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# MARIAPOLI

Notiziario del movimento dei focolari

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*Hombre Mundo 2017*  
**United world  
under construction**

**The Mariapolises**  
Seeds of  
unity for  
our times

**Travels**  
Africa  
and her  
living stones

# From Jesus Forsaken to Mary

**As we approach the new Ideal year» which will be dedicated to Mary, we are presenting and excerpt from a talk given to the Bishops friends of the Focolare Movement, in 1987. In it Chiara reminds us that the call to be a presence of Mary on earth (the well-known episode of «I want to see Her re-lived in you») came in a moment of particular suffering and is intimately linked to the love for Jesus Forsaken**

«[To understand that Jesus wanted “to see her again” in us] was a moment in which God reaffirmed in our heart the conviction that our Movement was nothing but a mystical presence of Mary.

It was a period of trials even physical ones. I remember that I could live only if I didn't remove my gaze from Jesus Forsaken, from the wound of his abandonment. But after this conversation with Jesus I seemed to understand, with that understanding which comes from the Holy Spirit, that, in order to be like Mary, to be another Mary, I had to decisively go beyond the wound, I had to embrace the Abandoned One so that the Risen One, the new creature, would always shine in us. Only in this way would we be like Mary».

*Chiara Lubich*

Taken from: C. LUBICH, *Maria*, edited by Brendan Leahy and Judith Povilus, Città Nuova, Rome 2017, p. 58

Mariapolis Ginetta, may 1998.  
Chiara Lubich in the church  
of the Little Town.



## Towards the new «Ideal year» «Go and dry the tears»

**On three occasions quite «by chance» during the summer, Emmaus shared with different members of the Movement what she had most in her heart. Her conversations prepare us for the new stage that begins with the theme of the year 2017/2018: Mary**

### 16 July 2017. Giulianova in Abruzzo.

Throughout the Focolare Movement, the 16th of July is commemorated as that day – in 1949 – in which the mystical experience of Chiara, Foco and the first focolarine began, and was called «Paradise '49». But the 16th of July is also the birthday of Maria Voce, present president of the Movement. Since she was celebrating her 80th birthday, it was unthinkable that she would celebrate it in the privacy of her vacation in Abruzzo. Those who came to greet her didn't just come from the local community, but also from the surrounding areas.

In a brief talk – which immediately made the rounds all over the world through *social media* – Emmaus did not only thank

everyone for the birthday greetings but she in turn gave a gift to all those present and to all the members of the Movement by sharing what was in her soul at the end of this year dedicated to Jesus Forsaken. «In this last period», she confided to all those present, «it seemed almost as if He made it a point to make himself felt in a particular way. There were many encounters, also painful ones, and many occasions to say my yes to Him again». The explanation of this almost «urgent desire of Jesus Forsaken to make himself found, to make himself known» can be found in an expression of Chiara: «And it is in the encounter with you Jesus Forsaken, that we become another Mary».

### New publication Mary

Volume 9 of the series «The points of the spirituality» entitled *Mary* is now available. The choice of passages written by Chiara, the introduction and the notes were done by Brendan Leahy, bishop of Limerick (Ireland) and by Judith Povilus from the Sophia University Institute (Florence), both of whom have worked closely with Chiara Lubich for many years in the «Abbà School» Study Center.

Excellent connoisseurs of her thought, they are thus able to come up with a well-thought out collection of texts and through their precious introductions, guide us by the hand to meditate and «re-live»



Mary, just as she was contemplated by Chiara in various occasions and in different moments of her life. They accompany those who have been journeying for quite some time, or those who are just beginning to journey into the rich and complex spirituality of communion, spirituality of unity.

«The theme of Mary in the spiritual doctrine of Chiara Lubich is rich and variegated. It is open to many ulterior deepening and is of great relevance today», they wrote in the introduction. And using the words of the great French philosopher Jean Guitton, they affirmed: «In the XXI century Christians will understand Mary within the Trinity ... The XXI century will be the century of Mary».

*prepared by Florence Gillet*



Giulianova, 16 luglio

«I understood then», continued Emmaus, that «since we are beginning the year which we would like to dedicate to Mary, He had to prepare us so that we would be able to be “another Mary”. And this – she underlined with very strong words – is not a crazy thing to do, but the will of God for whoever belongs to the Work of Mary and above all for the entire Movement inasmuch as the statutes requires it «to be a continuation of Mary here on earth».

### 7 august, 2017. Verona.

What does it mean to «to be Mary» for the people of the Movement? Emmaus explained it during a brief stopover in Verona, where she went because she had received as a birthday gift a ticket for the opera *Aida* of Giuseppe Verdi to be performed at the Arena. In a spontaneous meeting with the local community, which included also many others, Emmaus underlined that «to be Mary» means to be at the service of the Church and of humanity.

Rocca di Papa, 11 agosto



Just as one day Jesus made Chiara understand that He wanted «to see» his Mother again in her, so Chiara today also tells the Movement: «I want to see Her again in you». And this – Emmaus said in Verona – means that «we must be an active Mary, a Mary who moves and goes out to meet the needs of the Church and of humanity». It means «to go and dry the tears, to console, to go and welcome those who have nowhere to go».

