

YEAR XXXIV N 10-11 OCTOBER-NOVEMBER 2017

MARIAPOLI

Newsletter of the focolare movement



Delegates of the Movement 2017

**Knots of
a big net**

In Spain
At the roots
of dialogue

Upm
Start again
with dynamism
and passion

Mary flower of humanity

Looking at nature it seems that Jesus also gave it his new commandment.

I observed two plants and I thought about pollination. Before this, the plants grow upward, as if they loved God with all their being. Then they join together almost as if they loved one another like the Persons of the Trinity love each other. Two things then become one. They love up to the point of abandonment, up to the point of losing – so to speak – their personality just like Jesus in his abandonment.

Then from the flower, that blooms from it, a fruit is born and life therefore continues. It is like the eternal Life of God imprinted on nature.

The Old Testament and the New Testament form just one tree.

Its blossoming comes in the fullness of time. And the only flower was Mary.

The fruit which followed was Jesus. Even the tree of humanity was created in the image of God.

In the fullness of time, at its blossoming, the unity between Heaven and earth happens and the Holy Spirit weds Mary.

We therefore have only one flower: Mary. And just one fruit: Jesus. But Mary, even if she is one, is the synthesis of the entire creation at the height of its beauty, when it presents itself as the spouse of its Creator.

Jesus instead is the creation and the uncreated made one: the Marriage consummated. And he contains within him Mary just as the fruit contains the flower. When the flower has fulfilled its parable it falls and the fruit matures.

Nevertheless if the flower did not exist the fruit would not have matured.

Just as Mary is the Daughter of her Son, so too the flower is the child of the fruit, which is its child.

But between the flower and the fruit there is a very brief span of time as to be almost cancelled out, since the fruit is a consequence of the flower.

While the flower, after a long time, blossoms on the tree generated by the seed contained in the fruit.

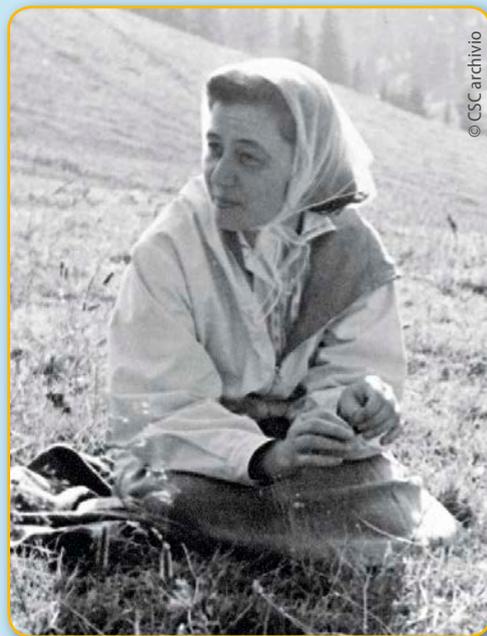
Thus Mary is the flower that blossomed on the tree of humanity born from God who created the first seed in Adam. She is the Daughter of God her Son.

Looking at a small geranium plant, that blooms into a red flower, I asked myself and I asked it: «Why do you bloom in the colour red? How come from green you become red?». It seemed something so strange to me!

Today I understood that all of humanity blossoms in Mary. Mary is the Flower of humanity. She, the Immaculate (Spotless), is the Flower of the Stained.

Sinful humanity blossomed into Mary, the all beautiful!

And, like the red flower is grateful to the green plant which has roots, and the



fertilizer that made it bloom, Mary is like this too, because we were sinners, God was forced to think of Mary.

We owe her our salvation, she owes us her life.

How beautiful Mary is! She is the creation that blossoms, creation that is beautiful. All of creation in bloom, like the crown of a tree, this is Mary. From Heaven God fell in love with this Flower of flowers, and pollinated her with the Holy Spirit and Mary gave to Heaven and to earth the Fruit of fruits: Jesus.

To come down from Heaven God had to find Mary; he could not come down in sin and so he “invented” Mary, who, taking on the beauty of all creation, “tricked” God and attracted him to earth.

But she is the Flower of humanity and, calling God to herself, she called him for humanity, because she is grateful to humanity for having given her life.

Chiara Lubich

Cf. A writing of July 9, 1950 in: *Maria*, edited by B. Leahy and J. Povilus, Città Nuova, Rome 2017, pp. 43-45; *La dottrina spirituale (The spiritual doctrine)*, edited by M. Vandeleene, Mondadori 2001, pp.185-187.



Delegates Meeting 2017

Knots of a big net

Those 15 days spent at the Center of the Movement by the General Council and the Delegates of the zones were quite intense: an experience of communion which brought a lot of surprises.

“One heart”. This was precisely, just as Emmaus wished for when she opened the meeting, the experience lived by the 131, among whom were the members of the general Council and the Delegates of the zones of the world, who in two weeks at Castel Gandolfo, tried to come up with a sort of “progress report midway in the six-year mandate”. The result? “A renewed awareness that the Movement is, the



Maria Voce with Glauco Venuti (Southeast Asia)

whole Movement, belongs to everyone” according to the wish that Emmaus also expressed. An experience which relates to Mary, in this year in which we would like to deepen our knowledge of her and above all to “re-live her because, wherever we are, whoever passes us by should find himself or herself beside the heart of a mother who knows how to understand, to wait, to be patient, to listen, to support”.

Together with the members of the commission¹ who worked on the programme let us try to understand and to gather together this experience.

“To be Mary – Gianni Salerno said – we need, as Chiara said, to dissolve, and as we become nothing – so to speak – we take on *her form and shape*”. “What did we do so as to form this ‘one heart’?”



Julia Tigges (Pakistan)
with Ray Asprer (general Council)

1 Della Commissione fanno parte alcuni Delegati di Zona: Silvia Escandell (Cono Sud), Salvatore Ignaccolo (Africa dell’Est), Andrea Goller (Italia) e Renata Kobayashi (Nordest Asia), e del Consiglio generale: Antonella Liguori (consigliera per l’Asia), Ray Asprer (consigliere per il Nordamerica), Fanny Bava (Umanità Nuova), Alba Sgariglia (Centro Chiara Lubich) e Gianni Salerno (Famiglie Nuove).

The sharing in small groups was very important, because we needed to enter into each other recognizing each other as “brothers” rather than persons responsible of a Center or of a Zone. Based on this unity then everything else took shape”. An application of sociality according to the Ideal was the impression of Andrea Goller: “To acquire the habit of living not only for our small piece – even if it is important – or in a direct relationship Zone-Center, but in a more social rapport, a network”.

“The programme which was already prepared – Antonella Liguori explained – was gradually adapted to the needs that were expressed by the Delegates. If before they were expecting answers, it was then in the communion and sharing that the light came. The answers are within each one because of the grace that he or she carries within to act there where they are and to realize the Movement there in the way God wants.

But these answers were understood and amplified in the communion with everyone that was decisive and crucial”. “A very profound silence – Silvia Escandel underlined – welcomed the presentation of our Zone, just as with all the others. To leave with the discovery of where we are going and with this global vision, is a point of light that will help us to think of the Movement in the future”. This point of light became more intense during the meetings of the zones with Emmaus and Jesús, who confirmed and gave a new impetus to the necessary projects, organizations, decisions.

Lucia Compostella (on the left, Yob Doronila, Noreen Lockhart (Oceania)

In Mariapolis online you can find the interviews of the participants who give a glimpse of the various working moments. This is how we came to know about the idea of holding just one European Mariapolis as a contribution to the unity of a continent that is profoundly in crisis. And of the project of organizing just one Mariapolis in one of 25,000 islands of Oceania, in order to increase the life of the charism in a land that is naturally predisposed to welcome it. In Africa, where education is fundamental for an equitable development, they confirmed the

Some prospects

In 2018 the commitment of the Movement, aside from the Genfest, will be oriented towards the tenth anniversary of Chiara’s departure for heaven. We will be celebrating – keeping Mary, in her Magnificat, in mind – by highlighting in a special way the many works that have blossomed from the charism of unity. What comes to the forefront is the incarnation, the aspect of the «Blue», but also that of «Indigo», because Mary is the «seat of Wisdom and a mother at home».

Among the topics to be tackled in the second week: *the proclamation of the Ideal*, which is collective and at the same time also personal; it is a testimony that generates new life in the others but also in ourselves. *Dialogue*, essential, transversal and common to everyone, our «lifestyle» which we must be prepared for already in the first moments of our formation. The realization that we need an always more integral *formation* that is accompanied by concrete experiences both on a personal and collective level was important. With regards to Up2me, it was seen that it is a rigorous and scientific programme. If its implementation is increased in all the Zones among the teens, it will be doing a great service for the Movement, the Church and the world.

opportunity of offering an education to a united world, by encouraging initiatives such as the action *Ecoleaders for the formation of the youth*. In Latinamerica the network of the numerous social actions was reinforced following the path of accompaniment, of dialogue, of communion. The creativity that accompanies the new set-up leads us to explore new horizons and strategies. In Brazil, for example, some focolare centers that have been in some cities for 40 years were moved elsewhere in order to strengthen the development of the Movement. In North America they are planning to open focolare centers to be at the service of specific realities,



Uno sguardo a metà strada ... fra due Assemblee

Centro dell'Opera, settembre 2017

Dove sia



Friederike Koller, Ángel Bartol (general Council)

such as in a parish or in a university campus. Aside from this, after the many years of experience in the different dialogues, a center dedicated to this is born. In Asia, the Genfest next July in Manila (with activities before and after also in other Asian countries), highlights the possibility of greater expansion of the Ideal especially among the youth, involving the whole Movement all over the world. We can say: "We are all Genfest!".

The central Delegates, Friederike and Ángel, became the spokespersons of precious

guidelines, like that one of Emmaus regarding the transfer of some focolare centers: you must not think that you are *cutting ties*, but it is a thread of that network, linked by unity, by reciprocal love, that is *going* to bring the same life elsewhere. The ongoing processes are an occasion to "enlarge and to tighten this net of Mary in view of 'That all may be one' where every knot is important and every thread is precious for the entire net".

"What does Chiara want to tell us today? – Salvatore Ignaccolo asked himself – that the incarnation which we are experiencing is, so that "That all may be one" takes shape. A process which began with the yes of Mary whom we are called to realize in her Work. Just as what happens in a computer: when you press *enter* the system starts up". "The efforts to bring this ahead was already started by Chiara, Ray Asprer said, as shared by the witnesses of the first hour. So we don't need to understand how to do it, rather we must let ourselves be guided and, with an act of humility, to put ourselves at the service of others".

For Renata Kobayashi "the meeting began with the work of the commission, through an evening appointment at 9 o'clock (Korean time), to be able to share, to evaluate, to build together". "I am a Volunteer and for me it was above all an experience of One Movement; a body that is working for the Movement – Fanny Bava said. The Movement belongs to everyone, and also the responsibility to bring it ahead belongs to everyone". Alba Sgariglia added: "We also contemplated the action of the Holy Spirit: during the first week we were surprised at how the Delegates were able to concentrate in just a few minutes an entire year of the life



Thanking those who dream of a united world

At the conclusion of the annual meeting of the Focolare Movement's regional delegates, Maria Voce (Emmaus), President of the Focolare, together with the world representatives, wrote a letter thanking those who live the ideal of unity in their everyday lives within the Movement and outside of it.

September 2017

Dear all,

During our international meeting at Castel Gandolfo, we have been able to see all that the charism of unity is doing in the world and deepen our identity as the Work of Mary. At the end of the meeting, we felt a great desire to reach out to each one of you who, in various ways, have adhered to and live the Ideal and who, in the most varied situations, make your own contribution to building up fragments of fraternity wherever you are.

We realised there are so many people to whom we owe gratitude and recognition, since you have loved, suffered and given your life to build up this reality. From the depths of our hearts, we want to say a huge thank you to everyone, without forgetting those who, while not considering themselves an active part of the Movement today, continue to live their daily lives motivated by Chiara's same Ideal.

We are certain that Mary, Mother of the Movement and of us all, will help us go forward together on the journey towards the unity of the human family, as witnesses to her love, wherever we are.

Considering all of us, in all we are doing and living, as little knots in a great net, we embrace you all.

Emmaus and everyone

of the zone, and in the second week we saw Mary generate an adult Jesus in the midst, a mature one so to speak, just like the Movement that we have in front of us".

The incarnation that God is leading us to



Jesús Morán and Padraig Smyth (southern Africa)

"There is no Christian incarnation without Mary – explained Jesús. Therefore there is no generativity without Mary [...]. The first incarnation is the collective spirituality, an authentic life of unity, the Work of Mary (with the world in colours and the zones which highlight inculturation), the big designs: of Charetto (Pasquale Foresi), that embraces culture, the Church, and of Foco (Igino Giordani), which encompasses the mass movements and the dialogues. Dialogue is a great challenge for us and must be deepened. We know that in many areas it is difficult, but it is one of the great contributions of the Movement for this globalized world. In this sense I really liked





Peter Forst (Central Europe), Geneviève Sanze (general Council)

it when Luigino Bruni said that we must grasp the chance to “ally ourselves” with others in view of the incarnation: some of the prophecies of Chiara are beyond the ability of the Focolare Movement itself to incarnate”.

As a “going away gift” Emmaus offered a writing of Chiara of July 13 1983, that refers to the summer of ‘49: “The Center of the Movement (referring to the Council and the Delegates of the zones) must be Mary who generates Jesus in the world everyday. [...] Because once generated He is everything to everyone, with his Spirit that inspires on how to carry out one’s specific task in the Movement. And it is Mary then who builds her Work [...]”. It seems to

me that the photograph of the experience that we have made – commented Emmaus – is how we will now face all the rest. Chiara said “when we have done this, everything is done”: here we have made this experience which you now bring in your flesh, in your blood, in all that you are, there where you are going”.

Then referring to Mary, all dressed in the Word, she recalled that Chiara began like this, living the Gospel and she was able to reach the ends of the earth. We can also do this, in small groups, to intensify the life of the Word and to tighten the net of the Work of Mary here on earth. And finally she evoked an image: “a river full of happiness”, as the gen3 sing. A river that runs already in the cities and which must reach everywhere. Once it has started to go towards the source it will increase because of the tributaries... And so this happiness will become greater and greater”.

