and form, in Him and through Him everything is unified: my personal life, the life of unity, the apostolate. He is the cornerstone of my life, fruit of total love for the only Spouse and the Desolate. He is the choice that I renew a thousand times a day».

And in 2002: «As the years go by, with all kinds of canes, interior and exterior, with some

small aches and pains that limit my strength, I feel that Jesus Forsaken has become more and more my only good, the guiding star of my life; it is Him who brings unity to the scattered fragments and at times the darknesses within me; He is the powerful spring that makes me jump into the infinite resurrections of the present moment». And still in 2013: «I think that my anchoring to Jesus Forsaken has grown: He is my light and my strength even in my weaknesses. "You are my life, I have no other": I would repeat this to Him an infinite number of times with the words of a song that often re-echoes in my soul».

On March 5, at the age of 78, Fr. Gino went up to Heaven in the arms of the Lord.

Fr. Carlo Santoro

Fr. Giuseppe Suman

«I am not of this world» (Jn 8,23)

On February 26, Fr. Giuseppe, priest focolarino of Verona (Italy), reached the Heavenly mariapolis at the age of 65. The new name given to him by Chiara is Giuseppe of Jesus Forsaken and his life was such when in 1976 due to a road accident he remained impaired for the rest of his life. In '98, during a liver transplant, he wrote to Chiara: «While I was entering the operating room and I felt the surgical instruments of the doctors and I saw the expressions on their faces, I told myself: "Even here I must be pure love". then "Jesus I entrust everything to you". I felt that I was borne by Jesus in the midst and the arms of Mary. In the final instances I repeated "Because you are forsaken, I offer you my life for unity". When I woke up I was only able to say once in awhile: "A pure act of love in Jesus Forsaken every day and every night". I am very happy to be your "popo" and I want to live even more for unity».



Fr. Giuseppe does not make his illness a burden and in spite of the fatigue, he continued to faithfully serve the persons entrusted to him distinguishing himself by his extraordinary ability to dialogue even with persons of other convictions. His always radiant face reflected his most precious secret:

an unconditional love for Jesus Forsaken.

Fr. Cesare Ronconi

Maria da Encarnação Lopez Nunes da Silva

A visible evangelical sanctity

A Volunteer of Faro (Portugal), Encarnação was married with two daughters. Generous, patient and gifted with great humility, her presence of love was felt even in her silence. She had faith in the power of unity and of prayer. Some years ago she decided to open the doors of her home and the surrounding land to realize a camp site for the youth of the Movement.

Elio Lucchi

«Build peace by witnessing to love»

Born in Cesena (Italy) in 1919, in spite of the difficulties of that epoch Elio was able to earn a degree and to find work in a bank. He joined the Catholic Action, dedicating himself to Christian education of teens. He was an aficionado of music, leading the singing during liturgical celebrations. From his marriage with Irma, four daughters were born. In a meeting at the parish he came to know about the points of the «art of loving» that Chiara drew from the Gospel and he decided to base all his relationships with every person he met on it, especially with his colleagues at work. Soon he became the point of reference for many. With diligence he participated in the life of the Movement and became a Volunteer.



When he retired, he offered to teach music and singing in the elementary school, cultivating in his students the passion for art. His devotion to Mary led him to intensify his prayer life and the visits, together with Irma, to the different Marian shrines. Their profound relationships with God made them both always open to the needs of others. In 2009, with the death of Irma, Elio lived

through a very difficult moment which he was able to overcome through his certainty in the love of God, and of the brothers. Since he could no longer move about independently, he continued to share through the telephone, paying particular attention to those who were suffering or lonely.

As long as his health permitted, he would attend Mass everyday and when he could no longer do so an extraordinary minister brought him Jesus in the Eucharist. On December 31, 2016 at the age of 97 he returned to the House of the Father, joining Irma and many friends who had lived to build peace by witnessing to love.