### 11 august, 2017. Feastday of St. Claire of Assisi. Rocca di Papa.

Another dimension of «being Mary» was shared by Emmaus on August 11 in her greeting during the celebration of the feast of St. Claire of Assisi held in the garden of the



Verona, 6 agosto

Center of the Movement, with the festive participation of the Focolare community of Lazio and the Roman Mariapolis. To «be Mary today», we must live the Word above all - Emmaus affirmed, to incarnate the Word in the same way «that it became flesh in the body of Mary; that the Gospel may truly become our life and that you may not only know it but live it and also to share it, to make a gift of it to the others. Having found such a treasure and keeping it only for ourselves would really be egoistic».<sup>1</sup>

Joachim Schwind

<sup>1</sup> In *Mariapoli online* you may find the videos of the talks of Emmaus on July 16 and August 11 with the translations of the text in 6 languages.



Meeting of the Delegates  
of the Movement 2017

# Where are we now Where are we going

**This year in Castelgandolfo, at the meeting from september 16 to 30, there will be 22 Zones and 4 Little Towns<sup>1</sup> represented with the presence of the Delegates of the Zone and the General Council. We spoke to Antonella Liguori and Ray Asprer from the Preparatory Commission<sup>2</sup>**

## How were you able to work in this Commission that is so varied and above all with members that are physically far from each other?

It was an intense and creative exchange, brought ahead with passion, also through video conference calls by *webex*. A journey together that helped us to put aside our own needs so as to open up to each other reciprocally, the Zone and Center, the zones of the others and the entire Movement. This brought us to a vision of the world as if it were just one Zone.

Questions emerged that reflect the path that the Movement has taken: «how to have a greater influence or impact», «guidelines for the new set-up», «the need for specialization in the Dialogues in a world gripped by conflicts, divisions and rifts», «the need

to really get to know the Movement in the world», «choosing topics or themes according to present day needs»... This is how we were able to define the objectives, topics, characteristics of the two-week programme to which we have given the title which also expresses the journey: «Where are we now. Where are we going».

## What are the objectives and the programme?

To acquire a global vision of the Movement today, and at the same time to better prepare ourselves to face the new challenges of the world. There is much anticipation for this experience of universality that will widen our vision of «That all may be one». This unitarian vision will then allow us to define the priorities of action which will be deepened, enriched and adapted

1 In seguito al nuovo assetto in corso nel Movimento dei Focolari, le zone attuali sono: 6 in Asia, 1 in Oceania, 5 in America Latina, 1 in Nord America, 4 in Africa, 1 in Medio Oriente, 4 in Europa inclusa l'Italia. Saranno presenti anche le Cittadelle internazionali - Mariapoli Renata di Loppiano, e Mariapoli Foco di Montet, con la Mariapoli Lia di O'Higgins e la Mariapoli Pace di Tagaytay - in quanto cittadelle Zona.

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

in the various Zones according to their own specificities.

During the **first week** the program will focus on «Where are we now», through the daily sharing of experiences from the Zones. The work done at the Center in these three years starting from the Assembly will also be presented; a look at the half-way mark, so as to continue the journey.

During the **second week** the contents that have emerged so far will converge into some themes: the announcement (proclamation), the incarnation, the dialogues, formation and accompaniment, the journey towards «That all may be one». In this way we will be able to focus on «Where are we going» in order to understand the direction to take, the next step to make and in order to identify some «strategic» points: not just for the fruits, but for the «prophecy» that they recall. So: Assisi, Istanbul, Jerusalem, peripheries, frontiers, emblems of conflicts. Some realities will also be highlighted such as the New Humanity NGO, that has as its aim «to make an impact» in international institutional ambits which are already working at the service of the universal human family.

**This year we have seen «prophetic» events, especially in ecumenical Dialogue, but not only.**

In fact among the five themes chosen, one is dedicated entirely to the Dialogues. There are clear signs that point to them as the privileged pathways for the Movement. There will be a deepening of them in order to highlight, starting from what Pope Francis said, the indications that Chiara has given during the time of foundation. In the meetings with the Big Zones we will be able to understand what to aim for locally as each one's specific field of action. With regards to the events during the year – from the «declaration of Ottmaring», to the ecumenical Week, to the meeting with Pope Francis

at Pentecost... – a special attention will be given to ecumenical dialogue.

**How should we look at and interpret the «new set-up» today, of which we are still feeling the aftershocks but of which we are now also beginning to see the fruits?**

The «new set-up» means being open, having a wider vision. From some experiences of focolarini of the early times we have seen that, even before trips outside Italy were done, Chiara had already «distributed» to each one a «small piece» of the world: to pray for it, to take an interest in it, to feel that it belongs to you. This helps us to understand the journey that the Movement is undertaking with regards to the «new set-up», in continuity with forward momentum towards «That all may be one» of the early times of the Ideal. The Zones are in different stages of this process. Each of them are moving according to their specific characteristics, but it is a big help to get to know the steps that the others have already made, while remaining free from any set patterns or schemes.

**«Why aren't we making a greater impact»? How much have these words of Emmaus influenced the programme?**

This appeal of Emmaus runs beneath the planning and organization of the meeting and it gave rise to the fundamental question of «Where are we now?» in the Movement today, guiding also the «Where are we going». It asks the question: are we doing what we should be doing so that the Charism of unity “serves” with its specific contribution, the life of the Church and the unity of the human family.