In Mariapoli online
www.focolare.org/notiziariomariapoli you
can find news of the meeting also with short
videos and a photogallery

An essential book

The birth of the Focolare

history and sociology of a charism (1943-1965)

The 1° of October saw the presentation of this book promoted by Sophia University Institute during Loppiano-Lab 2017

The book of Bernhard Callebaut, Belgian sociologist, focolarino, professor in various universities and formation institutes in Switzerland and in Italy and now with a chair on *Fundamentals of Sociology* at the Sophia University Institute, was a publishing event. It took twenty years of research, a long and methodical excavation and retrieval of documentary sources, an all-out and thorough mapping that gives a solid foundation to the historical reconstruction and sociological interpretation of the subject. Published in France already

in 2010, the book was then studied in depth and updated for this Italian edition, the first fruit of the author’s doctorate, of which Chiara herself – the undisputed protagonist of this work – was happy; and this is what she had written to the author: «this ... work will be a valid service to the Movement and therefore to the Church».

This volume, that contains the preface written by Piero Coda and the postface by Salvatore Abbruzzese, was presented in the Main Hall of the Institute in front of a large and attentive audience

during Loppiano-lab 2017. It is a much-awaited book, that situates the birth of the Movement within a sociological panorama and in the history of the 1900s; a book that is highly appreciated, and of which we would like to cite two influential and reliable comments. Maria Voce, president of the Movement, expressed herself in a letter to the author: «This work [...] having matured as a fruit of the life of the Ideal and of a specific sociological competence, certainly offers a valid contribution to highlight the novelty that the charism brings». Palmira Frizzera, one of the first companions of Chiara, expressed her open appreciation when she thanked the author through an email «for the great gift of your Masterpiece that will remain as the most complete Document on the sacred history of Chiara and of the Movement that is truly (a work) of God».

But what is it all about: a historical work, a book of science, an annotated chronicle of a complex phenomenon? Piero Coda affirmed in the preface: «A totally scientific approach to the history of the Focolare has not existed up to now. [...] the present research, for the first time, constructs and teaches a historical and interpretative dossier of the relevant phenomenon represented by the Focolare Movement [...] This work is accurate, timely, and as far as possible, exhaustive [...] exemplary and excellent in a historical sense».

Jesús Morán during the presentation, after analyzing the cornerstones of the book, concluded in this way: «It is an essential book. It possesses an enormous academic dignity... this is because effectively we are in front of a study of the events of the Focolare Movement in its socio-historical ecclesial context». It is an exciting and fascinating story which, he added, in certain moments can be read «as if it were a thriller, [...] aside from the fact that



there are even moments that are almost cinematographical».

The author himself, in his speech before the roundtable discussion, composed also of Sharzad Houshmand and Tiziano Vecchiato, underlined: «Societies find it difficult to accept great revolutionary changes and an inertial weight is always present, but at the same time a society changes continuously. We can also read the history of the Focolare

Movement in this perspective: in Trent and in Italy, during the Forties and the Fifties, the Focolare Movement was considered by some as a factor of incomprehensible change, a disturbing element; above all in the ecclesial ambit, it was received and accepted in the most diverse ways. Chiara Lubich was aware of this; undergoing a long period of trial, she chose to generate a “change”, to offer a prophecy, but from within, fully aware that the charism did not abolish the gifts of the past but grafted itself onto those that it somehow was regenerating». This is what the sociologist Tiziano Vecchiato, president of the Zancan Foundation (Padua) also emphasized: Chiara had «delicately» managed this charism. «There was the risk during those years that this innovative, generative force, could somehow be destructive, and instead in its submission to the Church, in the acceptance of the difficulties, it flourished».

At the end of the roundtable, Piero Coda, director of the “Per-corsi” series of Sophia, concluded: «I am happy that this series which is being honoured today by the publication of this fourth volume, gives us the possibility of also showcasing the task of Sophia, the university Institute that Chiara wanted established, which is supposed to be a venue where people can deepen certain topics about the Focolare Movement with open critical discernment and which will help to bring it up to date».

Lia Bigliardi Parlapiano

In Montet «World persons» are increasing

In Switzerland, near Fribourg, in the Mariapolis «Foco» with Maria Voce and Jesús Morán in contact with a dynamic reality, now enriched by two schools for the gen girls and the gen boys



A particularly blue sky accompanied the visit of Emmaus, Jesús, Friederike Koller and Ángel Bartol to the Mariapolis Foco, from October 12 to 16, during which just like regular citizens, they mingled with everyone, shared their life with love and wisdom. Franco Galli and Denise Roth with Markus Naef, the new person responsible who is taking the place of Franco who is on his way to Loppiano, were always beside them. They were days full of joy, a fruit of the «different faces of unity» as expressed by Jesús during the concluding Mass, that had illuminated pathways and realities of the Little Town. Let's relive these moments together.

With the formators

With the opening of the School for gen girls, the dynamics of the life in the Little Town was enriched by another expression of living together among the generations in all its aspects: work, apostolate, recreational activities, etc... The «natural» proximity of the gen girls

and gen boys in the Little Town – 31 of them this year – is welcomed as a unique occasion for the inhabitants to have a «school of relationships» enriched with new nuances, putting reciprocal trust as the basis of all relationships.

Emmaus' invitation «not to avoid the difficulties, but instead to look upward and to encourage the growth in the radicalness of one's giving» was a source of encouraging joy.

In the programme of formation of the gen schools, what was highlighted was the centrality of the life of the Gospel, which allowed a personal relationship with Jesus to blossom in them.

Jesús underlined that it is «the fundamental objective of formation in times wherein there is a lack of true teachers: to give them criteria for discernment which they acquire in their young age, rather than giving them many concepts».

With the focolarini and the focolarine leaving for the Zones

An intense communion characterized the two meetings with the Schools of the women and men Focolarini. It was an hour of focolare where each one shared the life of these years of formation, wherein the work of God made the individual and the group mature. «He called us just as we are and this is how He wants us to be, all his, so as to realize "That all may be one". The

With the community



experience with the writings of *Paradise* was fundamental, a turning point in quality, the highest point of our formation. And - just as Emmaus and Jesús wished for us - this reality will be the star that will guide our entire focolare life».

With the community

A variegated people, of all ages, gathered together one afternoon to be with Emmaus and Jesús. They were cosmopolitan in origin: Swiss, Iraqis, Syrians, refugees of various nations and religions, of different Christian churches, representatives of a humanity that has found a home, a family in the Little Town. Many of them presented themselves spontaneously with great freedom, giving a glimpse of the great potentiality that they are bringing to the Little Town. «How can we become a community when we don't live in Montet?» Rachel asked. Emmaus answered her by highlighting the importance that each one present «must become a knot in this net and to be a witness of the same love towards the person next to him or her».

With the permanent residents of the Little Town

In the presence of the permanent residents of the Little Town Emmaus gave the theme of the year on Mary followed by a moment of profound communion, in the simplicity of being able to share everything. Jesús underlined that «in order to incarnate, based on Jesus in the midst, which is our specific characteristic, "a pinch of competence" can make miracles and is needed. Without forgetting that the starting point is the dive into Jesus Forsaken: this is the basis of every incarnation and is fundamental for all its aspects».



«Maria Voce with Palmira Frizzera

With the gen Schools

A «historical»moment, for the first time in Montet the two gen schools meet with Emmaus and Jesús. Three hours of getting to know one another during which the gen boys and girls shared some of the challenges of living in today's world, their desires and expectations, the question if there exists a specific profile to be considered a

gen, because at times, they are not able to correspond to the image of an «ideal gen». Jesús clarified: «a gen doesn't follow Jesus alone. He or she receives the call to Jesus in the midst, therefore you must try to find a way of life of unity. The gen life is not an individual fact. You will discover the form, maybe you have to invent it, but the principle must be clear».

Emmaus added: «It will be an important year. To discover the beauty of other nationalities and so the "world person" that Chiara expects the gen to become will be a reality. To make your hearts wider so that it can contain humanity. Afterwards God will use you with these qualities, wherever He wants, for the world».

Denise Roth, Franco Galli

With the Schools of the gen girls and gen boys



Marian Popular University

Start again with dynamism and passion

At 37 years since its foundation, the focus on the «popular university» that Chiara desired. A look back at its history, a picture of its present state, some paths for its future. The message of Maria Voce and Jesús Morán

Imagine the walls of Hall C of the Mariapolis Center of Castel Gandolfo lined with big pieces of paper dotted with post-its, with underlines and coloured arrows and, a good group of enthusiastic and motivated people. This is what was visible at the end of the working meeting from October 20 to 22, that gathered together around 80 or so persons responsible for our Marian Popular University (UPM) coming from all over the world.

A look at the history of the UPM – a picture of its present state – the paths for its future, were the stages that marked the different moments of this dynamic and well-participated meeting.

The message of Emmaus and Jesús which was read during the opening (see side box) indicated the importance of this instrument that was greatly desired by Chiara as the way «to involve the whole Movement in giving space for the Indigo, so as to face the challenges of



the contemporary world “suitably prepared” - as we would say today». It was with gratitude that they looked at the patrimony of the courses that were held and the fruits that were gathered throughout these 37 years and they re-immersed themselves first of all in the founding inspiration that motivated the creation of this university.

Thanks to the numerous replies that were received through the questionnaire that was sent to the Zones before the meeting they were able to prepare an objective picture of UPM today with its strengths and weaknesses, its critical points and its potentialities. In two interesting workshops, they were able to gather many ideas from the participants on how to effectively improve the actual weak points of the UPM and they were able to outline concrete short and



The message of Maria Voce and Jesús Morán

Rocca di Papa, 18 October 2017

Dearest all,

we are 37 years from that 15th of October 1980, the foundation day of the Marian Popular University!

How many of us who were present then still remember the joy of seeing Chiara involving the whole Movement in giving more space to the Indigo, so as to face «suitably prepared» – as we would say today – the challenges of the contemporary world.

She launched with determination and wisdom to everyone what was written on the *General Statutes of the Work of Mary*, which says: «*The members of the Movement must have basic catechetical formation. Aside from this they must also possess a constantly updated and improved cultural, theological and professional formation, suitable for their state of life and vocation. For this reason the Work of Mary must provide courses, schools of formation and catechetical, theological and cultural updatings*» (Art. 65-66).

The General Assembly of 2014 has also inserted «spiritual and cultural formation» among the priorities to follow, to better offer the light of the Ideal to others. Aside from this, during the recent meeting of the Delegates of the Movement, they reiterated

the absolute necessity of studies as a complement to wisdom.

It is providential that this meeting of ours takes place at the beginning of the year dedicated to Mary, in which we hope to deepen also the aspects of the Blue and of Indigo, which are both very much in tune with Her «Seat of Wisdom and Mother at home».

We know that Chiara has given life to a school of thought that is recognized on an international level, drawing from the Light of *Paradise '49*. Many meetings have already started to read and study these pages. But we are convinced that this must be based on an authentic life of unity and on a «base» of indispensable notions of Scripture and Tradition, on the knowledge of relevant elements of the Magisterium and of theological and cultural reflection. Chiara herself said to the Abbà School, in January 2004: «*The new doctrine contains the others... The base does not have only a pedagogical objective of explaining the new doctrine that is born from it, comparing it with what has been said up to now, but it is an integral part of that (there can be no crown if there are no branches, the trunk and the roots)*».

Good work! We assure you of our unity, so that this collective reflection during the various sessions of the programme will mark a mature step forward in the realization of the design of God on the UPM.

medium term projects for its renewal and its corresponding update to be able to meet the needs of a Movement that is going out.

«We understood its role as “base” and complement to Wisdom. We start again with dynamism and passion», the participants wrote to Emmaus and Jesús.

The programme of UPM is a companion to the deepening of the theme of the year.



The lessons, which can be followed through live streaming, open up windows of knowledge from various perspectives. This year the theme «Mary, woman of the Gospel» will range from iconography, to the vision of the various Churches; from the comment on the text of the Magnificat by Martin Luther, to the anthropological perspectives. This will be presented in a series of lessons from November 2017 to April 2018.

Renata Simon, Francisco Canzani

Programme of UPM 2017/2018 Mary, woman of the Gospel

1° LES | 4 NOVEMBER 2017

«The different portraits of the mother of Jesus in the NT». PHILIPPE VAN DEN HEEDE

«Understanding Mary, a Jewish woman. Feminine pathways in the OT». GIOVANNA MARIA PORRINO

2° LES | 9 DECEMBER 2017

«Mary, flower of humanity: the Marian dogmas». BRENDAN LEAHY

«Mary in the iconographic tradition: some indications on the research on Marian devotion in the different artistic expressions». MARTA MICHELACCI

3° LES | 20 JANUARY 2018

«Mary and the Church in the light of the Second Vatican Council». MICHEL VANDELEENE

«A comment on the text of Martin Luther on the Magnificat». MARILÙ FISCHER

4° LES | 10 FEBRUARY 2018

«The place of Mary in the Anglican tradition: an ecumenical reflection». CALLAN SLIPPER

«Mary in the perspective of the Orthodox Church». REV. AUGUSTINOS BAIRACTARIS

5° LES | 7 APRIL 2018

«Mary, human-Christian model. Anthropological perspectives». SR. TIZIANA LONGHITANO

«Mary, model for a synodal Church». SR. TIZIANA MERLETTI

To watch the live streaming live.focolare.org/upm

From Canada Soirées-échanges

In Québec a novelty in the study of UPM

Pushed by the desire to realize that «going out together suitably prepared» – after the meeting of the Delegates of the Movement last year – the local committee of the UPM launched themselves in a challenge.