Gian Paolo Palmieri

In January 2016 she suffered a stroke that brought with it many limitations including the loss of speech. When the women Volunteers visit her face immediately becomes expressive and attentive. «we spoke to her and she would reply with a slight movement of her head and squeezing the hand of one of us. We remember praying with her and with her hand she ran through the beads of her rosary one by one».

After a brief stay in the hospital, on the 18th of February, at the age of 81, God called her to Himself. Her parish priest, to whom Encarnação would give the Word of life, immediately wanted to celebrate a Mass for her: «...she was a discrete person – he said – with a very delicate love. She had the ability to accept suffering that was beyond normal. We can say that evangelical sanctity was visible in her».



Michela Vaz Patto

Fr. José Varas

Pillar of the Movement in Spain

First priest focalario of Spain, Fr. José of Madrid returned to the Father on January 28 at the age of 87. When he met the Ideal (1966) he immediately committed himself to live it and he does it in such a way that he became – as witnessed by the co-president Jesús Morán –: «a true pillar of the Movement in Spain with a *sensus ecclesiae* that was really special».

Loved by everyone – priests, laity, the poor, the rich, workers, politicians – with his joyful laughter, well-known throughout the diocese, he was able to resolve many difficulties. He was parish priest in



many parished, for three years he was the spiritual director of the Seminary of Madrid and for 13 years he was the episcopal vicar. For many years he was the delegate for the priest focolarini of Spain. The love for Jesus Forsaken supported him in all these positions of responsibility for which he had always felt inadequate, up to the point of asking Chiara to be replaced. But she encouraged him to go ahead giving him the Word of life: «Oh my strength, I want to sing to You, because You are, oh God, my defense» (Psalm 59, 18).

At the little town Castello Estero (in the area of Madrid), Fr. José knew how to «make you feel at home», priests, seminarians who would come to stay or to visit. In his more than 60 years of priesthood he distinguished himself by his special love for the elderly and sick priests and for the poor. In his final years, due to a degenerative illness he had to move to a residence for sick priests. Pushed by his passion for «*that all may be one*» he confided to those who came to visit him the secret of his serenity: «I resemble Jesus in the cross, I am now very limited, but this does not make me sad... I cannot do much with my tongue or even with my legs or with writing ... I can only pray... For each one there is a plan of God. I am happy to know that I am in His hands». When he had to be brought to the hospital, and he was asked if he felt like renewing his consecration to Jesus Forsaken he answered: «Here I am!». These were his last words. We can now truly entrust to him, as Ángel Bartol, central delegate at the center of the Movement: «the priests of Spain and in particular the focolarini».

Fr. Francisco T. Tomas Rodriguez

Zygmunt Frackowiak

Among the first builders of the Mariapolis Fiore in Poland

Born in Poznan, at 18 years old Zygmunt began to work in the underground mines, continuing this job for around 30 years. When he reached retirement age, with his wife Lidia, they moved to the Mariapolis Fiore to begin, together with the focolarine, the Polish little town. While Lidia took care of the kitchen, preparing meals for the numerous guests, Zygmunt took care of the

maintenance of the little town becoming the point of reference for everything regarding construction and the environment.

Lately he was diagnosed with a serious illness, but his strong constitution and the immediate and appropriate therapy gave hope of his recovery. But before Christmas

his condition worsened. As his departure for Heaven drew near – December 29 at the age of 80 – Zygmunt is surrounded by the whole community of the little town, grateful to God for the gift of his life and for his spiritual legacy permeated with unity.

At the funeral Mass, concelebrated by seven priests, people from all over Poland came, some even travelling 400 km. In the homily his virtues in the imitation of Mary were underlined, such as simplicity, kindness, humility, modesty, service, united to the spirit of sacrifice and dedication to his work, virtues that Zygmunt drew from St. Joseph.

Stanislaw Grochmal



Maria Mugnai

A simple and constant love

Maria, Volunteer of Montevarchi (town near Loppiano), had a difficult life especially with regards to her physical health (but not only) which tried her since her birth; no one believed that she would survive and instead she managed to do so, not just as a newborn baby, but also in the many battles that she had to face consequently and which she overcame remaining always in charity, minimizing the difficulties and finding the positive in them.