*prepared by the editorial board*

In Mariapoli online  
[www.focolare.org/notiziariomariapoli](http://www.focolare.org/notiziariomariapoli)  
starting from september16 you will find  
news about the meeting

# Collegiality lived Freshness, prophecy and incarnation

## The summer appointment of 62 Bishops friends of the Movement

Every summer the Bishops who are more deeply committed to the life of the charism of unity, agree to meet for a few days in order to live together as brothers, to share sufferings and joys, to rest, but also to deepen the life of the Ideal and the developments of the Movement, so as to depart with a new light and a renewed enthusiasm to serve the Church and their people.



This year we were welcomed at the Salesian House in Muzzano near Biella in Northern Italy not far from the Alps, from July 25 to 30. We didn't expect to see various persons from the local community of the Movement and of the zonetta there to welcome us together with the members of the Salesian Family. They found all the ways to decorate the various corners of the Institute bringing from their homes plants, paintings and even chairs and small divans: our brothers and sisters who surrounded us with their love also throughout our stay there. We were touched by their generosity and gentleness, their giving and their joy.



This time we were 62, coming from 26 nations. What were the novelties and characteristics of this year? Let's try to summarize them briefly.

Five of us arrived two days before, in order to prepare the meeting together, and so we brought ahead those days truly as «one body».

Completing a journey that can be described as «assembly-like» which we began two years ago, in the first part of the meeting we asked ourselves, both in plenary and also by language groups, how we were able to make use of the instruments that the Movement offers. What emerged were the





many fruits that we were not fully aware of, interesting developments in our local Churches that were important to share among ourselves, so as to be able to help each other and encourage one another.

Emmaus Voce was present for two full days and Jesús Morán stayed even longer. They expressed their great joy for what emerged during our moments of communion. As they shared with us the life of the Movement today, the President and the Co-president underlined the need to place the charism of unity even more at the service of the Church and society, of «incarnating» the Ideal even more, and to do this precisely in this year wherein the whole Movement will deepen the reality of Mary who, was the first and foremost who lived the incarnation.

Emmaus, in her theme, spoke to us about Mary and of the call of the Movement to be – as our Statutes say – «a presence and almost a continuation» of her. What does this mean and how can we realize this? We will discover it during this year.

Jesús underlined the new step that we can take together with the whole Movement: there is much life generated by the Ideal in the Church, but the time has come to bring out a real and true «pastoral culture» that can be shared by many others.

In this context it seemed meaningful to us the example given by Card. Miloslav Vlk

who left for Heaven last March. With much courage he was able to merge the Ideallife and the life of the Church, with noteworthy fruits for the archdiocese of Prague and the entire Czech republic, that was very evident during his funeral.

Recalling some key moments in the history of the Bishops friends of the Movement was very enlightening. We discovered three major guidelines, present since the beginning: the life of a family and of unity among the Bishops; the strengthening of episcopal collegiality and the renewal of the diocese; a specific contribution of the Bishops to the Dialogues.

A concrete occasion for dialogue took place during our visit to the monastic Community of Bose and the meeting with Enzo Bianchi, its founder. With him we deepened various aspects of the great change that the Church is undergoing to answer more fully to the cultural and social situation of today.

In the midst of all this, we were also able to rest, encouraged by the beautiful park in front of the house and by some tours. But without a doubt, the one thing that regenerated us was the experience of a bit of that freshness and prophecy that started this life among the Bishops almost 40 years ago.

*Francis Xavier card. Kriengsak Kovithavanij*



# Hombre-Mundo Construction Site

## Start with a smile

This second edition of the **Hombre-Mundo Construction Site** after the one held in Argentina in 2014, was made up of 50 **Construction Sites** setup only in the month of July in many cities of eastern Europe and in Italy, but also in Central and South America, in the Middle East and one in Africa



On the shelf above the bedside table in my room there is a small, old and wrinkled book that I am not sure who it belongs to. I don't even know how it ended up there and I don't remember exactly when I began to open it and read it. Common sense should have told me to buy the newer and latest edition since everytime I would pick up this 1974 copy I would have to put in order the detached pages. But I won't buy a new edition because this book has been underlined, it was lived, it was held by the hands of people who up to today want to live what is written in it. Maybe it is precisely by thinking about this people I am helped to read it well.

During the return trip from the Hombre-Mundo Construction Site of the Mariapolis Fiore in Poland, I could not stop thinking of an action/commitment that the



Croazia



Albania

90 teens decided to put as the first point of the Manifesto on communication: *Start with a smile.*

Its seems like the simplest and the most taken for granted act in the world, and maybe it is in a certain sense, but instead for others it in fact isn't. In the digital age of «virtual risks», of the *social network*, of rapid, instantaneous and functional communication, there are teens 13-17 years old who have committed themselves to begin communication with the most ancient and yet the newest gesture in the world: a smile.

Messico





How many smiles have changed our life and will continue to change it?! Smiles that are not common and which are joyfully contagious.

I open the door of my house, I put down my suitcase and run to pick up the book. I open it delicately and ... I remember what is written at the bottom of page 27 and I read:

«Joy, this is the “Gen uniform”: that unmistakable smile that is not like human mirth and exhilaration but a joy that blossoms from a root: love».

2017 is the year of the Hombre-Mundo Construction Site, an experience that as affirmed by the teen participants, generates first of all a great joy.

Since 1974 more than forty years have passed and yet the book *Conversations with the Gen* by Chiara Lubich is still relevant. Its is not just the book which is so, rather the book is relevant because of the Charism, the Ideal of unity.