It has been for some time now that there was a felt need to find a new formula so that the lessons could be of help in «inculturation», by bringing them closer to the problems of the local realities. And so the «Soirées-échanges» was born, monthly meetings lasting two hours, open to everyone, wherein – based on the UPM programme (the faces of Jesus Forsaken in our society) – topics are discussed which are relevant to present day questions, and allowing for ample space for dialogue among the participants. An internet link-up allows even those farthest away to participate too. We made a calendar of eight evenings from April 21, 2017 to January 19, 2018 and up to now the participation has been greater than what was foreseen. There are interventions from experts even not of the Movement: in the second evening for example, Jonathan Guilbault, delegate editor of the Novalis Publishing House, spoke on the difficulties of mediation, in Quebec, between the conservation of a language (French) and of one's own culture, and the welcoming and integration of many immigrants that come to this region.

This new «formula» has given us the opportunity to invite new people, who are increasing in number.

Annie Bréchet, Paolo Dalla Fontana

For the 500 years of the Reformation

Getting to know each other so as to understand one another

A Seminar of ecumenical studies on the places where Martin Luther lived. 52 participants travelled together to discover the roots and the intentions of this reformer who «did not want to divide the Church».

The welcoming structure of the Mariapolis Center of Zwochau, near the principal places of the Lutheran Reformation, was the ideal setting for Catholics and Evangelicals to look at history together with new eyes.

The first stage of the seminar, promoted by the «Uno (One)» Center for Christian unity, was the city of Wittenberg where Luther arrived as a monk to teach theology at the small university, and to preach in the Marienkirche. This is where he lived, and much later, he was assisted by his wife Katharina von Bora. The Lutheran pastor Stefan Günther, professor at the Institute for the formation of future pastors, introduced the group to the complex relationships of Luther with the ecclesiastical authorities. He supports the idea that the division that was created was caused above all by a misunderstanding among diverse cultures, which was exploited by political interests.

Visiting the university and the Lutherhaus (a large complex of the Augustinian monastery, where Luther lived with his family), one enters into many historical details which, as the document From conflict to communion¹ said, we cannot change but we can «talk about it in a different way».

In Wittenberg, with the Lutheran pastor Stefan Günther (on the left)



The house of Luther in Wittenberg

In Erfurt, accompanied by Pastoress Mildenerger, member of the Ordo Pacis (a contemplative community of Evangelical women), we visited the vast complex of the convent of the Augustinians where Luther spent his novitiate, he pronounced his vows and celebrated his first Mass.

It was precisely there that we had an unexpected joyous encounter with the Lutheran bishop Munib Younan, who was up to just a few months ago the president of the worldwide Lutheran Federation, who had invited Pope Francis to Lund to begin together the celebration of the 500 years of the Lutheran Reformation. The Bishop immediately asked us to bring

¹ Document of the worldwide Lutheran Federation and of the Catholic Church in view of the 500 years of the Reformation

In the spirit of Lund Some initiatives in the world

his greetings to Emmaus, and when we assured him that as the Focolare Movement we would bring ahead the «ecumenical spirit of Lund», he exclaimed: «I am counting on you!».

During the Seminar (August 22-26) various themes on the spirituality of unity were deepened with meditations of Chiara Lubich, introduced by persons of various Churches. The exchange of experiences on some chosen words of the Gospel as the motto for each day, was the foundation for building unity among everyone. The participants became aware that they must be the bearers of the life of Jesus in the midst (Mt 18,20) so as to be builders of «living cells» within their own Churches and among the Churches.

A central point was the talk of Fr. Hubertus Blaumeiser, theologian and expert in the «theology crucis» of Luther, which highlighted three so-called controversial points: Mary, the Eucharist, the Church. In the light of the spirituality of unity, he found useful convergent lines that opened new prospects for dialogue.

The echoes from the participants confirmed that it was a fruitful seminar: «If in the past we lacked the relationships in order to understand one another, now we must aim at rebuilding these relationships, so that we can reach unity».

At the **Mariapolis Fiore in Poland**, the five-hundredth anniversary of the Reformation was celebrated with a question: what are the riches that Christians can appreciate in the Churches that are different from theirs? At the beginning of september the inhabitants of the Little Town welcomed the pastors of the Reformed Church, Catholic priests, academicians. A focolarina who had lived in Ottmaring shared the experience of the ecumenical Little Town and presented some points taken from the «Declaration of

A journey undertaken in the spirit of Lund. This experience inserts itself in the multitude of initiatives for the fifth centenary with the desire above all «to grasp the gift of the other as a gift also for me» (see *Evangelii Gaudium* n.246). Everything was done in an ecumenical way which the spirituality of unity enables us to do, and to which Emmaus and Jesús has called us with the Declaration of Ottmaring².

Maria Wienken

2 See: Declaration of Ottmaring: *NotiziarioMariapoli* 3-4/2017; Ecumenical week: *Collegamento CH* June 2017 <http://collegamentoch.focolare.org/2017/06/17/walking-together-christians-on-the-way-towards-unity/>, *Mariapoli* 5-6/2017

Erfurt, monastery of the Augustinians.
Group picture with the Lutheran bishop Munib Younan



Ottmaring» on the need for a «conversion of hearts» so as to «think ecumenically». The participants were presented with the Polish-German ecumenical Pilgrimage that took place 15 years after, between Gniezno (first capital of Poland) and Magdeburgo (Germany) which bore the fruits of friendly relationships that are helping to heal the wounds between Poles and Germans, between Catholics and Lutherans. At the conclusion, the vibrant prayer of Chiara was recited: «[...] we feel the need to ask you O God, in the name of Christians of all times, for forgiveness because we have divided Your garment into pieces...»³. As they greeted one another, a question that is also a commitment: «What can we do for ecumenism in Poland?».

In Curitiba, Brazil from September 1 to 3 an ecumenical mariological Symposium was held for the 500 years of the Reformation and for the 300 years of the Shrine of Aparecida, organized by the Commission for ecumenism of the national Bishops' Conference (CNBB) and the Lutheran-Catholic Dialogue of Brazil. With Catholic Bishops, Lutheran Pastors, experts on ecumenism, theologians, priests and a good number of laity, the presence of the focolare was also numerous and varied. The central theme: the Comment on the Magnificat of Luther, recently published as a Lutheran-Catholic co-edition. Invited by Bishop Biasin, president of the Commission for ecumenism, Fr. Hubertus Blaumeiser held two introductory conferences on Luther, which was an invitation to review the image of the reformer and, especially for the Lutherans, as a stimulus to get to know and to study him more profoundly.

After the Symposium, at the **Mariapolis Ginetta** a cultural evening on Luther was held and transmitted by live streaming, advertised and promoted in the whole of Brazil and followed in 650 venues. Among those present, aside from Fr. Hubertus, were methodist bishops Nelson Leite and Adriel De Souza, the mayor of Vargem Grande and people from various Churches. It was



In Strasbourg, France a group of the Focolare participated in the events of «Protestants in celebration, living fraternity». In the photo taken at the conference entitled «What divides us, what unites us»

a shining moment, followed also by the youth, interested in discovering the treasures that the various Christian traditions conserve as a gift for everyone.

In Ireland, at Dublin, promoted by the Lutheran Church of the COuntry and by the Focolare Movement a group of Christians from various Churches guided by Pastor Martin Sauter and by Joan Patricia Back of the Focolare, studied the document From conflict to communion. The collaboration for this presentation continued during the «Ecumenical week of the Bible» held in **Arklow**. In **Limerick**, during a day of study on Luther, bishop Brendan Leahy presented the theme «From conflict to dialogue».

In the Southern cone of the world, the unity among Christians is growing, thanks also to moments of sharing in the light of the spirituality of unity. **In Santiago del Cile** the presence of Cardinal Ricardo Ezzati in the Lutheran Church of the Redeemer, who spoke under the effigy of Luther during the joint celebration of the jubilee commemoration, elicited a profound emotion among all. **In Mendoza, Argentina** a special mention of the 500 years of the Reformation was made during the Week of prayer for Christian unity during Pentecost.

Also **in Venezuela** various celebrations are being held where we have been invited and which has allowed us to deepen the relationships with pastors and persons of the Lutheran Church and others.

3 cfr *Mariapoli* 5/1998 p. 8

Spain

At the roots of dialogue

The members of the Focolare Movement in Spain faced with the initiative of the referendum for the independence of Catalonia. A courageous and painful experience of dialogue in action, without giving up

The Catalan desire for independence is a social, cultural and political current that advocates the independence of Catalonia as a sovereign state. This process was accelerated with the call for a referendum which was declared as illegal by the central government of Spain, but which nevertheless took place last October 1°.

The contrast among the two sides pushed even us of the Movement to face this situation.

With the acceleration of events we felt the need to focus on the commitment to dialogue. But how do we find the expressions that can be accepted by everyone? The positions, without a doubt polarized abnormally by the media and the interpretation on the legality/illegality of such a referendum made



<http://lanamappa.com/spagna/>

the discussion difficult and we experienced within us contradicting sentiments. With the Council of the zonetta, with members from the different regions of Spain, in an exercise of sincerity and transparency, we discussed the draft of a letter to send to the people of the Movement, as we faced the profound wound that we discovered among us and at the same time trying to find together the path to take.

The content expressed the desire to be faithful to the Pact of reciprocal love and the





need to express it with attitudes of respect, understanding the reasons of the other, of dialogue with everyone. Aside from this, it also referred to unity and diversity which are the dimensions of the same life of God, inseparably linked, and to which we must fix our gaze so that we may be assisted when we share our ideas, sentiments, proposals.

It was sent to all the intern members, and what followed was a frank, painful exchange which was at the same time constructive. The letter allowed us to put the problem on the table and to face it together.

We understood, nevertheless, that many among us, even if we were used to dialogue in our daily life, didn't know how to act in this concrete circumstance. There were those who asked themselves: «Whose side are you on?», there were those who kept silent for fear of increasing the division, those who posted on facebook belligerent and excluding opinions. We realized that all of us wanted to live the Ideal, but in the face of this challenge we had to take a road that we had not taken before and we experienced the difficulty in doing this.

In the midst of the clamor of the media that was becoming more intense as the referendum approached, a Volunteer in the Council wrote in WhatsApp: «I have the strange feeling that we are living in two parallel worlds. What is happening in Catalonia, and therefore in Spain, is really very serious. Where are you? I feel sad because I feel that you are so far away». This appeal activated a new and intense communion from which

emerged the need to make a public statement. But it was difficult to agree on what to do: what was indispensable for one, was inadmissible for another. It seemed like a failure.

In the meantime other Associations and Movements were publishing their messages.

The words of the Pope in n.228 of the *Evangelii Gaudium* strongly resounded in us. We had planned a meeting of the zonetta Council which we took as the best opportunity for communion, also because we would be together physically; allowing ourselves to be accompanied by Chiara Lubich with

From Evangelii Gaudium

228. In this way it becomes possible to build communion amid disagreement, but this can only be achieved by those great persons who are willing to go beyond the surface of the conflict and to see others in their deepest dignity. This requires acknowledging a principle indispensable to the building of friendship in society: namely, that unity is greater than conflict. Solidarity, in its deepest and most challenging sense, thus becomes a way of making history in a life setting where conflicts, tensions and oppositions can achieve a diversified and life-giving unity. This is not to opt for a kind of syncretism, or for the absorption of one into the other, but rather for a resolution which takes place on a higher plane and preserves what is valid and useful on both sides.

the meditation on two texts of Paradise: «Look at all the flowers», «To welcome the All, you have to be Nothing», then communion in small groups, which renewed the presence of Jesus among us. We were then able to face the topic of coming up with a «concrete action as a Movement in this historical situation». In order to come up with a text that everyone can sign and since we were around forty people we followed this method: for the final version we asked everyone to propose eventual modifications. Three were presented. Then we voted on the title, the body of the text and finally we affixed our signature. After every vote we gave the possibility of those who were in the minority to express the reason why he or she voted against it. We were able to understand better all the positions and, after a raising of hands for the approval there was a warm round of applause.

The result was a kind of manifesto, translated into the four official languages, that proposed a personal commitment to dialogue. And so also a campaign in social media was started with the hashtag #SoyDialogo (I am Dialogue).

The sociopolitical events continue in a frenetic pace. Each member of the Movement is trying intensely to be builders of peace and of dialogue. We are discovering among us the wealth in our ability to listen, to forgive, to maintain clarity, but it is not always easy to remain with an attitude of welcome and acceptance, of not wanting to defend our own vision of things, to accept the mistakes of the others with mercy. The journey is still long, but we feel within a «painful moment of grace» which makes us more aware of who we are, but also of what the Charism is! And so there is the possibility to grow, to learn.

At the university of Fribourg

Between reflection and practice between science and life

An interdisciplinary *workshop* on «convergence, differences and prospects in Christian Muslim dialogue» fruit of a long history of relationships, friendships and collaboration by persons of the Movement on various levels.



prof. Mokrani, prof. Schmid, prof. Specker

«The collaboration with the Focolare Movement has given us the possibility of linking academic commitment to social and existential ones». This is what professor Mariano Delgado of the University of Fribourg in Switzerland said at the end of an interdisciplinary workshop on convergences, differences and the prospects in Christian Muslim dialogue, held from September 21 to 23 in the same University of Fribourg. Around a hundred academicians from different European universities participated in the three-day convention. It was the first time that the Movement in Switzerland was taken into consideration as a partner in interreligious dialogue on an academic level.

It has made us more aware of what our brothers and sisters in the ideal are living in many places all over the world. With full trust we go ahead with our journey.

Margarita Gomez, Juan Badia

The organizers of this workshop were two realities of the prestigious University of Fribourg: the «Institute for Study of religions and interreligious dialogue» presided by prof. Delgado and the «Swiss Center for Islam and Society» with its director Hans-Jürg Schmid. «The hardest task – said the latter – is that of speaking about the other while looking at him face to face».

The workshop tried to do this and it seemed to have gone very well. During the three days we could see in the participants a growing awareness and consideration of the other and of a reciprocal involvement. This atmosphere was certainly due to a long history of relationships, friendships and collaborations by the members of the Movement on various levels: from the community of Berne and the contribution made in «together for Europe», from the experiences of interreligious dialogue of priest focolarini, from the support given to a study group (Cluster) started at the University of Innsbruck in Austria some years ago.