She was around 30 years old when she met the spirituality of unity and remained fascinated by the answer it gave to her many sufferings in life, which she discovered as a reflection of the sufferings of Jesus on the cross. She launched herself with generosity in the adventure of the Gospel that brought her to a commitment, with humility and wisdom, in the various

Giuseppe Ricci

A testimony of the will of God

Born in the province of Arezzo (Italy) in a family of farmers, due to his marked predisposition for learning, Giuseppe was able to graduate and become an able and talented middle-school teacher and subsequently in a secondary school. In the Eighties he met Antonella, they got married and both of them join the Movement. Giuseppe, in order to live with radicalness his choice of God, became a Volunteer. In spite of his notable culture, his humility, simplicity and goodness of heart made him feel the least important among his brothers of his



his nucleo in Florence, often comparing himself to the worker of the last hour.

In 2008 Jesus Forsaken presented himself in great style: due to a cerebral ischemia he lost his sight for several days. He recovered up to the point of feeling that he received a miracle, but the ischemic episodes continued and in May 2016 he began to experience problems in walking. On December 15 their nucleo meeting was held in his house and for the first time we saw him sitting on the sofa. After an hour, visibly in pain, with a feeble voice he excused himself for not being able to stay with us but he assured us that he offered everything for our unity.

A few days later he was brought to the hospital, where he continued to bear witness to his meekness in wanting only to do the will of God. On December 28 at the age of 78, he returned to the House of the Father.

Pino Tasca of the center of the men Volunteers

ambits of social and ecclesial life. As a hospita volunteer she knew how to move and act with delicateness: «There are sick people – she wrote in 2012 – who have no one and they don't want to eat. A lady was silent and did not answer even when I asked what her name is. Looking through her chart and seeing her name I told her: "courage Margherita!" Hearing her being called by name she accepted my help and when I greeted her as I was leaving she continued to send me kisses!».

Maria had a special passion for the youth and she would often pray for them that they may discover and know how to embrace with generosity their own vocation. Her love was simple and constant, her faithfulness conquered everyone. For more than ten years she was at the service of the parish as a Eucharistic minister, creating with the sick and their families real fragments of fraternity. Maria left for the Heavenly Mariapolis on January 2 at the age of 79.



Aurelia Nembrini

Fr. Gerhard Höning

«Obeying to the truth, you are purified and now you can love one another sincerely as brothers» (1 Pt 1,22)

Born in the province of Heidelberg (Germany) at twenty years old Gerhard entered the seminary and in that period he met the Movement. Ordained a priest, in 1959 he participated in the Mariapolis of Fiera di Primiero. When he became the parish priest of Obrigheim he built a new church and he held the mariapolis three times in his parish, giving many of his acquaintances the chance to get to know the Ideal. In '75 he attended the priests' school in Frascati (Rome) and from there he wrote to Chiara: «I was able to drink the pure water of your charisma. I want to be a focolarino. I want to be faithful to this life even when I go back home».



As a priest focolarino he was involved in the Parish Movement becoming a point of reference for the Zone and for the whole Germany. His famous «gara aemulami» among parishes will remain unforgettable which through his untiring support, gave rise to so much Christian life. In the ambit of the priests of the Movement Fr. Gehrard had the responsibility for the communion of goods, that he practiced and spread with faithfulness and vigour, underlining the importance of the culture of giving.

A few months ago he was struck by an illness that he immediately recognized as a precious invitation to the encounter with his only Spouse. With faithfulness he submitted himself to the treatment that nevertheless proved to be ineffective. In the last four weeks of his life he was transferred to the palliative care unit where everyone was surprised by the many people who came to visit him and who would often sing for him the songs of the Mariapolis. On December 3, 2016 at the age of 85 he took his fight in God.