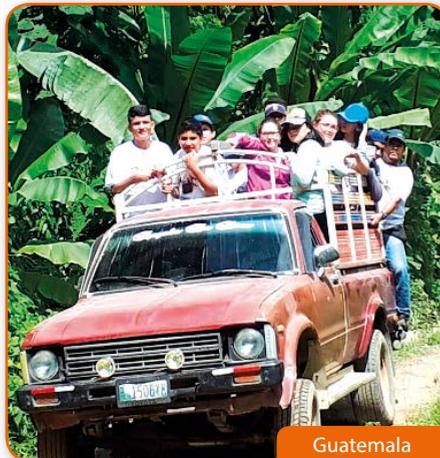
This second edition of the Hombre-Mundo Construcion Site, after the one in Argentina in 2014, was made up of 50 Construction Sites setup only in the month of July in many cities of eastern Europe and in Italy, but also in Central and South America, in the Middle East and one in Africa. It was a real mobilization of several thousands of teens from 49 nations (maybe even more).

The theme chosen was communication with the title *Head-Hands-Heart*, that was used in all the Construction Sites of the Teens for Unity in the world, both internationally and

locally. Three dynamic “Hs” that launched the teenagers beyond the barriers of diversity, not to avoid conflict but «to develop a communion of differences» as Pope Francis wrote in the *Evangelii Gaudium*, because«unity is superior to conflict».

The difficulties were not lacking, especially during the two weeks of the international Construction Sites, whether due to organizational structures or because it was the first time that an event of this kind was held, as well as for the teens who found themselves catapulted into a variety of cultures, languages and experiences of their peers from other Countries. Moreover the experience of the World-Person as Chiara had shed light on and in the way that

whoever lived some fragment of it could share, is not a time of certainties and confirmations, often it is an entirely different thing. It is not easy to find an immediate relationship with someone who is different. It is done «with the humility of someone who is always willing to learn», just as Chiara



Guatemala

had written. So the first week was a time of becoming nothing, zero, that emptiness to be found within oneself so as to start welcoming those who were arriving from here and there.

The extraordinary flexibility that the teens of that age group exhibit, quickly created the premise in rder to start this experience of dialogue, a formation to fraternity that took place when we began to build the programme together, plauing, dancing, reflecting, discussing our points of view, and finding the bridge that links them. The Construction Site, once started cannot be stopped, it is in continuous evolution, there was an incessant fermentation during the intense days with the experts who came to share a talk and to interact with



Angola



Lituania

the teens, the games and the sharings with the «big brothers» the gen2 and the point of reference with more adults with the temporary focolares, the assistants of the Zones, the Volunteers and the families involved.

In this sense, it seems to us that the experience of the Hombremundo Construction Site is formative not only for the Teens for unity but for the whole community, because in order to understand who is the World-Person, maybe before everything else it is necessary to grow in our understanding of the family to which he/she belongs, in our case it is the family of the Work of Mary.

During the second week, in the various Countries, the teens went out to do different ecological actions, cleaning up and even restoration projects but above all they went to personally meet immigrants, the homeless, orphans, the sick, the disabled, ethnic groups, gypsies... and to bring them a wave of joy and of hope. There were very strong experiences both for the teens and also for the people they met, with moving stories such as what happened inŠkofja Loka, in Slovenia, where the teens from Turin and those living there went to a park to meet some homeless people and they ended up celebrating the fiftieth birthday of one of them with improvised songs and dances. «This person shared to us his life story and he wanted each one

of us to sign a card for him. It was a touching, sacred moment», the teens wrote.

We could share many other experiences, such as the friendship that began among the Catholics and Orthodox in Serbia, or the clean-up action along the banks of the Danube River in Bratislava, where a group of German and Slovak teens gathered 600 kilos of garbage.

In the launching of the next Hombremundo Construction Site in 2020 in Kenya, there was a lot of enthusiasm in immediately saying: «Beautiful! See you there!».

I couldn't help but smile because for the teens Kenya seems to be just around the corner. And rightly so: when you are ready for everything even to make an experience that could turn your life upside-down, distance is relatively important.

And so if we can smile then there is nothing to worry about. The most beautiful things start from there.

*Start with a smile.*

*Andrea Cardinali*



Polonia

# The Gen2 World

## The courage of being radical

During these months all over the world, there are congresses, weekends, day meetings, camps organized by the Gen2 together with many youth. Steps in the journey towards the next Genfest. In Montet (Switzerland) an international School entitled «On earth as in Heaven». It was an occasion to reflect on some topics presented at the General Assembly of the Movement in 2014.

Emmaus Voce and Jesús Morán closely followed their activities, trusting them, encouraging them to «contaminate» many other youth with the Ideal of unity by being authentic just as Chiara wants them to be from the very beginning

### «Come in Cielo così in terra»

A Montet una scuola per «bianco» e assistenti Gen2

Lasting for 10 days (10-19 august), 100 participants, 30 nations represented. These are the numbers of the meeting for the gen «white» and gen2 assistants that was held in the Swiss little town (Montet) in answer to the gen2 document presented at the last Assembly of 2014, which contains our desire to go more in depth. The focus of the course this year is the aspect of the Green, namely all those things regarding physical life, health, sports, food, nature, etc. as seen also in their spiritual dimension. Entitled: «On earth as it is in Heaven», it was inspired by the many themes on *Paradise '49* contained in the programme.