In this atmosphere of openness, respect and the desire for an always more profound mutual understanding, a Christian theologian could speak about the «inimitability of the Qur'an» and a Muslim professor could tackle the topic of the «death and resurrection of Jesus Christ in an Islamic perspective». The contribution of different members of the



prof. Delgado

Movement was not only the life experiences shared, but also elements of our spirituality presented in a scientific-academic language, like for example the intervention of Fulvio Gamba, priest focolarino, who presented the figure of Jesus Forsaken as the «key of true dialogue».

At the end of the convention it was mentioned that this workshop was just the beginning of a collaboration with the University of Fribourg, even if the modalities and the next steps are still to be understood together. The realization that the event was not only of interreligious character but also had an ecumenical value was beautiful because the preparation was done by Christians of various Churches.

«We learned – concluded the theologian Roman Siebenrock of Innsbruck – that dialogue and integration in Europe change from Country to Country. What nevertheless remains important

everywhere is the personal encounter with the reciprocal effort of understanding each other. The contribution of the Focolare Movement with its charism of unity has made even the experts on reflection reflect».

Annemarie Imhasly, Johannes Vetter



prof. Schmid with dr. Rifa'at Lenzin





Communion and Law in Prague A multicultural Law School

This year the Law School hoped to become first of all a «proof of dialogue and of a multicultural experience»

In Prague (August 31- September 3) they said that there was already a multiculturalism present: Brazil, USA, Saudi Arabia, Ivory Coast, Madagascar, Hungary, Romania, Italy. Among others there was also a young Muslim girl.

Open to students or young professional the Law School entitled «Multicultural society and law: from fragmentation to unity» was a new step preceded by years of other seven summer schools held in various European nations.

We experienced a real «laboratory» of dialogue, discussion and deepening, together with a communion of life.

A novelty was that of offering, through the talks of Chiara Lubich in various international headquarters, such as the UN and UNESCO, the «law guidelines» according to a perspective renewed by the Ideal. The texts of Chiara were a «direct source» and working «instrument» for the youth also in the workshops, with the mediation of some experiences, that showed through life that the message of Chiara is not a utopia but a reality that is possible.

Listening: we were impressed by the depth and attention of the participants, knowing that many of the young people just met for the first time. It was precisely this attitude of listening that made the dialogue easier, which we did in small group so as to get to know each other, and then to participate in the workshops or all

together for the juridical topics: fraternity, peace, international relations.

The adhesion to the thoughts of Chiara was decisive as was the commitment to search together for the elements to construct juridical categories illuminated by the charism. We really experienced the universal relevance of Chiara, so much so that Christina, from USA in her first contact with the Communion and Law, told us that this should also be inserted in the American norms.

In this context, dialogue was profound, listening to each other was more authentic going beyond every difference in religion and thought, so much so that a young girl who had just come to know the C&L, said: «a dialogue such as this is extremely rare, but very beautiful, to listen and to welcome the other beyond every diversity».

A gen girl in her second year of law, who shared her experience for the first time: «I found answers to some of my questions ... I really liked the environment which is extremely stimulating both for the level of the interventions as well as for the presence of



people from many different places. It is a great incentive to continue to study with passion because, beyond the exams, there is an entire world that is moving and evolving».

Another youth who participated for the first time: «The Summer school has gone beyond my expectations. It gave me the energy to go on with the daily activities with a greater stimulus and with the awareness of sharing with other people a journey of an enriching and innovative research».

And a young pre-Volunteer: «I realized that I have been given the possibility of deepening topics that I don't encounter in my work. I have found once again the

courage to speak about fraternity to my colleagues».

It seemed to us that we have laid the foundation for our future work, as requested by the young people, in line with Chiara's wishes: «The future of the world, I believe, its ability to progress, to find solutions to its conflicts, its crises, depends solely on the awareness of individuals and the commitment of the people. We cannot rely solely on the institutions, but we must offer, through the institutions, moments, occasions to be able to develop these convictions».

Adriana Cosseddu

In Manaus in Brazil

Law and fraternity in search of realization

A three-day meeting in Manaus, from August 25 to 27, involved and impassioned 470 persons and 10 law faculties of the universities in the city and of the Amazons

The theme of fraternity in law is already being studied in depth, for the past ten years or so in the Brazilian universities; study centers have been opened based on this theme and in 2018 the Center of research on Law and Fraternity of the Federal University of St. Catherine will celebrate the tenth year of its activities.

This congress, the third one organized for the North - Northeast of Brazil, has allowed the journey to continue and has involved new professors and students, by placing side by side the doctrinal studies on fraternity as a juridical category and the aspect of testimonies on how this should be lived in the courtroom and judicial halls; they worked on finding ways to insert this



in the interpretation of norms, in the texts of procedural documents. Of importance was the panel on: «the teaching of law and fraternity, fraternity and social transformation», with a special reference to the protection of minors and adolescents; fraternity towards communities in need.

And to make fraternity concrete, all the participants were asked to make a small gesture of solidarity: to each donate a carton of milk to a center for minors in difficulty.

Health Dialogue Culture in Brazil

«Promoting global health»

The IV international Congress organized by the HDC – Health Dialogue Culture, the «inundation» of Medicine was held in San Paolo, Brazil from September 7 to 10

Entitled: «Promoting global health. Strategies and actions on individual and collective levels», the congress hoped to contribute to the present debate on the need to identify new paradigms for the healthcare system, in a globalized and interdependent world, based on the centrality of the patient, considered in his globality and complexity.

The 273 participants, representing nine Latin American nations, two from Africa, four from Europe and from the 19 states of Brazil (of which 50% come from the academic field both professors and students) made a vital experience of reflection and communion, at the faculty of Medicine of the University of Santa Marcelina.

Among the topics discussed: health as a common good and the social determinants of the health-sickness process; spirituality in medicine and scientific evidence on the relationship between spirituality and health; the centrality of the person in the processes of healthcare with a particular attention to



disability, old age, facing suffering and pain, and palliative care; the responsibility towards the patient and the community, in caring for fragile groups, in experimentation and clinical practice; formation to global health. Much attention and time was also given to «Taking care of those who heal», through two practical workshops on how to support the healthcare workers.

High-level interventions from more than 60 speakers of various origins and specializations were interspersed with presentations of projects and collaborative efforts in the field of healthcare between nations with different standards of healthcare assistance.

An interweaving of culture and life, with space for dialogue and discussion, also with some workshops for the numerous young people present. The venue, chosen in a continent outside Europe, allowed for an experience in different cultural contexts, and with a new perspective.



The preparatory work done by many with great generosity and dedication, and the presence of many people of the Movement brought the atmosphere of Jesus in the midst to the congress which made the communion more profound. At the end of the work done there was an atmosphere of celebration, just like after a Mariapolis.

The words of a young medical student expressed what the others were feeling: «I leave this Congress with a change in the way I think about medicine, with ideas that make me a better person and with the certainty that this will also make me a better professional».

A Brazilian doctor: «Reports and interventions of an excellent level: science, but not cold and distant. We learned that we can do science

without forgetting the essential thing that unites us: love. In this atmosphere one experiences the peace and the joy that permeated each day of the Congress».

Another participant: «I have never seen a Congress with so much human warmth and positive energy. I am definitely not the same person as before».

Emmaus was present though a message that was a great encouragement for everyone: in particular, her invitation to «live professionalism with a love that generates fraternity, all directed towards the good of the human family», seemed to resound in all the corners of the University.

Flavia Caretta, Mateus Rotta

Psychology and Communion Encountering the other: limitations and the gift of oneself

1° Latin-american Congress

«Encountering the other: limitations and the gift of oneself» was the theme presented to more than one hundred twenty professionals in the field of psychology coming from all over Brazil and other Latin-American countries (Argentina, Uruguay, Perú, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia) at the Mariapolis «Ginetta» of San Paolo in Brazil from July 26 to 29, 2017. A good number of people also followed the meeting through the internet. Vera Araujo, linked-up from Recife, was able to «contextualize» the congress within the socio-political panorama of Latin-America and in a positive perspective of hope with regards to the present serious global crisis.

The participants: academicians and professionals of various profiles and formation, bore witness to the concreteness of active networks of social relationships. Passionate



about their work, interested in the contemporary person with that attention and that sensitivity taught to us by Chiara Lubich. The presence of the youth was also significant.

What emerged was a particular attention given to mental suffering as a «social emergency», to which we must respond through interventions aimed at the «community», aside from the individual or the family. The «community therapy», presented by Dora from San Paolo, and the experience of «Red Solar», proposed by a group from Argentina, were very much appreciated as professional testimonies.

Simonetta Magari

Anniversary of the Reformation With the Gen Verde at Stadthagen

An ecumenical experience that involved hundreds of youth and adults and which became an opportunity for the Gen Verde to plan a tour in Germany after almost 20 years.

«This is precisely the message that is needed by our youth in this celebration of the 500 years of the Reformation!». This is what the Lutheran bishop Dr. Karl-Hinrich Manzke exclaimed after listening to the short concert of the Gen Verde last March 14, 2016, during the commemoration for Chiara Lubich in Castel Gandolfo. He participated, invited by the «Uno» Center, since he was in Rome for a month for his studies and he happened to be in Rocca di papa that day to get to know better the ecumenical work of the Focolare Movement. The first «negotiations» immediately took place – keeping in mind that for more than 20 years the Gen Verde had never returned to Germany and they could not go for just one concert. The Bishop, who was also the German Lutheran Church's person responsible for relations with the Catholic Church, was able to overcome all the obstacles in order to realize that which seemed to him «an essential message» for Christians today; and for the Gen Verde, various concerts in other cities in Germany were added (see www.focolare.org/news/2017/10/20/nessuno-e-straniero-per-me).

«When we arrived in Stadthagen – Sally McAllister told us – for the concert On the Other Side, the Lutheran bishop Dr. Karl-Hinrich Manzke invited us to dinner with around twenty pastors and local musicians, who promised to assist us for all our needs during our stay there. The next day a priest



focolarino came to celebrate Mass for us: to our great surprise Bishop Manzke was also present in the church.

To help us set-up the stage, under a torren- tial downpour that soaked us to the bones, four pastors came with a good number of young people. The rain didn't dampen our spirits and the joy of working together.

Inspite of the cold and the humidity, peo- ple started coming to the square at 4:30 in the afternoon to participate first of all in a vigil animated by a local choir and a brass band, followed by our concert which ended around 10:00 in the evening.

In the interval between the vigil and the concert, we were touched to see Bishop Manzke and his collaborators wiping the seats before the people sat down again. Aside from this, he himself wanted to introduce the concert with these words: «Gen Verde you live to the fullest the glory to God and you serve the people... You come from all over the world and



you present an intercultural and lively show . Thus you are a symbol of the ideal Church».

It was calculated that there were around 800 people present, without counting those coming and going as they were passing through the square and who got interested in the event.

In different ways many people told us that our presence made the commemoration of the Reformationsjubiläum 2017 a special moment for the city. We too, with the passion that Chiara has transmitted to us for ecumenical dialogue, we shared the joy and the honour of having been invited for this event.

The focal centers of Hannover and Hamburg, saw new possibilities for ecumenical dialogue in the experience made and in the relationships built especially through Bishop Manzke. The Bishop said he would see us again next year in Loppiano where he would like to bring a group of young people for a visit».

Sally McAllister and the focolarine of the Gen Verde

Charisms in communion

400 years, but it doesn't show

The Gen Verde invited to animate the anniversary celebration of the Vincentian Family

The request came as a surprise during the summer. From the first contacts with the Superior General and the priest who organized the event, the mutual understanding was immediate. In our songs they could see the evangelical witness and social commitment that is so much a part of their life. The challenges were not lacking, but all of them were just external, because the unity of purpose was much stronger between the charism of St. Vincent de Paul and that of Chiara Lubich.

Early in the morning of October 14, around 11,000 people from around a hundred nations joyfully invaded St. Peter's Square. Sons and daughters of the charism of a great man who lived in France in the XVII century, who even today makes the warmth of his charity felt already «on a global scale» and especially close to the poorest of the poor. And we, together with them, animating this special meeting with our songs, centered on a very relevant and timely theme: «I was a stranger and you welcomed me...».

The culminating moment, the presence and the words of Pope Francis who through three verbs – adore, welcome, go – presented a fascinating task which is valid for everyone. And then a surprise: we did not imagine that as we sang our *Uirapuru*, a song-appeal in defense of the Amazons, that the next day the Pope would have announced a special Pan-amazonian synod for 2019.

Looking for synergies and working together among charisms old and new is a winning formula!

S. M.



Temporary Focolares

A stroke of genius

Continuiamo il viaggio nei Focolari temporanei



Sri Lanka. In a business started after the tsunami

This is how Emmaus called it during the recent meeting of the Delegates of the Zones: «A stroke of genius» because in a short time they are able to concentrate many activities, with some powerful moments which are then brought ahead, with enthusiasm by the community. The temporary focolares are a «missionary» instrument that gives value to all the members of the Movement, who together with the women and men focolarini who «collectively» bear witness and proclaim the Ideal in a valid formative action per the growing communities.

In North Vietnam the temporary focolare was an occasion to hold English lessons for 200 teenagers of high school and middle school age in the province of Thai Nguyen (diocese of Bac Ninh) around 80 kilometers from Hanoi. The members of the team came from different Countries and with very diverse backgrounds: Santa from the focolare of Pescara; Fr. Tan, parish priest of the host village; Hannah, gen2 from New Zealand, Gerrie, Dutch from the focolare of Chiang Mai; Kim a young girl who lives in Italy; Marie-Laure, French and in the

focolare of Yangon; Hue-Vera and Hop-Speranza, Vietnamese focolarine from the focolare of Hochiminh City. And so together with language teaching, the proclamation of the Ideal went ahead too, as some students shared: «I learned much more than just English: I learned how to love». «After the English Camp I am definitely a better person». A day-meeting at the pastoral center of Bac Ninh, with the presence of 80 people, gave us the chance to present the charism of Chiara Lubich, with a particular emphasis on Jesus Forsaken. The ground which was tilled and sown appears to be promising. The small community of North Vietnam is growing and is hoping to have a permanent focolare center in the future.