Fr. Joachim Dauer



Anna De Rosa

*«In your will is my joy»
[Psalm 119 (118),16]*

From Gaeta (Italy), married to Salvino and mother of three daughters among

whom is Elga who would later become a member of the parish Movement, Anna had the first contacts with the Ideal of unity in 1975 attending a small group of the Word of life guided by the parish priest. Attracted to this new way of life based on the Gospel, she adhered to it with enthusiasm: thus began her adventure as part of the nascent Parish Movement which would involve other people.

The Word lived pushed her to actively participate in Caritas in the parish, always in the frontline, prompt and assiduous, there where it was needed or there was a suffering to alleviate or a critical situation to fix. She participated with passion in the numerous formation

meetings at the Center of the Movement, always more aware of the greatness of the gift received through the Ideal. In the final years, when her precarious health forced her to remain at home, what sustained her was her faithfulness to the Eucharist and a special love for Jesus Forsaken, as a worthy and true child of Chiara. She was this up to the end of her earthly existence on December 21, 2016 at the age of 94.

Franca Mitrano and Tony Fusco

Antonio Garcia Rubio

A person in live with the will of God



A Volunteer of Spain, Antonio moved to Madrid to study law

and to start his work in the capital. He married Paca and thanks to their daughter Loli (who was then a gen3 and now a focolarina) they met the ideal of unity. From his first Mariapolis Mariapoli Antonio wrote: «It was the discovery of God Love. I felt in the depths of my being the certainty and the confidence of being loved by God and that the way to reach Him was the brother. As a consequence I must love everyone that He puts beside me everyday».

This new spirituality provoked a profound conversion in him: to go against the current, to live forgiveness, to build deep relationships of mercy. He became a Volunteer and placed his talents, his capabilities and his human experience at the service of the Movement, dedicating himself to the Mariapolis Centers and the the Ciudad Nueva publishing house. For a period he was the person co-responsible for New Humanity if the Zone. What impressed us was his honesty, responsibility, intelligence, humility, wisdom, hospitality, his knowing how to «create family» with everyone, starting with his relatives. He was committed to the social realities, he helped in forming various cooperatives and in establishing the EoC in the Zone.

Difficult moments were not lacking, such as the death of one of his children in a car accident and the degenerative illness of Paca, which Antonio is able to overcome with an ever deeper love for Jesus Forsaken.

In September they discovered an illness that required him to be immediately hospitalized. His total docility to the will of God, just as he had strived to do all his life, and his subtle sense of humour conquered the respect and affection of the hospital staff. On December 24, at the age of 84, he left for Heaven with great serenity, leaving an exemplary legacy of faithfulness both as a Christian and as a son of Chiara Lubich.

Juan Badia



Francesco Crivelli

A «saint» next door

On the evening of December 10, 2016, Francesco – Volunteer of Lugano (Switzerland) since the '90s, responsible for the men Volunteers of the

Zone – left for the Heavenly Mariapolis at just 60 years old, accompanied by the love of his wife Marina and their five children. The former Secretary, he carried out his responsibility with perizia and dedication, making fruitful also his choice to live a life based on the Gospel which brought him «to disappear» more and more so as to give space to the others.

Seven years ago, when his illness returned, Francesco was forced to leave his job. He overcame this with dignity and also the loss of two of his grandchildren. The moment in which the decision was made to stop all treatment and to go home to spend the time he had left there, he entrusted himself totally to Jesus Forsaken. All those who came to visit him were edified by his great serenity. The focalare of Lugano wrote: «Francesco was a teacher of how to accept all sufferings from the hands of God. All those who met him did not remain indifferent. In his last days his house became a shrine, a home that was always

open, where there was always a place at table for everyone».

The church was crowded for his funeral; people who came to celebrate his birth into Heaven, as he himself had entrusted to his relatives and friends: «No tears, only celebration». The pastoral council thanked Francesco for being an exemplary person both as a Christian and as a citizen; the parish priest spoke of him as a «saint» next door, who through his life irradiated the light of the Risen Lord.