Unable to be present physically, Emmaus and Jesús asked the central delegates Friederike Koller and Ángel Bartol to represent them, together with the Councilors of the Green and the Indigo.

Emmaus, linked by *skype* for a moment of intense dialogue, encouraged us to aim high without being afraid of difficulties.

Her invitation to live the Gospel radically and to share it was very strong because «our objective is to build a united world» (see box).

Jesús, also linked-up with us, explained the «clarian» person: a Christian who, starting from the charisma of unity, makes an experience of encountering Jesus who penetrates his or her conscience intimately transforming it. And this is done through six pillars: a



discovery (God-Love); a dynamics (Jesus in the midst); a logo (the Word); a secret (Jesus Forsaken); a dream («That all may be one»); a figure or model (Mary).

Among the speakers, the presences of archbishop Vincenzo Zani, secretary of the Vatican Congregation for Catholic education, and of Vincenzo Buonomo, professor of international law, were quite important and significant. Mons. Zani invited us to go towards the other according to the experience and with the light of the Ideal, which means the total giving of oneself and as such, brings with it a generative principle of God in the world through creating relationships; he also underlined the importance of formation in social topics, the «ability to be moved» like



Jesus in front of the crowds, and to have the courage to propose new ways for the development of peoples.

On the evening of August 17, we received the news about the terrorist act in Barcelona. We all went to the chapel to pray for the victims and their families, and to ask that the terrorists too may make a true experience of God and change their mentality. It was a special moment wherein we experienced that Jesus Forsaken widens our hearts towards humanity and urges us on towards «That all may be one».

We reached the highest point of our meeting with the extraordinarily special presence of Palmira Frizzera, one of the first companions of Chiara. With her sense of humour and the freshness of her 90 years, she shared with us her experience with Chiara in «Paradise '49». Among the many precious points she shared, what



## Emmaus to Gen

During the *skype* link-up on August 11, Emmaus shared what Chiara said one day: young people of the world unite! «An appeal which says: the only way to change the world – and this is what the young people want to do – is to have such power that is unstoppable in front of anything, a power that only God can give, a God present in history, a God who loves humanity, a God who wants to change things over and beyond all the threats of war around. A God who can move goods to bring about equality among the rich and the poor, a God who can govern nations, a God who can inspire leaders to create laws that are truly for the common good».

«Gen –Emmaus continued – go out to meet the young people of the whole world without stopping in front of any difference: of culture, race, age, skin colour, social strata, health, sickness.

God needed a woman so that the Word could become a person and so He asked the help of Mary. And Mary, with her “yes”, granted this to Him.

Mary today needs men and women like her because she wants to come back to the world today so as to give Jesus to humanity. This could be you, we can be ourselves if we commit to living the Gospel, to saying that “yes” that Mary said in every moment of her life, so as to become Jesus and to be His presence in humanity».



foto di gruppo con Palmira Frizzera

Blaumeiser of the Abbà School who presented to us a passage contained in *Paradiso* '49: «Resurrection of Rome», considered as the «*magna carta* of the cultural and social revolution» of the

emerged was the supremacy of reciprocal love, which she called the «science of sciences».

There were eight workshops and various working groups, with the presence of experts from various vocations of the Movement, on the various themes of the Green, with the objective of drawing out, with the light of Jesus in the midst, general tracks that can serve as pathways of reflection for the whole gen movement and the entire Work of Mary. The title of the workshop: «Unstoppable generation – zoom in on the Green». Starting from concrete situations, we tackled some of the problems we face, such as homosexuality and the various addictions, in relation to the aspect of the Green. The method or approach was not always easy, especially because of the variety of cultures and the diversity of our experiences. The deal-breaker was the exercise of listening to one another and putting aside one's own convictions. This dynamics allowed the essence of each topic to emerge, that truth which everyone could accept because it was perceived as a manifestation of the Teacher who was present in our midst. A method that enriched both the first and the second generation, both fully committed to this exercise.

For the conclusion of the course, we again had a *skype* link-up with Jesús Morán who gave us some advice on how to extend the work done on a continental level and with the assistance of local experts. He encouraged us to live the gen vocation. «I trust you completely», he assured us.

Another jewel in the crown was the contribution of Fr. Hubertus

Charism, which gave us a glimpse of the route or pathway towards the birth of the new man and the new culture.

These days, the work done, were an «experiment» in which we walked together, searching not only for answers, but above all asking the right questions. Everyone expressed the desire to repeat this work in the Zones, choosing those topics that are more relevant locally.

One of the precious instruments of the collective spirituality could not be missing: the moment of truth is each gen Unit. Each one brought with him or her, in different tonalities, the awareness of being a reflection of the light that God had given to Chiara; the light that the second generation is called to pass on to the world, like another «little-Chiara».

Noemi Sanchez

## Genfest 2018 in Asia, the continent of the youth

It began with the conviction of wanting to rewrite a new geography that aims at tearing down limits and personal and planetary fences.

The march of the Youth of the Focolare towards the eleventh edition of the Genfest that will be held from July 6 to 8, 2018 in Manila (Philippines) at the World Trade Center, Metro Manila, while the *workshops* will be held at the De La Salle University. Title of the event: «Beyond all borders». This



# Back to the future

## An international Summer School for the younger Gen2

«Go back to the roots in order to design the future». This was the *leitmotif*, expressed in the title, of the international summer school of two weeks held last July in Loppiano for around forty boys and girls from 16 Countries, many of whom have just recently become gen2 after their experience with the gen3. Among them were four Algerian Muslims and a numerous group from China.