Remaining in the Asian continent let us look at the temporary focolare in **Sri Lanka, in Colombo**. In view of the Genfest 2018 in Manila, a three-week programme that was organized with Marilu', Jay, Tita, Catherine and Hugo who went to visit schools and colleges to meet young boys and girls. Aside from this, they held a big meeting that



Sri Lanka



Angola

gathered the youth of the parishes who, subdivided into groups, deepened the theme on how to live for and build a united world. The life of the temporary focolare took shape moment by moment in unity among everyone: from the visit to a business set-up by persons of the Movement after the tsunami, and which provides work for a group of women, to a meeting, together with a couple from New Families, for a group of married couples interested in the vocation to the focolare. Around 500 youth were met, a good number of them are committed to the preparation of the Genfest.

From **Africa** we have news about temporary focolare, or of trips to Angola, in Tanzania, Rwanda, Niger, Mali.

In **Saurimo, in Angola**, they went upon the request of a bishop, Mons. José Manuel Imbamba, where in his diocese they have been working to form consciences and to create the premise for a society without corruption and which promotes life. Idalina and Toni Cruz Nogueira, family-focolare of Portugal, wrote us: «With Isabel Laranjeira (person responsible of the focolare), Ana, Volunteer, Elias, Cipriano, Raimundo and Miguel, also Volunteers, Miria and Susana gen2, we were in a land where every circumstance, every reality spoke to us of Jesus Forsaken: a cry that already was answered by many men and women who throughout the centuries have given their lives, but which now continues to clamor for a universal urgent answer». The number of people we met,

of all ages and vocation, grew day by day. The Word of life and the «art of loving» are the fulcrums of proclamation. And finally, we were able to identify the possible animators to follow some of the groups. The encouragement of Mons. Imbamba was important: «I think that you are on the right path. Now, I can see the joy in the people who come to my residence for meetings».

A family-focolare from Bari arrived in **Tanzania**, Grazia and Carlo Conversa, working in tune with the women's focolare of Dar Er Salaam. They were impressed by the numerous presence of the young people who listened with simplicity, immediately welcoming the Ideal. «Many people invited us



Tanzania

to their homes – they wrote - in a relationship that was immediately familiar, marked with simplicity, sharing, and every occasion was an opportunity to immerse ourselves in their difficult and painful reality. We found many values that we Europeans have already lost, but above all we found people who welcomed the charisma of Chiara with passion. We were touched to see adults, youth and above all teenagers who never tired of listening to our experiences and who shared with us with much simplicity, their own, which were truly profound». Grazia and Carlo shared their experience in a meeting of youth, in the Mariapolis, in the New Families meetings and in two parish communities. As

doctors they were also able to assist in the aspect of sanitation. They were also able to go to Ifakara, at 270 kilometers from the capital, in a deep forest, invited by the bishop Mons. Salutaris Melchior Libena, who was very attentive and open to the Ideal.

The significant testimony of Sigi Dubiel, focolarino, who went to **Kigali in Rwanda** with Deo (from the focolare of Burundi), León (filipino from the focolare of Dallas/USA), Eric (from the focolare of Burundi) expressed their gratitude for having met the «family of Chiara» which is developing in spite of the terrible trial of the genocide 20 years ago.

The zonetta of Bobo (Burkina Faso) had sent three temporary focolares in some Countries linked to it: a men's focolare **in Niger**, one women's and one men's center **in Mali**. All three made up of members of the Movement of different vocations: focolarini, gen e pre-gen2, Volunteers and pre-volunteers, adherents. With a particular note: the presence of a Muslim pre-Volunteer man and a Muslim gen2 boy from Mali. It was a challenge and at the same time a gift above all for those two Countries with a strong Muslim majority. There were many fruits: the local communities found a new enthusiasm again; the number of young boys and girls increased, even new ones who participated in the Mariapolis; it was the occasion for a deeper formation with those who had the responsibility for the local communities. As many said, these temporary focolares are a blessing and a strength for the irradiation of the charisma. A young girl said: «In our Countries plagued by terrorism and absurd wars, your coming was a drop of love in a sea



Mali

of suffering, but (this love) will become an ocean if we don't stop ».

From Europe we received the news of a temporary focolare from **Sofia, in Bulgaria**. It was composed of Ono with Nico first and then with Cristiano later, (focolarini from Eastern Europe) and some gen, among whom were a Bulgarian and a German who wanted to spend their vacation in an atmosphere of unity. They were a support for the women's focolare in Mali. They launched the initiative



Bulgaria

called Hombre Mundo. With the young people, they built an open and sincere relationship and proposed the idea of a moment of discernment to understand together the plans of God. And they saw blossom «from nothing» young people who were profound and willing to risk their life for God. persone profonde, desiderose di mettersi in gioco per Dio.

prepared by the editorial board

Errata Corrige In the last issue, on page 32, second column, it should read only as **Lebanon**, not **Lebanon and Sudan**. Also in page 33, 1° column, 1° line only **Khartoum**. In fact Karthoum refers to a Shiite village in Lebanon, and not to the capital of Sudan. We apologize for this involuntary error.

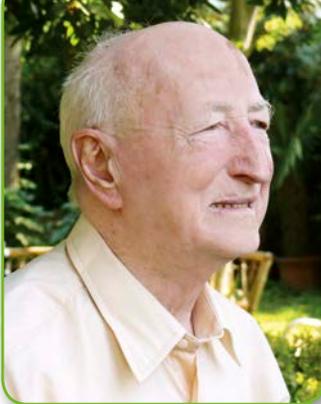
Mario Brini

«Above all have among you mutual and continuous charity» (1 Pt 4,8)

Mario – focolarino of the Roman Mariapolis who peacefully went to Heaven on October 23 at 95 years old in talking about himself, loved to begin from 1949, the year in which at 27 years old, his conversion began. «I lived the first part of my life badly - confessed Mario - with many defects that I was not worried about removing. This is why I relay like what Jesus said "There is a greater celebration in Heaven for a sinner who repents than for 99 righteous persons have no need for conversion". He would often go to the house of Vittorio Sabbione in Turin, where he met some of the first focolarini. «What I encountered – he explained – was love without measure, lived by true Christians. I began a new life seeing Jesus in everyone who passed me by. In the beginning I thought of earning money and to spend my time as pleasantly as possible, and to settle down well, but now my soul was opening up to this new life of the Gospel».

In '57 he entered the focolare in Turin, then in Florence, Trent, Bolzano. In '62 he moved to Castelli Romani, where in the succeeding years he gave a precious contribution to the Center of the focolarini in the administration. In '94, after the Collegamento in which Chiara invited everyone to put into practice the readiness to give one's life for the other, he wrote: «I had the strong and immediate impression of being in a certain way taken out of myself... At the same time a painful perception of my inability to live this commandment to the fullest. As I was going to work I met a focolarino: "Are you ready to die for me?"; I asked him. "Yes", he immediately answered. "Me too", I told him. Then I went to the chapel and I felt that I had to ask Jesus: "Are you ready to die..." but I couldn't continue: I knew very well that He died for me. And so, telling Him "Me, too for You" was easy. To die for Jesus in the others».

In these final years of his life living the the « casa verde» with other focolarini who were sick, he gave a great example of faithfulness to the gift of his life to God and of an unconditional love for Jesus



Forsaken. In spite of the advancing age and the many aches and pains of old age, whoever asked him how he was, would always receive the answer: «always better» and he confided: «The most beautiful period of my life is now: old age purifies, many things fall away, what remains is what is essential, the mercy of God comes to light in a more convincing way.

Mercy is everything».

Upon his departure, many bore witness to his «loving in a concrete, intelligent and persevering way»; «his will to never ever give up»; «his awareness of his limitations and his boundless trust in God-Love which was evident in the gentleness and sweetness of his eyes and gestures»; «his faithfulness to prayer and to starting again». We now believe that he is in the eternal joy, together with Guido, his brother, also a focolarino.

Gianna Terrone Fumagalli



She filled us with her smiles

Born in Varazze in Liguria, as an adolescent Gianna joined the Scouts where she was formed with the values of fraternity and solidarity. At 21 years old she met the Focolare Movement:

«I can still see with my own eyes– she shared - the hall which welcomed us, the people who spoke, Marita Sartori, but above all I had in my heart the light of the discovery: God is Love, we have only one life, let's live it for Him. From that moment on I went to receive Jesus in the Eucharist everyday. My entire life changed. I no longer met many people but Jesus in them; I no longer personally faced the various situations of life, but I was attentive

in trying to discover His plan in the different circumstances».

In 1960, she met Chiara Lubich in Friburgo: «I was engaged to Carlo and I was trying to discern my vocation. That day Chiara spoke to us of Jesus Forsaken and I experienced a new freedom that I had never felt before and the certainty that no one could separate me from that God to whom I had given the first place in my life when I met the Ideal. This was the answer».

Two years later she married Carlo, an architect from Milan. They had two children: Giovanni and Silvia. «From a personal one – Gianna continued to share – prayer became communion, also with Carlo, and it acquired a special beauty, a jump in quality which gave us the courage and the joy to ask God for many things together: for our children, for the needs of many, for humanity».

Gianna and Carlo followed the way of the focolare. They dedicated themselves to the development of the Movement in Lombardy, especially in the ambit of the family and in 1977 they wrote to Chiara: «We want to place in your hands our readiness to an eventual transfer». Immediately the year after, they arrived at the Center of the Movement in Rocca di Papa: Carlo dedicated himself to the planning of different structures among which was the Mariapolis Center of Castel Gandolfo and Gianna, having retired from teaching, collaborated in the formation of the married focolarine and worked in the international center of the New Families. Aside from this she worked for the preparation of congresses, books, talks, articles on the family. In *Città Nuova* for many years she prepared a column «Spazio Famiglia» (Family Space). Sometimes she would accompany Carlo in his business trips: «I am just back from Pakistan, she wrote to Chiara in 2000, with a great joy in my heart. In remote villages or in areas of extreme poverty, we met Christian and Muslim families and many children who are being helped by the support at a distance of Azione Famiglie Nuove (AFN). Once again I saw the charisma unite peoples, Churches, millenary cultures under one Sky».

From 2007 to 2014 she was a member of the general Council of the Movement.

She lived her focolare life intensely. Her experiences on the Gospel, her communion of soul

all had the element of surprise, just as someone who faithfully lived in the supernatural. Her Word of life was: «Everything that you want others to do to you, you do the same to them» (Mt 7,12).

Last July she began to experience complications in her health that required her confinement in the hospital. In spite of the seriousness of the situation, as the children wrote us: «she was always smiling at us during these two months of her illness». On October 13, at the age of 80, Gianna concluded her fruitful adventure here on earth, and joined Carlo who preceded her in Heaven in 2012, and all of «our people» in the heavenly Mariapolis. Her words, when she shared several years ago, resound today like her greetings to us: «I would like to live, so I can still love, but if I die, I will continue to love...».

André Katoto Shungu

«If you don't love me who will love me?»

Born in Lubumbashi (Democratic Republic of Congo), at 15 years old André met the Ideal and he immersed himself in the gen life. At 29 he married Julie, convinced that even if she belonged to a different tribe, she was a gift of God for him. They had three boys and a girl. In 2000 he felt the call of God as a married focolarino. He wrote to Chiara: «The radical choice of God has made me transform all my relationships with others into supernatural ones especially with Julie and the children, by seeing Jesus in them and sharing whatever material and spiritual goods I have. Housework is no longer a taboo for me, but the possibility to show my love. At home we begin the day with prayer and if possible also with the Mass. In the evening we share what we have lived and the experiences on the Word of life and we end by reciting the rosary together. Our differing points we entrust to the mercy of God so that we can start again and see each other new».

With Julie, also a married focolarina, in 2011 they welcomed the possibility of moving to Goma as a family-focolare. André is a university professor and an accountant for the State Railways. To leave such prestigious positions was seen as something crazy, but he knew how to explain to everyone the reason for this choice. A limpid person, with a permanent and sincere smile, an untiring apostle, always ready to lose his ideas out of love for the others. Taking seriously the phrase «to give one's life», André and Julie remained in the city even during the war, sharing every danger with the small community.

At the beginning of this year, unexpectedly, the illness arrived. He confided to Emmaus: «I heard the voice of the Spouse who was telling me: "If you don't



love me who will love me?". It is a "yes" that I renew moment by moment». For the treatment it was necessary for him to go to Kenya. André continued to be a luminous point for many even there. They wrote from the Mariapolis Piero, where they spent eight months

with Julie: «He conquered many, above all the gen and the future focolarini of the school. His experiences are an example of Evangelical radicalness».

His health deteriorated, and thanks to a generous communion of goods by the community, he was able to return to Lubumbashi where he was welcomed in the focolare. At the Mass, celebrated in his room, he pronounced his final promises as a married focolarino, thus completing his marriage with Jesus Forsaken». In the evening of the same day, on October 11, at 54 years old, he went to meet his Spouse.

Edith Vallet

«Who then can separate us from the love of Christ?» (Rm 8,35)



Among the first married focolarine of France, Edith, together with her husband Lucien, who was also a focolarino, soon became the apostles of the Ideal. She was also very dedicated to the family, enriched with seven children, accompanying each one with much love, always respecting their personalities. Her words were measured and full of wisdom, often the fruit of suffering embraced. Humble and discrete, she knew how to be courageous in her love for others, not hesitating, for example, to write the the wife of the President of the Republic to defend some refugees who were asking for political asylum. With Lucien they helped many people in difficulty, sharing what little they had without ever expecting anything in return, with a great faith in Providence which made them say «we were never wanting in anything». Their home was always open to welcome everybody.

With the illness of Lucien and his death a period of trial began for Edith. Her health also began to deteriorate, but she remained faithful to the «password» which she shared to everyone everyday to those who had no access to internet. She offered her difficulties for the Movement, trying to keep her «compass» well feixed on Jesus Forsaken. «I discovered – she wrtote to Chiara - that I have to allow God to work and not to put any barriers in His way with all my human reasoning. I have to recognize Him Abandoned in my inner misery, but not to stop there, because He can do everything». And still: «On my part, I want to be what Mary wants».