Pino Tasca from the center of the men Volunteers

Hildegard Angenheyster

A Christian faith without ifs and buts

One of the first women Volunteers of Aachen (Germany), Hildegard was still a student when she met the Movement. From then on the Word of life became the basis of all her actions; she was convinced that she had found in the charisma of Chiara the way to live an authentic Christian life, without ifs or buts. ancora studente quando conosce il Movimento. Da allora la Parola di vita diventa il punto fermo del suo agire, She became a catechist



and a supervisor of adult-education – this was her profession – gathering Christians who were in search for something more, forming them in the life of the Word. Many of them, in different degrees, found their vocation in the Movement.

As supervisor, and later as the directress of refresher courses of the diocese, she became a close collaborator of Bishop Klaus Hemmerle. In various manifestations Hildegard always found a way to present the spirituality of the Focolare Movement and its service to the Church in the world, thus giving a strong witness of the Movement.

Her priorities were to nurture relationships and be involved in situations of need. Unity was the guiding force and basis of her many social and personal relationships, which allowed all those she met to encounter a living God, God-Love: in the Church, that she loved very much, in ecumenism, in a group of Muslim ladies strated by her ...

After she retired she felt the call to begin, in the Cathedral of Aachen, a moment of prayer and meditation at noon, which continues till today and which she started and brought ahead until she became ill. Her earthly life ended on March 4, 2016 at the age of 86, after a long and mysterious embrace of Jesus Forsaken, which revealed abundant fruits, to the great surprise of everyone at her funeral.

Doris Spitzer



Michel Garel

*Active in charity,
discrete, humble*

Michel was born in Lyon (France) in a family who had a watch and clockmaker's shop. Due to a degenerative illness of his father, being the eldest

he had to stop studying at 15 years old to help his mother in the business. At 30, he married Lucile and they too had five children among whom Alex is now in the focolare in Algeria. When they met the Movement, Lucile became a Volunteer while Michel, who was then very active in his work and in the parish, participated once in awhile in a few meetings. Their fifth child who had Downs Syndrome, died just a few months after his birth, a loss which was transformed into a strong experience of love. In agreement with their other four children, Michel and Lucile adopt Myriam, a little girl also with Downs and, much later, Gérard, who had some character problems. Their home was always open to the poor, the foreigners, to people who were alone whom they helped also through the Association of Traders and Shopkeepers. But their business was not flourishing and so they had to close their shop and eventually moved the family to Toulouse. This human setback helped him to discover and to choose Jesus Forsaken. he became a Volunteer.

Discrete, humble, always available for everyone, even as a member of the Movement Foi et Lumière, he did everything so that a community of Arche, could establish itself near Toulouse, and their Myriam was welcomed. In 2013 Lucile died and Michel suffered a lot. He remained alone, and was also able to find a place for Gérard in an educational center.

On June 5, 2016, after returning from an international meeting of men Volunteers, he entered a clinic for a simple procedure. But after the operation his health was compromised due to an infection which the doctors could not eradicate and for five months he had to be nourished by fluid drip. Even if he felt that he was in «a spiritual desert», Michel continued to pray, abandoning himself to God, without complaining: his always thought of the others. On November 1, 2016 he left this world at the age of 76. The Beatitudes was chosen to be read at his funeral Mass.

Frédéric Colomar and Emmanuel Baroux

Nella Lingua Altimani

*An uncommon
freshness of soul*

Originally from Piedmont, Nella moved to Milan due to the work of her husband who one day brought home a copy of *Città Nuova* that he had received from his colleague. Fascinated by the contents of the magazine she tried to find a way to come in contact with the Movement, understanding fully the novelty of its way of life. She became a Volunteer and her actions revealed more clearly the nobility of her soul and her sunshine disposition with which she was gifted. She was always at the service, and got involved in the parish where she made use of her ability in mediation and bringing with her cultural heritage which was always up-to-date, building unity everywhere. She distributed the Word of life in great numbers, accompanied by little notes and personal touches. With generosity she gave her summer cottage at the beach for the use of the women Volunteers and also there,