The programme offered moments of deepening with the professors of the Sophia University Institute, work and play activities, together with moments dedicated to the spirituality. The exchange of experiences among the gen girls and boys belonging to the permanent school and the gen centers, generated a surprisingly profound communion.

A Brazilian gen boy, who was still uncertain about his choice, decided to live the Gospel. An Italian gen girl shared her joy of being a gen,

an instrument of love for the others. One girl from Myanmar, discovering the power of the Rainbow Revolution, felt that she is now ready to «bear witness to Jesus in the midst with her life and her words». The Muslim gen girls, declared that «they always felt comfortable, very close to God because they had found Him in each of the participants». «I felt that it is important – a gen boy confided – to be informed about what is happening around me in the world and to ask myself everyday: what can I do to bring ahead the united world?».

Paola Pepe, Jonathan Michelon



appointment hopes to be, as Chiara Lubich desired, «a waterfall of God»; a point of arrival and of departure for all the young people of the world according to the United World Project that was born six years ago at the Genfest of Budapest.

«We want to show the world – Kiara Cariaso of the Philippines, member of the organizing team said – the network of projects, *campus*, actions of solidarity, support for legality that thousands of young people are bringing ahead. We want to re-affirm our “NO” to war and the weapons race, but also a no to solitude, abandonment and superficial relationships».

«It will be a milestone in the journey towards a united world – explained Maria

Guaita and Marco De Salvo from the central secretariat of the Yoth for a United World – to share the initiatives for peace and unity that already ongoing and also in order to encourage them. Many young people who will participate, in fact, live in war-torn and conflict-ridden territories, or in situations of social hardship».

«We act on different fronts: we go to the peripheries, but we are also involved in formation, sports, solidarity – explained Rafael Tronquini, Brazilian member of the Genfest team, who is in Manila for already five month; we want to be there where we see the needs and hear the cries for help of our people»



# To grow with the children The hidden treasure in Trent

With the gen4 in Cadine from June 15 to 18.  
When the community forms

In more than 200 coming from a France, Lebanon, Lithuania, Italy and Slovenia, the gen4 boys and girls made a profound experience of encounter with the Ideal by visiting the places where Chiara lived.

With the title: «The hidden treasure in Trent», the ultimate discovery was that there was not just one treasure but many: the Gospel, the Ideal of Chiara, the places where she understood this precisely through living the Gospel, the Commandment of reciprocal love and a big family all over the world that lives the Ideal that began in Trent. And above all, Jesus, the greatest treasure!

It was very beautiful. I want to go also tomorrow... please will you give me this big gift and allow me to go?» (A nine-year old girl who was supposed to come only on Friday asked this from her father). «I want to do it again from the beginning!» (a five-year old boy, when he arrived home after getting off the bus).



Since the first day the gen4 started to make many acts of love for Jesus, and so, during the four days, the beautiful jewel box that was placed in the chapel in front of Jesus in the Eucharist slowly began to fill up with precious colored stones. There were many moments, all together or in small groups, to share how these acts of love were done.

The community of Trento prepared for this meeting several months ahead. During the tours around the city the gen3, Teens for Unity and the adults were involved, as well as in the skits on some episodes in the life of Chiara done in the most significant and meaningful places (piazza Cappuccini, Goccia d'Oro, the Androne with the episode of the size 42 shoes, the bomb shelter...). Many people made themselves available as «guardian angels» and to help in the logistics, in



the transportation and many others. Both the focolarine of Cadine as well as the members of «Trento Ideale Accoglie» (Ideal Trent Welcomes You) actively participated in the preparation of the programme. Even the Mayor and the Bishop of Trent were actively participating in the programme, welcoming a group of gen4 in their offices! Simple and joyous moments of reciprocal exchange.

This first International Congress for gen4 girls and boys in Trent was also open to the families of Trent and their children.

The decision to do this came from the desire to answer to the actual challenges being faced such as the decrease in the number of assistants as well as the change in family lifestyle. In fact, for some years now, the families of the ZOnetta have been working together with the assistants thus sup-



porting the living together of the children in the family. One of the fruits was this congress that involved the community and welcomed gen4 from the most varied origins.

These challenges are not only of the Trentine region. At the gen4 centers we continuously receive news about congresses and activities done for the young children everywhere in response to the growing need to better form those who would like to work for the accompaniment of the gen4. In fact, there are many difficulties, that are diverse and challenging, which the assistants encounter in their experience with children and teens. Social grievances (poverty, violence...), family problems (separations, deaths), personal problems (illness, psychological and emotional

fragility...), that can hinder human and spiritual growth. All this in a world that is always more globalized and which brings with it new phenomena such as multiculturalism, inter-religiosity, advanced forms of technology, etc.