In the final weeks Edith suffered a lot also experiencing dark momenys, but she never stopped loving. Her children took turns to be constantly at her side with great love. On October 2, at the age of 86, she concluded her «holy journey», leaving behind a limpid witness of an evangelical life, an example for many families and not only.

Dario Cafagna

«Only one thing is necessary»

(Lk 10,42)

Dario was born in Trieste (Italy) and at a very young age he had to work to support himself. After a while he entered into a profound crisis, that affected his health. During his stay in a sanatorium he got to know *Città Nuova*, and in the book *Meditations* by Chiara Lubich, he discovered God as Love and a new way to live the Gospel. Once he was cured, he went to look for the focolarini. With them he felt the certainty of having found the way to concretize his giving of himself to God that he had been thinking about for some time.

At 24 years old he began his life as a focolarino and he went to work in Grottaferrata in the printing press of Città Nuova, where he remained for 40 years. He wrote to Chiara: «Jesus was a carpenter, but in His heart he had the passion for "That all may be one". Me too, in my little corner in the printing press, I can live for the Church».

In his rich experience of focolare life in the zone of Rome, he accompanied many young people in their journey of unity (more than two hundred) and in spite of the fact that they were more educated than him, an ex-labourer, he was for them a friend, a brother and a teacher of life. From his letters to Chiara we can grasp his spiritual depth. «Every difficulty I give to Jesus because he helps me to embrace the cross in order to truly love the neighbours. I know from experience that when He lives in us and is our ultimate goal, everything has value, meaning and beauty».

In 2010, after a heart operation he wrote to Emmaus: «It was a very difficult trial that put me even more in front of the real values in life and the Ideal, I was in front of God alone. But for the many who came to visit me it was also an experience of paradise. I realized that the same Jesus in the midst, reciprocal love, unity that was built throughout these years, have never decreased, rather they are more



than ever alive. It is like being in paradise where the past is all contained in the present and in the future and also everything is in the eternal present of God, that is why I experience the fullness of joy».

In June he suffered a stroke and his health immediately turned for the worse, and on September 6, at 79 years old, he

was called to the Father.

Giulio Caccialanza

«To be love: this is my programme»

On the 1^o of September, while he was taking a walk around his focolare at the Roman Mariapolis, Giulio, left for Heaven at 78 years old. Born and raised in Piacenza (Italy) in a non-practicing family, at 19 he met the Movement and at 22 he began his formation to enter the focolare, grateful to God for this vocation that gave him the possibility of «being a contemplative in the world».

After a short time in Turin and Barcelona, he spent 9 years in a focolare in Portugal and then again in Spain for almost twenty years, where he also took on the task as co-responsible for the Zone. From the Iberian peninsula, many, who recalled those years together, wrote of having experienced his

love, his ability to accompany that was full of «wisdom, constancy, paternity, detachment, humility, joy, discretion», strongly touched by his «serenity, which radiated trust and enchantment for the Ideal».

Giulio knew how to make people feel comfortable, without superimposing his role or his culture: the love for God and a life guided by the Gospel were visible in him. In 1995 he was ordained a priest.

In '97 he moved to Texas (USA) where a new wave of life awaited him. But some health



Maria das Dores Maciel de Farias (Fides)

«There is greater joy in giving than in receiving» (Acts 20,35)

From the focolare of Fontem (Africa) where she was staying, on August 25 Fides, Brazilian focolarina from Recife, unexpectedly left for the heavenly Mariapolis. The news was a big surprise for everyone because - in spite of her 80 years - she was still very active and full of life.

As a child she was sent to a Catholic school and at 13 years old she felt the desire to give herself totally to God. Her family did not agree and she experienced a very strong reaction to this, so much so that she abandoned the Church and the sacraments. Years later she came in contact with the Focolare Movement. «It was a light», she confided much later, that brought her to «see people, facts and events as the love of God, of a God who loved me silently and personally. It is as if He came here on earth just for me and died only for me. If God loved me up to this point, I had to return His love with my love». She felt the call to follow Chiara and in 1969 she entered the focolare.

problems which manifested itself caused him to return to Italy the following year. It was a precious occasion for him to intensify his commitment to living the Word of life that Chiara had given him: «Love one another intensely with a pure heart» (1Pt 1,22). «Everything in me must be a fruit of the Love and in Love - he noted in his diary - to be Love: this is my programme» (1999). A love which was manifested in his daily life and in his untiring readiness for private talks or to hear confession during the courses that were held at the Mariapolis Center of Castel Gandolfo, and among the faithful in the cathedral of Frascati. «In the measure in which I try to live with Jesus in the midst in my focolare - he



From '72 she was in Loppiano, where for 13 years she worked at the Centro Ave Art as the one in-charge of artistic Reproduction, instilling in the many focolarines of the school who worked with her, an imprint of harmony and unity. Then in Africa, where she stayed for a long period of time in various focolare centers among

which were Fontem, Bamenda, Fonjumentaw, where she also began a kindergarten. She made a strong experience in Angola during the difficult period of the war where she gave her life so that the newly opened focolare center there «will be an oasis of peace, of light, of love in the midst of so much hatred». Among other things she organized a mini-market to sell basic commodities at a low price, becoming mother, sister, friend to many.

A year ago Fides returned to Fontem and she assured Emmaus: «Count on my unity for everything. I want to tell you that I am ready to "change heaven" and to go where He will ask me». Upon the news of her death, Emmaus wrote: «We believe that God found her ready for the meeting with Him - accepting her many years of faithfulness to the Spouse and her untiring commitment to generously sharing the wisdom and light of the Ideal».

wrote to Emmaus - I feel that I have the light to give good counsel to the people. I always remember what Chiara used to say: to listen with love up to the end without thinking of what to answer. Then finally the illumination of the Holy Spirit comes as a surprise. And each time I realize that it is true».

«His was a marian presence - Emmaus wrote when she announced his departure - a life of self-giving simple and hidden, made dynamic by a constant starting again. We now think of him as having reached the goal. Like the wise virgins of the Gospel of the day, Giulio was ready and he had with him the oil of that love that had illuminated his life».

Fr. Vito Chiesa

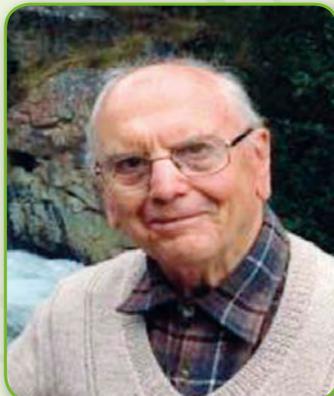
A collaborator of Chiara in building the Work of Mary

The story of Fr. Vito, priest focalario of the diocese of Genoa (Italy), is closely linked to the spirituality of the Focolare Movement which he discovered during a pilgrimage to Lourdes in 1960, six years after his ordination. «I was sleeping in the same room as Fr. Raggio – he shared – who would read to me a book of meditations without mentioning the author, Chiara Lubich. One of the passages began like this: “If we are united, Jesus is among us”: words which touched me a lot and which changed my way of being a priest».

The desire was born in him to live a community life with other priests and soon the first priestly focalario of Liguria was started with a common dining room also for other priests. «Jesus among us - continued his story - changed everything: in the place of our limited way of seeing things and making our own plans, we were becoming men of dialogue».

Respected and admired by the Bishops, he was given many responsibilities – in the parishes, in religious Families, in the ecclesiastical Court - which he fulfilled always in God and for the others. Whoever came to him felt totally welcomed by a pastor who loved without measure, because «if I did not take my brothers to heart – Fr. Vito said - My mission would be incomplete». Numerous priests and lay people were generated by him to the life of the Ideal. His unity with Chiara was extraordinary so much so that she considered him as «one of her collaborators in building the Work of Mary».

As his health deteriorated, his trust and desire to serve up to the end and to do only the will of God increased. On October 5, at the age of 88, he entered into the «fullness of life». At his funeral this is what Card. Angelo Bagnasco said: «As everyone knew, his priesthood was marked by a Marian dimension, of which the Work of Mary (Focolare Movement)



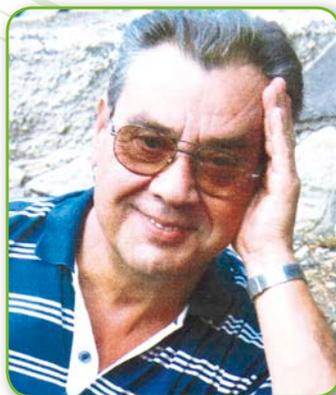
draws its inspiration, and to which he too belonged. Fr. Vito radiated: his gaze was enough to make one feel his gentle and attractive strength which he wove with humility in an atmosphere of communion and of unity, where Jesus was present, faithful to his word: “where two or three are united in my name, I am in their midst”. We are grateful to God for having given him to us».

Fr. Mario Moltedo

Fr. Antonio Petrone

«Blessed is he who believed in the fulfillment of the words of the Lord» (Lk 1,45)

Fr. Antonio was born in Naples on May 20, 1939. He worked in the railways, sportive, a leader of the Catholic Action, and at 29 years old he shared that he lost his faith: «By faith I mean a series of practices and rules that I had to comply with, while within me there was a thirst for change». He left the Catholic Action and began a painful period in his life: «The ideals of my youth were crumbling one



by one... One evening, without thinking about it, before I went to bed, I took the Bible on my side table that I had won at a ping-pong tournament and without any interest whatsoever I began to read it, I don't know why I stopped at St. Paul». Those words shook him and pushed him to put the Gospel into practice. A new stage of his life began that would lead him to the community of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate in Marino where he discovered the Ideal and

at the mature age of 33, he felt the call as a consecrated and a priest. Asking for a Word of life from Chiara he wrote: «Trying to live profoundly all the expressions of the Movement, God gave me the light that made me see in its totality the great gift of love that it is giving to the Church and to the whole world... This great light has illuminated my vocation as an Oblate and to consecrate myself to the whole Work of Mary in embracing Jesus Forsaken, our one great Ideal, up to the end». Chiara gave him the Word of life: «Blessed is he who believed in the fulfillment of the words of the Lord» (Lk 1,45).

On December 8, '76 Antonio was ordained a priest. In '77 he was sent to the community of Marino as formator and after five years he was transferred to his city Naples, which he never left and later assumed the responsibility for the branch of the Religious men. He accompanied with passion and the charism which was typical of him, especially the youth and then the laity, transmitting the Ideal to many. Among them, vocations blossomed to the Oblates, the focolare and to other institutes.

Immediately after his death, on July 30, the superior of his community wrote: «On his last day, we witnessed something out of this world: hundreds of people, especially "his" ex-youth, passed by to greet him and to pray for him, all night and all day. For everyone Fr. Antonio gave a slight nod to show that he recognized them. In my final conversation with him I repeated the phrase of the Apocalypse "I am standing at the door and knocking", and Antonio answered: "Let's open wide the door to Him"».

Fr. Salvo D'Orto, OMI

Iustina Ponoran

In the hands of God who is love

A committed member of the New Parish Movement of Romania, Iustina met the Movement when she was of young age. Hers was a Marian and generous self-giving, both in the family and in the parish and in the Movement.



Wife and mother of two children (Beatrice, 15 and Fabian, 11 years old), in the middle of June she suddenly fell ill and after many examinations she was diagnosed with a rare incurable neurological disease. In two weeks Iustina lost the use of her legs, then her speech and in 4 months, on October 18, at the age of 44, she concluded her «holy journey». Previously, after having received the Eucharist, she confided that even if she did

not understand why she had this illness, Jesus certainly knew the reason why, and she was certain that she and her family were in the hands of God who is Love.

Her certainty continued to be a support for the family and the entire community, who experienced a renewed faith in the love of God and a strong sense of family among everyone.

Maria Christine Surdu

Roberto Cardinali

*Union leader, politician,
committed to social action.
But above all a man of God*

Agriculturist, manager of a Cooperative, he gave up his job to help a friend in difficulty and he went on to become the union leader at the Federation of Italian Farmers of Siena: there he met Raffaella who was the administrative secretary, he got to know about the Ideal from her and she later became his wife. Because of his competence, in 1973, while he was attending the School of the men Volunteers in Loppiano, he was asked to take charge



of the newly established Cooperative Loppiano Prima: so he left his job, and with Raffaella (married focolarina) they moved to the Little City.

A very strong moment for Roberto was when Chiara gave a Word of life to the Cooperative: «Seek first the Kingdom of God and his justice and all the rest will be given to you in addition», the same one which she gave to him and which he would bring throughout the years, that led him to live a radical communion of goods on one hand and on the other, a great faith in providence. He also continued his political activities: in Incisa he became a town councilor for three terms. Committed in New Humanity, he promoted, together with others, the hospital volunteers (AVO) in some cities in Tuscany.

Roberto and Raffaella did not have children but, because of the many ways they welcomed others into their home, Roberto explained, «we were just the same very much loved parents and even “grandparents” and “great grandparents”». Attentive to every difficulty in the Cittadella, he gave his contribution both spiritual and material in every circumstance. When he reached retirement age, together with Raffaella - who went to teach at the schools of the future men and

women focolarini - Roberto spent a period of time in Montete, happy to offer also to the Swiss Little Town his agricultural knowledge and experience.

In 2012 he becomes seriously ill and after various medical treatments he seemed to be cured. But last June, during a routine exam, the disease had reappeared which brought him quickly to Heaven. In this last period, seeing how his condition was rapidly deteriorating, he prepared himself solemnly and fully aware, entrusting himself to Mary and remaining in love up to the end. On August 31, in a sacred and serene atmosphere he reached the heavenly Mariapolis at 86 years old.

Emmaus wrote this to Raffaella: «To crown a life totally given to God and to the brother, we believe that he was accompanied by Chiara and by our people to the meeting with Jesus as a courageous witness of the Ideal.[...] We are grateful to him and count on his help so that Jesus in the midst will shine more brightly in the Cittadella, certain that he will keep a special gaze on the Cooperative Loppiano Prima which he had always supported. [...] Roberto remains in the Cittadella as a “living stone”!».