Ways of sanctity

Daniela Zanetta. On February 23, 2017 Pope Francis, recognizing her heroic virtues, declared a Venerable the Servant of God Daniela Zanetta, a girl of Maggiora (Novara) who died in 1986 at just 24 years old. Now the cause towards her beatification is ongoing. She was born with a rare illness that all throughout her life caused skin lacerations and enormous suffering (epidermolisi bollosa distrofica). She left behind a diary wherein she revealed the secret of her journey to sanctity: to transform suffering into love. The papal pronouncement gave a great joy not only to the Movement, but also to her parents Lucia and Carlo and to her siblings Fabrizio and Emanuele, and the entire ecclesial community of their place.

Domenico Mangano. His wife Pia with the children, the men Volunteers of God and the whole Work of Mary welcomed with joy the news from Mons. Semeraro, bishop of Albano (Rome) that with the edict of March 9, 2017, the cause of canonization of Domenico Mangano was announced with these motivations: «His authentic testimony of a Christian and his radical faith is a constant invitation to collective sanctity, which finds its maximum expression in reciprocal help in walking along the same road to sanctity. To become a saint out of love for the neighbour». He was a Volunteer of Viterbo who died in 2001.

The complete text of the telegrams of Emmaus for the focolarine and the focolarini can be found in www.focolare.org/notiziariomariapoli

together with them she would even attract the people at the beach with her life.

Pillar of the family, with her discrete and balanced love she was able to find the right way to participate in the initiatives of the Movement without compromising her family life. Even up to her old age she maintained a freshness of soul that was not common and with which she was able to lovingly raise even her grandchildren.

She had a stroke, and having thus to depend on the others, she did so with humility and docility, and always expressed her gratitude. On September 17, 2016, at 90 years old she left for Heaven leaving the legacy of a life totally clothed in the Word that Chiara had given her: «There is no greater love than this: to give one's life for one's friends» (Jn 15,13).

*Francesca Scauda
Candeloro*

Our relatives

Those who have passed on to the Next Life: **Nicasio, brother of Geneviève Sanze**, focolarina at the Roman Mariapolis; **Giuseppina, mother of Sergio Rondinara** and **Luca, brother of Michele Lauriola**, focolarini at Loppiano; **Sebastiano, father of Rosetta Basile**, and **Angelo, father of Barbara Abate**, married focolarine in Catania; **Mercè, mother of Marcela Boldú**, focolarina at Castell D'Aro (Spain); **Giuseppe, father of Letizia Fuso** and **Santino, brother of Lucia D'Antonio**, focolarine in Naples; **Edivaldo**, brother of **Cristiane (Cristy) Da Silva**, focolarina in Iringa (Tanzania); **Charles, brother of Magdalena Namayanja**, focolarina at the Mariapolis Piero (Kenya); **Marie, mother of Christiane Bankumukunzi**, focolarina in Bujumbura (Burundi); **Maria, mother of Bernadette Neissl**, focolarina in Holland; **Heinrich, father of Marianne Hessing**, focolarina at the Mariapolis Luminosa (USA); **José, father of Vibel Lopez**, focolarina in Trento; **Vojteck, father of Maria Fismanova (Marigi)**, focolarina in Bratislav (Slovakia); **Oliva, sister of Frediana Kyomukamarikora**, focolarina at the zone center of East Africa; **Alba, mother of Elena Pace**, focolarina in North Lazio (Italy); **Serafina, mother of Giorgio Alberico**, focolarino at the Roman Mariapolis; **Maria, sister of Elio De Toffoli**, focolarino in Trent; **M. Antonietta, mother of Grazia Passa**, focolarina in South Lazio (Italy); **Vita, mother of Enza Lo Grasso**, focolarina at the zone center of Italy; **Hae Soo, father of Juliana Corona Hyun**, focolarina in the USA; **FRANCESCO, SON OF SANTA EQUI**, MARRIED focolarina in Pisa (Italy); **Thi Men, mother of Pavi Anh Le**, focolarina in Vietnam; **Maria Selma, mother and a brother of Tania Santos**, focolarina in Teresina (Brazil); **Piero, father of Chiara Cuneo**, co-responsible for Eastern Europe; **Jan, father of Jaroslava (Jarka) Maliková**, focolarina in Slovakia.