## Educate oneself in order to educate others

It is for these challenges that the gen4 and gen3 centers and the Teens for Unity have started the «EDUxEDU project - Educate oneself in order to educate others» - a course of formation for those involved in the formation of children of the Focolare Movement. After its launching in the



three little towns in Brazil, San Paolo, Recife and Belém last January, wherein more than 500 people participated such as assistants, animators, teachers, catechists and parents, the project seems now to be unstoppable. In

the following months it was done in Padua (Italy) and in Vienna (Austria), with two days of formation on the promotion of pro-social abilities and the educative value of play, and then onwards to Montet (Switzerland) where the first extended school of formation was held with the participation of focolarini and focolarine and the gen2 girls and boys of the schools of formation, around thirty gen4 and gen3 assistants from different Zones and others from the Little Town Foco.

Each stage was different and special and in each occasion we saw the importance of the contribution of each assistant in accompanying the children and teens in their spiritual and human growth. By following this path we are moving towards what Chiara had expressed: on the importance of having the local communities form the children and teens and not just the individual assistants (1966) and that we must organize a systematic formation of the assistants (1983 and 1984).

We are launching ourselves to face these challenges with great enthusiasm!

*Maria Helena (Milene) Benjamin, Pep Cánoves*

# Little towns Looking at Loppiano today

**What is the present situation of the first Little City? Can we say that the dream of Chiara – a city with houses and factories, where the life is totally imbued by the Gospel – is already a reality? With Emmaus Voce and Jesús Morán to continue the journey**



«What we saw this time is very beautiful, everything has grown. (...) Everything that you did during this period has borne the fruit of a greater unity among everyone. Are we satisfied? We are not satisfied because we have started a process that will bring always new surprises. (...) I think that this will encourage us to constantly do better, but above all to have more trust in the love of God that is bringing ahead everything. And since we trust in the love of God, then we can also trust one another».

This is the balance sheet of Emmaus, at the conclusion of her recent visit to Loppiano last June 13 to 18. Jesús Moran and some members of the Center of the Movement were also with her.

Two years after her last visit, Emmaus wanted to visit the latest realities that are in the development phase or in the process of changing, such as the Lionello Industrial Park, Sophia, the School

for the Gen Girls and the Gen 4 House, which was inaugurated by her after its recent renovation.

Many processes were started, like the one regarding governance of the Little City, where the participation and the involvement of the citizens is a central point. Now the process of studying the sustainability of Loppiano has begun with the setting-up of an ad hoc committee.



Emmaus and Jesús with Joxepi Zubillaga and Stefano Fontolan, the former delegates and on the right Daniele Casprini,

At 52 years after its foundation, the Little City has around a thousand inhabitants from around 60 Countries and in 2016 it welcomed more than 35,000 visitors. Every year thousands of young people come from every part of the world, from every faith and culture, just like what happened last May 1; it is becoming a spiritual reference point also for communities or ecclesial movements who choose this place for their meetings. The last group who came was the 150 friends of «The Sun», a successful and famous Christian band, which organized three days of going in depth for the members of their own fan club in Loppiano, requesting also the help of the Little City for the spiritual contents of the programme.

«The Movement is ours», Emmaus reiterated: «... and Loppiano is the first permanent Mariapolis, the first reality where one can experience a life with a stable presence of Jesus in the midst (...), in all aspects».



«One doesn't come to Loppiano to meet people from all over the world or to get to know different cultures – a recent visitor commented – you can already find these things everywhere in our globalized cities. One comes here for the quality of the relationships. This place is proof that it is possible to build a society governed by mutual love».

«Life must come before all other structures», Jesús Moran confirmed.

In the past 15 years Loppiano developed by giving a home to the different concretizations of the Charism of unity in the spiritual, economic and cultural fields: in 2004 the Theotokos Shrine was completed with the adjacent auditorium, in 2006 it was the turn of the Lionello Bonfanti Industrial Park for the Economy of



which lies at the origin of Sophia: «The project is immense, while its realization is still microscopic. It will not be realized in a moment, but in time. What is important is to do what we can to accelerate this process».

Emmaus also met the youth of Loppiano: and intense and joyful meeting with the schools of the focolarini, and the Gen of the Gen Schools – around forty of them coming from 20 Countries, who stay in Loppiano for 6 months to a year. She entrusted to them the proclamation of the heart of the charism of the Focolare Movement: «Be courageous in proclaiming. Also in view of the Genfest: don't say only the things that everyone likes to hear. The youth must see that there is a current of good that is rooted in God-Love who wants to save the world».

In answer to one of the questions on the need for a greater radicalness of life, Jesús affirmed: «We must re-acquire the push to put Jesus in the midst». And Emmaus: «Help us to be radical by showing us your radicalness without falling into the trap of judging others». With regards to the relationship among generations: «These relationships can grow. We are on a journey and we must do this more together, instead of sector-based». Jesús concluded: «You gen are our consultants, and if it were up to us, we would bring you all to the Center of the Movement!».

At the conclusion of these intense days Emmaus and Jesús presented to all the citizens the new delegates, Donatella Donato Di Paola and Franco Galli, who with Daniele Casprini will be the persons co-responsible for Loppiano.

*Stefania Tanesini*



Donatella Donato Di Paola and Franco Galli, the new delegates of Loppiano

Communion and in 2008 the Sophia University Institute was born and will be celebrating its first 10 years next October.