Stefano Fontolan

Marie-Thérèse Oudot

*«My food is to so the will
of Him who sent me
and to do his work» (Jn, 4, 34)*

Born in Algeria in a French family, Marie-Thérèse is among the first people to know the Movement when it arrived in that Country and she remained an active Volunteer until she returned to France in the '70s. She then found work as the administrator of a nursing school in Blois and, in spite of the distance she went to Paris regularly for her nucleo meeting. Much later a nucleo was formed in Orléans with M. Thérèse assuming the responsibility for it. But everything of the Movement is hers.

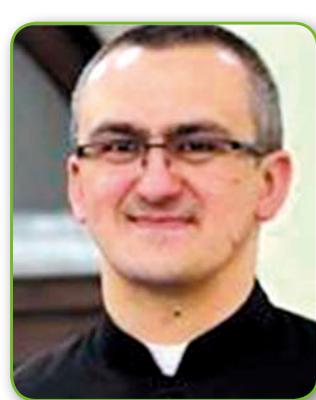
She is passionate about dialogue, she formed friendships with persons of various Churches and other Religions, often with



Muslims whose culture she knows well. She was a supporter of the EoC, doing her part in spreading its publications and thanks to her an entrepreneur of the region got to know the Eoc. With her communion of goods, she gave a big contribution for the realization of the Little Town Giulio, near Paris. In spite of her fragile health, many were welcomed into her home.

She spent the last three years of her life in a center for those with Alzheimer's in the Region, entrusted to the care of her relatives and accompanied by the women Volunteers who continued to visit her even if Marie-Thérèse could no longer recognize them. On August 27, at the age of 90 years old, she went to Him who was the All of her life.

Thérèse Chanel



Fr. Marcin Szopiński

«Whoever remains in love is in God and God is in him» (1 Jn 4,16)

Marcin was born in a small city near Rzeszów (Poland); after his high school he entered the seminary. That year, among the many meetings, there was one wherein they would be talking about the spirituality of unity. Marcin could not escape from attending it but he thought it would just be a waste of time so he brought along a book with him. Instead it was a real discovery. With other seminarians they immediately formed a group of the Word of life and, always with the desire to go deeper, together with another seminarian they asked and were given permission to spend a period of time at the Center of spirituality «Vinea Mea» of Loppiano. With his ordination in 2004, he felt at the same time the call to be a priest focolarino.

After some years as assistant parish priest, in spite of his young age, the Bishop asked him to take charge of a Retreat House of the diocese and to become an exorcist. He did his pastoral work in the normalcy and in silence, with an active and marian presence also in the local community of the Focolare. He knew how to love concretely, organizing everything very well. His communion of soul was always interwoven with experiences on the Gospel lived.

At 38 years old, Fr. Marcin accepted the announcement of a serious illness, as a task being given to him by the will of God. Without hesitation he decided to undergo an operation even if it was risky. It seemed that his condition improved afterwards, but after a few months the illness returned in an even more aggressive way. When the doctors told him that there was nothing else that could be done for him, he confided to his friend also a priest: «I am ready to meet Jesus». On September 18, at just 39 years old, he met Him forever, leaving behind a trail of light.

Fr. Wojciech Czekaj

Fr. Costanzo Donegana

His ability to build relationships, his sense of humour, his words which were never lacking...

My friendship with Fr. Costanzo goes back to the day I entered into the formation community of PIME where he was the rector. I had just met the charism of Chiara. Fr. Costanzo, instead, was already a secure point of reference for the young religious men who



in the Zone of Milan were coming to know the Movement. In those years, quite turbulent for many young religious students, he remained close to the young people with patience and wisdom. I remember his touching conversations, taken from the spirituality of unity which he gave to us with simplicity, confirming them with citations from the Fathers of the Church, whom he had a great passion for. Then together we left for the mission: he went first to Camroun and then Brazil, and I went to Hong Kong. In 2004 I had the occasion to meet him in San Paolo, in Brazil, where he was working as the editor-in-chief of our magazine *Mundo e Missão*. He brought me to the *favelas* where some social projects of the Focolare were actively working and where he would run to whenever his time schedule allowed it. «I could not just write about them - he explained to me - I had to go and be with them. And so for twenty years I immersed myself among the poor of the *favelas*. They were the most beautiful moments of my life, not in a romantic sense, but truly, as a missionary who "is trying" to live the Gospel of Jesus. This period in Brazil was marked also by an intense collaboration with the *Cidade Nova* publishing house.

Then he was called to Rome to take up the responsibility for the Historical Office of the PIME. The Superior general described him in this way: «His ability in building relationships, his sense of

humour, his words which were never lacking, his love for the Institute, these are some of the characteristics that Fr. Costanzo offered daily to all of us». Yes, Fr. Costanzo loved concretely the PIME and the persons who belonged to it. He equally loved the Work of Mary with the enthusiasm of the simple.

In the last years of his illness there were also dark moments and those who were beside him were able to feel that something sacred was happening in him. The smile and the luminous gaze were his personal and intimate declaration of love for Jesus Forsaken. This is what Emmaus

wrote to his Superior general on the occasion of his death which took place on July 8, at the age of 77: «Making his talents as a writer also bear fruit, Fr. Costanzo gave a precious contribution in the spread of the Gospel in various places where he lived his vocation as a missionary. ... He had especially in his heart the aim of unity which Jesus asked from the Father: "That they may all be one until the world believes"; ideal which he shared with the religious adherents of our Movement».

Fr. Luigi Bonalumi, PIME

Maria Therese Brücker Eckstein

«To him who loves me I will manifest myself» (Jn 14,21)

Born in Altdorf, in Switzerland, she managed a general goods store as an adult. At 46 years old when her mother whom she took care of with great love for a long time, left this world, Maria Therese decided to begin her life anew by working as a cook in the biggest parish of Zurich under the care of priest Focolari. Thus she had the opportunity to get to know



the spirituality of the Focolare and to commit herself first in the Parish Movement and then as a Volunteer of the Work of Mary.

At the end of a meeting at Castel Gandolfo she wrote in her diary: «Jesus, I have only one great desire to put my life entirely in your hands, to accept your great love and your mercy, and to start again without looking back. Teach me, show me, how I can recognize you in every moment».

When she retired, after a period where she remained at the parish center, she moved to an apartment in the Little Town «Pietra angolare (Cornerstone)» in Baar. As long as her strength permitted, she worked in the shop for used items

«Von e Für» (From and For), and gave concrete help as she could, radiating peace and wisdom. The nucleo life was very precious to her. She wrote: «The nucleo means community for me, from it I am able to draw strength to overcome also difficult moments. From it comes the grace to "make myself one", to be together in the "holy journey", to always repeat and renew my "yes"».

God called her to Him on August 5, just a short while before her 90th birthday.

Imja Lutz

Fr. Georg Schlütter

«From this we have known love: he gave his life for us, so we too we must give our life for the brothers»

(1 Jn 3,16)

When at 22 years old he met the Ideal, Georg - student of theology in the Rhineland (Germany) - began to live in profound communion with Jesus Forsaken, the source from which he drew strength to renew the pact of unity every day and to build relationships with everyone. Six years after his ordination he chose to go to Berlin, a city full of tension and divided by the wall, in his profound desire to meet everyone with the



soul of a true brother and to give his life for them: for the ideological enemies of the Church, just as for the homeless of his parish. He was among the first group of priest focalini. The characteristic of Fr. Georg was to build bridges. The big parish house in Berlin-Kreuzberg became a center for the life of the priests in the east and the west of the city. Always open to the new will of God, he shared his talents (art and liturgy) for the «Katholikentage» in 1980 and 1990. He played the guitar and practiced various sports: an activity which brought him close to the youth and paved the way for the realization of an important project: the recovery of Berlin youth from the hellhole of drugs. Having understood the great ecclesial and humanitarian importance of the Fazenda da Esperança founded by Bro. Hans Stapel in Brazil, he shared his political contacts that would mark the beginning of the Fazendas in Germany. Here he experienced first hand how the Word of God lived opened the way for the redemption of these youth and made them become credible apostles among their peers who were still victims of drug dependence.

The last six years of his life was marked by a serious form of dementia. During my last visit to him together with his friend Hans Schweiger, he unexpectedly recognized us and to our great surprise confided, fully aware, «I live for you!» On June 29, at the age of 76, Fr. Georg returned to the House of the Father.

Wilfried Hagemann

Maria Victoria (Vicky) Pertierra Pellicer

«If God is with us who can be against us?» (Rom.8,31)

Volunteer of Manila (Philippines), at 40 years old Vicky met the spirituality of Chiara and, strongly attracted to it, she would often go to the focal center to know it more deeply as much as possible. «I was so inflamed by the Charism – she shared – that I wanted to embrace and love Jesus in His abandonment». This love would give her strength in moments of suffering and in her commitment for many years to the Social Center «Bukas Palad (With open hands)» putting herself at the service of the least.

In the '80s the families who would go to the Center were almost 5,000 and in spite of much communion of goods which the members of the Movement tried to live, the funds were never enough. Vicky overcame her shyness and with her creativity she was able to approach the President of a bank and invited him to visit the social Center. Moved by the many services being offered there, he decided to launch a fund-raising activity among the departments in the bank's branches all over the Philippines. And so thanks to Vicky's courage, today «Bukas Palad» is a five-story building whose walls could talk about the many stories of the poor who experienced the love of God in their lives through it.

Vicky aside from being responsible for a nucleo was also committed to New Humanity, to which she also involved other teachers in the territory. In spite of her fragile health (she had undergone 14 operations), she as a volunteer-teacher for street children, whom she taught in *tagalog*, the local language, which she tried to learn so that they could understand the lessons better.

In March her health deteriorated. Vicky had to renounce her beloved activities to enter the hospital. Her «yes» to Jesus Forsaken is total. «It seemed to me that Jesus was saying – she confided: “You asked me to become a saint, this is my way for you to attain sanctity, through the Cross”». And so I told Him: «If this is the way for me to become a saint, I accept it, but you, Jesus, must help me, I cannot do it alone». Her serenity up to the end made it clear that He was always beside her, up to the point of bringing her with Him to the Heavenly Home, on July 22, at the age of 77.

Ma. Corazon Guzman

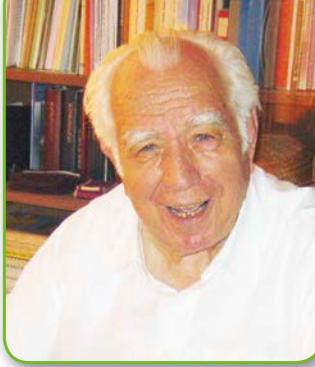


Fr. Helmuth Brockman

From Westphalia to the Andes, with the Ideal of unity in his heart

Helmuth, from Westphalia-Rhineland (Germany) at 16 years old began his formation as a Steyler (divine word) missionary. While still a student he happened to take in his hand a copy of *Neue Stadt* (Città Nuova German edition). He was deeply touched that in 1959 he went to the Dolomites to participate in the Mariapolis where he met Chiara personally. In '64 he left for Argentina, bringing the Ideal of unity in his heart.

Fr. Carlos, as he was simply called in, remained for 40 years in this new continent, moving to different places. At the delta of the Rio della Plata he built a flourishing missionary



island, in the Andes he took care of 56 indigenous villages situated between 3,300 to 4,500 meters above sea level. His last destination was in one of the hottest regions of Argentina. Everywhere he went Fr. Carlos maintained contact with the fo-

lolarini, helping them in organizing the Mariapolis and spreading the charism of unity everywhere.

Returning to Germany, for 15 years he lived in the monastery of Mosbach in the Odenwald and as long as his strength permitted, he was always present in the meetings of the local community. In September 2016, he moved to the hospice of his order in Sankt Wendel. There, on May 28, 2017 at the age of 83, Fr. Helmut returned to the Father.

p. Wolfgang Angerbauer

Renata Orzenini

«There is no salvation through anyone else, nor is there any other name under heaven given to the human race by which we are to be saved» (Acts 4,12)

Volunteer of the zonetta of Bologna, Renata is a joyful person, open, who knows how to make herself one with everyone. She wrote to a friend: «You ask me if I have ever experienced the absolute emptiness. Oh yes, certainly! That is why I can understand it and share it also with the heart, as an instrument in the hands of God who, even if he is hidden continues to console us and sustain us». With her sisterly and motherly love, Renata was the point of reference of the women Volunteers of the zonetta.

In the school where she taught, whoever was problematic became her favourite and this allowed her to build strong ties with many of her former students. She lovingly took care of her mother throughout her long illness: «This situation that was becoming more difficult— she wrote - increased the unity and love between me and



my sister. It is really true: even in the midst of great fatigue, both physical and psychological, suffering is a source of maturation. It is always a gift».

She bore witness to what Chiara had written to her confirming her name Renata: «... be new, reborn in every present moment, saint», in front of every suffering Renata renewed her choice of Jesus Forsaken to whom she remained faithful for

the rest of her life.

She confided to her sister: «The Lord is making me walk a certain path in spite of my resistance, but I have to let myself be guided by Him». She spent more and more of her time in prayer and to teaching catechism in the parish, almost as if she was preparing for her encounter with Jesus which happened on May 28, at 83 years old. «Being with Renata – a friend who worked with her in Caritas sgared - I immediately felt the presence of God». Her illness allowed the Volunteers to be beside her and to give back some of the love that Renata had poured on them

Daniela Nicolini Palmieri

Rosella Sammarini Talacci

Her journey of suffering became her «teaching chair»

Married and mother of three children, in 1978 Rosella from the zonetta of Bologna, participated in the Mariapolis of Bergamo, in which the theme was «Jesus in the brother». With her husband Armando she welcomed fully the message of the Gospel and, together, they began to live it. In this new light, the unexpected arrival of their fourth child was welcomed as a gift of Mary.



Their house was open to welcome people they didn't even know, but in whom they saw the face of Jesus. A characteristic of Rosella, who in the meantime felt the call to be a Volunteer, was her special smile with which she welcomed people and situations without ever losing her peace. She was a simple woman, but always well-dressed and neat to welcome Jesus in every neighbour she would meet.