SPIRITUALITY

- 2 Spiritual thought of Chiara Lubich. The joy of the Risen One
- 3 New publication. *Sarai tutta nuova. La mia vita con Chiara Lubich* (You will be all new. My life with Chiara Lubich)

EVENTI

- 4 Special report March 14. A light on the family
- 8 The General Council in Ottmaring
- 11 Little Towns between design and realization

THE PEOPLE OF CHIARA

- 14 Youth in Syria. Stories of suffering, hope and faith
- 16 EDUXEDU in Brazil. Educate to prepare the child for the world
- 18 Women and men Volunteers in Brazil. At the service of humanity
- 20 Women Volunteers of the Southern Cone. The fulfillment of a long-awaited dream

AT THE CENTER

- 20 EoC and Pope Francis. A stage for today and for the future. Observatory on poverty «Leo Andringa»
- 24 The meeting of the publishing houses of Città Nuova in the world
- 26 Bishops friends of the Focolare Movement. «To go out of the encampment»
- 28 Meeting the challenges of today. A pastoral programme born from the Charism
- 30 The «New Set-up» at the international Center of the Work of Mary
- 32 Word of life. How the new commentary is born

IN DIALOGUE

- 33 «Together for Europe». The voice of the Movements
- 34 For the 500 years of the Reform. Two evenings in Piedmont
- 35 In Baar, Switzerland. Muslims and Christians together
- 36 Philippines. At the Mariapolis Peace. School of oriental religions
- 38 With friends of non-religious convictions. The meaning of suffering

IN ACTION

- 40 gen3 Congress in Angola. Like a concert
- 41 In Nicaragua. The community is consolidated

TESTIMONIES

- 42 Card. Miloslav Vlk, vescovo Jozef Zlatňanský, Antonia Benaglio, Gianni Caso, Fr. Marino Merlo, Fr. Luigi (Gino) Galante, d. Giuseppe Suman, Maria da Encarnação Lopez Nunes da Silva, Elio Lucchi, Fr. José Varas, Zygmunt Frackowiak, Maria Mugnai, Giuseppe Ricci, Fr. Gerhard Hönig, Anna De Rosa, Antonio Garcia Rubio, Francesco Crivelli, Hildegard Angenheyster, Michel Garel, Nella Lingua Altmani, Our relatives
- 55 Ways of sanctity. Daniela Zanetta venerable. Domenico Mangano the start of the diocesan process

Questo numero è stato chiuso in tipografia il 3 aprile 2017. Il n. 1-2/2017 è stato consegnato alle poste il 16.02.2017. **In copertina:** 12 marzo 2017. Una famiglia durante il «FamilyHighlights» a Loppiano. © CSC Audiovisivi | C. Mendes

Redazione Via Frascati, 306 00040 Rocca di Papa [Roma] tel/fax 0694798270/240 e-mail n. mariapoli@focolare.org
 Mariapoli n. 3-4/2017 | Mensile | Notiziario ad uso interno del Movimento dei Focolari | Direttore responsabile Caterina Ruggi
 Grafica M. Clara Oliviera Otai | Direz. Via Frascati, 306 00040 Rocca di Papa [Roma] | Autorizzazione del Tribunale di Roma n. 5/84
 del 10 gennaio 1984 | PAFOM | Stampa Tipografia Arti Grafiche La Moderna - Via Enrico Fermi, 13/17 00012 Guidonia [Roma]
Mariapoli Online www.focolare.org/notiziariomariapoli

Al 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.