In her last years she learned to live with illness, drawing strength from Jesus Forsaken. Her journey thus became her «teaching post», from where she could love even more the neighbours she met, going beyond herself. Fully conscious up to the end of the seriousness of her situation, as well as of the fragility of her health and her limitations, she entrusted herself completely to the mercy of God. Even when she was confined in the hospital, her relatives and the women Volunteers remained constantly by her side, until she left peacefully on May 8 at the age of 74.

Daniela Nicolini Palmieri

Yvonne Tayoh Lambou

She was a testimony that God is also Beauty

After elementary school, Yvonne, Volunteer of the zonetta of Bamenda (Cameroun), became a very good seamstress. She embraced the spirituality of unity with all her heart and she remained faithful to it for the rest of her life. Gifted with a marked sense of harmony, she offered her contribution during the meetings of the Movement to show the world that God is also Beauty.



She had an open personality, forgiving, happy, loving, she attracted many people to the values of the life of the Gospel that she herself was living. She was an untiring worker, always ready to serve, her love for others was visible to everyone. When she became ill, her condition worsened by a stroke in the last two years of her life, that left her partially paralyzed. She accepted everything from the hands of God and offered her sufferings for the activities of the Movement. Her husband Evaristus, left his job as a driver in order to care for her. She left for heaven on February 8 at 54 years old. During the funeral, deeply touched by the witness his wife had given and by the special closeness and support of the community of the Movement, Evaristus openly declared that he wanted to become a member of the Movement.

Dorothy Kum

Luciana Salandini

«God loves me the way I am»

Pushed by the desire to deepen her knowledge of the charism of unity, Luciana, from Gallarate (Varese - Italy), participated willingly in the congresses organized by the Movement and from 1990 she became a member of a group of the Parish Movement. Returning from a meeting held at the Mariapolis Center of Cadine she wrote: «I understood that I have to be more committed in my meditation and in living



the Word of God. I must remain myself without copying anyone since God loves me the way I am, with the talents that He himself has given me. I should "know how to lose", embracing Jesus Forsaken and not allowing myself to be taken by activism and to neglect the things of the soul». After an experience in Castel Gandolfo she wrote: «I really reflected on the theme on Jesus Forsaken and the importance of love and of making one with everyone for a new evangelization».

Active, punctual in her commitment to the parish choir, she always tended towards unity and was attentive to the needs of everyone; she gave with love to those in need, always keeping in mind the aim indicated by Chiara: to live unity in the parish so that it can become a small piece of the Kingdom of God on earth.

As a member of the missionary group she took care of the relations with foreign contacts of the support at a distance project of the NFA (New Families Action), building a relationship of love with each child that was assigned to the group, a relationship that was reciprocated and nourished by a constant correspondence and fervent prayers. She translated into Italian the letters of the children so as to keep everyone updated and she encouraged prayers for these children so that, «Jesus will transform our prayers into something good for them».

On July 6, at the age of 72, the Father called her to Himself, thus ending a long degenerative illness that gradually took away her mobility and speech. They were difficult years, lived in full acceptance of the will of God, surrounded by the love of her relatives who did all they could so that she could remain at home, obtaining the best care for her.

the secretariat of the Parish Movement of Milan

Benjamin Desmond O'Connell

«Founding father» of the men Volunteers of Oceania.

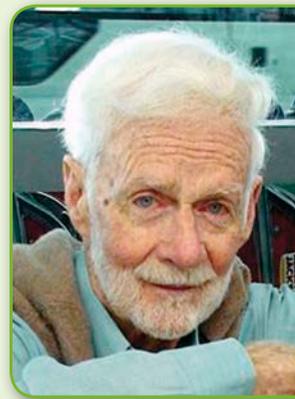
Benjamin Desmond (Des) was in the Navy when, at the end of the second world war, he visited Hiroshima (Japan) still in total devastation by the nuclear bomb. He was profoundly touched and as a practicing and committed Catholic he decided to renew his choice to realize with his life a world of peace.

In 1949 his young family, together with other 150 people, moved to St. Marys/Maryknoll (in the eastern part of Melbourne), to collaborate in the building of a citadel founded by Fr. Pooley to promote a new social justice. He met the Ideal of Chiara afterwards and understood that to bring Jesus to the world he had to begin from himself dedicating his intellect and strength of soul, in a continuous dialogue with Jesus. In '73 after participating in a school in Rocca di Papa and visiting Loppiano, he expressed his desire to become a Volunteer of the Work of Mary.

From that moment on his life consisted solely on doing what God wanted from him, in simplicity and in the joy of building authentic relationships, putting the other at the center of his world.

In Maryknoll Des was the promoter of unity, also where it apparently seemed impossible... for example he was able to convince the families to open a center for rehabilitation which was at first strongly contradicted but now is very much appreciated by the entire community. When he went to another state to assist the sick father of a Volunteer, he realized that the patient in the next bed had a loaded gun which he intended to use when his pain became unbearable. He was able to re-ignite the faith in God-Love in that man and the gun disappeared. Among the three of them, a profound unity was built that accompanied this dying man until he left this earth in peace with God.

His last two years and a half were spent in a home for the elderly. There Des



Christa Benning

«... until we meet again»



Christa's first job - in Bocholt in the region of Munster (Germany) - was with a consultancy firm whose owner, Hermann, later became her husband. Since he was differently abled, she took care of him and assisted him both at home and at work. But, at just a little over thirty years old, Christa became a widow with three small children and with courage, for another 55 years, she brought ahead the activity started by her husband.

Through her children - Hermann Josef, now a Volunteer and Matthias, married focolarino - she met the Movement and later became a Volunteer. Gifted with a strong sense of truth and justice, she knew how to listen and to give advice with a great ability of discernment. In the nucleo she was appreciated for her profound and heartfelt communion of soul. Her house was always open, especially to the young people. Their nucleo meetings were also held there.

In spite of her advancing age Christa was not worried about her health. She strived to eat healthy food and to live with respect for nature taking from it the remedies she needed. As her strength diminished she tried to help herself like for example dividing what she had bought into smaller bags so she could carry them by herself. Due the complications arising from a serious influenza, she was brought to the hospital. Knowing that she would soon be going to the Father - which happened a few weeks later on April 5, at 91 years old - she would lovingly tell all those who came to visit her: «...until we meet again».

Margareta Gehlmann

continued to love: his caregivers, the doctors, the nurses, the residents who happily spent time with him to experience, as one of them said, «a bath of light and wisdom». On September 5, 2016 at the age of 102, he peacefully left for the heavenly Mariapolis.

Rob Lyell e Bruce Scott

Alice Vivarelli Tovoli

«... I try to keep my soul always ready»

Volunteer of the zonetta of Bologna, Alice, school teacher and a teacher of life, shared her knowledge and profound faith with love and in «making herself one» with everybody. She found her way of life in the spirituality of unity and many people, including her family, also wished to make it their own. Attentive to the needs of others, she helped them concretely without measure. For a long time she would go every week to visit a family in difficulty who had two small children. The wife recalled that, while Alice ironed clothes she would tell fairy tales to the eldest child who listened enchanted.



She demanded much from herself, but was open and understanding with others. Someone said: «She took care and worried about me. She would invite me to her house, she made me feel comfortable even if I was coming from the countryside, she helped me to face society since I was very timid, giving me advice and encouragement. She always loved me without asking for anything in return».

From the hospice where she was staying under her own choice she wrote: «Many things have changed, every day and every night Jesus helps me to live with peace my present health situation. I try not to have too many thoughts and to keep my soul ready for everything that Jesus will still ask of me». On April 30, at 96 years old, Alice took flight to God leaving in everyone the certainty that she was already in Paradise.

Daniela Nicolini Palmieri

Walter Ruffato

Young at heart

With his departure for Heaven, which took place on January 30 at 94 years old, Walter, Volunteer of Padua (Italy), left as his inheritance his great faith, his tenacity in keeping his commitments, the respect for family values and universal brotherhood. During his long life, the controversies, hatred, regrets never touched him, rather, he was always ready to get involved so that the world could encounter true love, that given by God and which makes us all brothers and sisters.

Even with his advanced age he was always young at heart, open to every person he met.



He loved beautiful things, art and literature, he was passionate about Città Nuova with which he nourished his soul committing himself to its diffusion. He had the young people at heart and never missed the chance to be with them in all their initiatives.

His love for the family was tangible, especially for his wife Carmela. Lately when we would go to visit him we breathed the atmosphere of Paradise, among them, with the love that they had for one another. Walter lived profoundly also the illness of his wife whom he accompanied without complaining and with dedication bringing her comfort and encouragement.

prepared by Pino Tasca

Maria del Carmen Lozada

Among the first women Volunteers of Argentina

She was one of the «historical» women Volunteers of Alta Gracia (Córdoba), among those who left their mark, generating many to the life of the Ideal. She had a new name, Maricor – Mary Heart of humanity – and a Word of life: «For them I sanctify myself, so that they too may be sanctified in the truth» (Jn 17,19).

She actively lived in the Movement for forty years. She was a great worker, enthusiastic in her profession as a teacher, she was the curator of the historical «Museum of the Virrey Liniers» and also the librarian of the parish of the Salesians. She became a widow and raised her children with great love, one of whom made the experience in the Mariapolis O'Higgins. At 80 years old, towards the end of 2016, she reached the House of the Father.



The many difficulties in life that she had to face, she did so with strength of character and an inexhaustible joy which she radiated whether in favourable or adverse circumstances. Joyful, witty and smart, whenever she arrived for any occasion, she would exclaim: «Why did I come here? To love and nothing else». In her readiness to always start again she found the balm for all her failures and encouraged the women Volunteers to do the same. She never doubted that her place in the Church was that of serving the Work of Mary and her «yes» was forever. When health problems began for her, family problems suffering, she encouraged us to pray the consenserint – even at a distance – to recite the Rosary. You could always count on Maricor, on her prayers, certain that she lived for the reality of the other. All this greatness was hidden in a tiny body, hidden and in the background but filled with the virtue of humility.

Gabriela Clivio

Adelina Zunino

«Saints» for a new society



From Sassello (Savona), she received a teaching diploma and went to teach at the same school of Gianna Fumagalli (see profile pp.

31-32). They became friends: «Gianna always listened to me – Adelina shared - and she would gather all my complaints, until one evening, with much delicateness, she offered me the magazine Città Nuova saying: “Try to read it, maybe it will help you in your daily life”». That night Adelina, who was then 28 years old and for some time now no longer went to church, was not able to sleep. Those pages seemed written precisely for her.

As soon as possible she went to confession and, in the summer she went with Gianna to the mariapolis of Fiera di Primiero, where she came to know the cornerstones of the Ideal life: God who is Love, the present moment, reciprocal love, Jesus Forsaken. She became a Volunteer, and her great love for Città Nuova helped her to gather around fifty subscriptions every year. At the end of a school in Loppiano she wrote: «The Volunteer is called to renew the world and can contribute to building a new society only inasmuch as he or she becomes a saint. Therefore the commitment to live “within”, to grow “within” without worrying about the “outside”, and God will do the rest if He lives within me». In 1971 this is how she described her commitment for «That all may be one»: «I continue to build relationships of unity with the Director and a teacher who were communist. This morning as I came back to work after an illness they came to greet me in class and they brought me a book as a gift, naturally it was a leftist book. Every Friday I would do volunteer work in a protected residence for the elderly and with other three friends of mine we kept company with 32 elderly all in wheelchairs. Thanks to the presence of many vacationers and tourists, also this August we were able to do our exhibit-market of the many handicrafts done by the residents and to share with them the profits of the sales as a

sign of solidarity. The profit was quite big, but to see them all in action was even more beautiful».

In '81 she accompanied to the Familyfest at the Palaeur of Rome three families of Sassello among whom were Maria Teresa and Ruggero Badano, with their daughter Chiara Luce, who in 2010 was declared Blessed.

On June 10, at 86 years old, the little teacher of Sassello, whom history had used as the instrument for Chiara Luce to meet the Ideal, concluded her earthly life, a marvelous adventure all interwoven with the Gospel.

Angela Roncallo

Our relatives

João, brother of Margarida Nobre, focolarina at the Roman Mariapolis; **Antonio, father of Roberta**, focolarina in Caracas and **of Gabriella Munegato**, married focolarina in Milan; **Giovanna, mother of Carla Somavilla**, focolarina in Padua; **Giuliana, mother of Paola Serafini**, focolarina in Lazio North; **Pierre, father of Pierre André Blanc**, focolarino in Montet; **Giovanni, brother of Pierino Spada**, focolarino in the Roman Mariapolis; **Maria, mother of Ange Mi Sook Kim**, focolarina in Seoul; **Walter, brother of Red Deschuyffeleer**, focolarina in the Little Town Marienkroon (Holland); **Vicente, brother of M. Auxiliadora Peres Moreira**; **Floraldo Bruno, brother of Sandra Ribeiro**; **Maria Luiza, sister of Alice and Maitê Guimaraes**; **Síria, mother of Josemeri Valério Pereira**, all focolarine in the Mariapolis Ginetta; **Maria Selma and Antonio, mother and brother of Tania Maria dos Santos**, focolarina at Teresina (Brazil); **Lúcio Flávio, father of Isabel Furtado**, focolarina in Fortaleza (Brazil); **Yolanda de Nazareth, mother of Ana de Fátima Monteiro Athias**, and **Annik, mother of Carina France Araujo**, focolarine in Brasília; **Maria Cecília, sister of Luiza Arezzi**, focolarina in Florianópolis; **Manoel, father of Maysa Monteiro dos Santos**, focolarina in Rio de Janeiro, and **of Telma**, Volunteer in Brasília; **Nelson, father of Teresa Cristina Costa**, focolarina in Brasília; **Eliezer, brother of Elide Araújo**, focolarina at the Mariapolis Glória (Brazil); **Giovanni, brother of Fabrizio Caldiron**, focolarino in Rome; **Micifumi, father of Tessa Keiko Oto**, focolarina in Nagasaki (Ja[an]); **Giuseppina and Luigina, respectively mother and sister of Agnese Sega (Cari)**, focolarina in the Roman Mariapolis.

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