In Sophia, on June 16, the president of the Focolare Movement met the students and professors. Gabriella, is a 24-year old Italian, who did not know anything about the Movement when she first entered Sophia. She is a first-year student of Trinitarian Ontology, and she shared briefly her experience being at the SU: «wound and style», she explained: «The world of today demands from us knowledge, competence, ability. Sophia adds to this a style, the face of humanity, an element that the world today no longer knows how to decline. I think that the mission of Sophia today is to meet this world, to wound it, illuminate it and finally to give it a new style of listening with the heart, the concreteness of actions and gestures of a daily revolution». Emmaus recalled the «prophecy»

# To be Church-communion

The summer Course 2017 for consecrated women was held in the Mariapolis Renata



From august 7 to 12 Loppiano was decked with the style and the colours of a group of consecrated women belonging to 16 Institutes and Congregations for a summer Course of spiritual exercises. Aside from Italy, the participants came from Thailand, the Philippines, India, Mexico, Burundi, Cameroun, Congo, Brazil, Egypt, Switzerland. the profound experience of fraternity lived gave a certain beauty to the diversity of cultures, nationalities, religious formation and age group.

Sessions of spiritual deepening; meetings with the citizens of Loppiano for a first-hand experience of the little city; moments of dialogue; liturgy of the hours; Eucharistic adoration; personal reflection and liturgy of reconciliation. This was the atmosphere in which the theme «Jesus Forsaken key to unity» and the experience of Chiara on the «outfits of Jesus Forsaken» was deepened. The reality of the different Charism and the life of the Founders were illuminated in such a way that the value of the vision of Chiara who invites us to «look at all the flowers» so as to be «Church-communion» was discovered.

*sr. Tiziana Longhitano sfp*

60 Religious men of the *Focolare* Movement from five continents, held their summer meeting from august 2 to 10, in the region of Verona. The programme consisted of the deepening of the pages of light of '49 and the experiences for a more effective «going out» of the Movement of Men Religious. Also present for a few days with them was Morán, Gloria Duarte and Tim King, counsilors for the aspect of Irradiation.

## New publications

# A luminous encounter

## The story of Fr. Novo



Chiara Lubich herself, at the end of the '90s, asked Fr. Novo to write his story, just as she has asked the other witnesses of the early times of the Movement to do so. It was in answer to this request that Fr. Giuseppe Andrea Balbo immersed himself in this work, making use of Fr. Novo's diary, but above all by looking back at the events of his life up to 1956: his childhood, the call to the Franciscan life, his passion for nature, the encounter with the Ideal, with Chiara, his experience in the Holy Land. And still more: the initial trials of the Movement and the personal trials of Chiara herself.

What shines through in this autobiography, is the concern of the author to be objective, but what comes out more strongly is the desire to bear witness from his own point of view: to the changes in his own soul and in the turning point in his life with the encounters that he called providential.

And so, for those who could be looking for definite historical data in these pages, due to the lack of a critical apparatus, must bear the burden of research and verification. The editor of this publication chose to present a «lean» text that slowly reveals the story of a religious, once two Charisms meet and illuminate each other reciprocally. Fr. Novo, in the furrow traced by St. Francis, understood in the light of the Gospel explained by the charism of Chiara, how to contribute to «repair», that is to say, reform, himself and the House of the Lord.

*Fr. Salvo D'Orto, omi*



## Sophia Latin America and the Caribbeans Guarantee of continuity

In the Little town El Diamante the annual Meeting for professors of the Sophia University Institute *ALC* and the fifth *Summer School*

With the slogan «The charism of unity: its understanding made culture» the annual Meeting for professors of Aophia Latin America and the Caribbeans (Sophia *ALC*) was held from June 23 to 25, in the Little town El diamante of Mexico. There were 60 participants, of diverse disciplines and COuntries, especially from Mesoamerica.

The four lessons of Piero Coda on the event of '49 introduced in a Trinitarian light and dynamics, how to review the different disciplines

Immediatel after, the fifth edition of the Escuela de Verano (Summer School) of Sophia was held (after three in the Mariapolis Lia of Argentina, and one in the Mariapolis Ginetta of Brazil), with 42 participants, many of whom already graduates and everyone with a profound social awareness. The edition was well contextualized with regards to language and methodologies, showing that it was capable of answering the challenges that Sophia *ALC* is called to face.

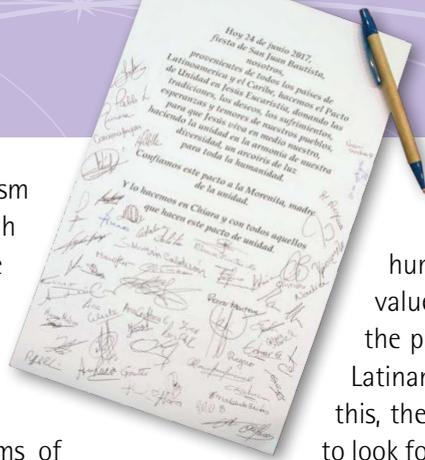


and interpret the historical journeys and the socio-cultural challenges of the Latin American countries in the perspective of the charism of unity. Other interventiona highlighted the wisdom of the ancestral Andine peoples and opened the way for a pluralistic-inclusive-intercultural reading of the culture of unity. With great solemnity, the Pact of unity was signed behind the image of the Virgin Mary of Guadalupe - mother and teacher of inculturation. This sealed the personal and communitarian «si» to the committment to incarnate and communicate the culture that is born from the Charism in these lands.

Developing the theme: «Cultures, relationships, dialogue. Contributions to universal fraternity from Latin America», complimentary glimpses on the situation were shared - past and present - that spoke of injustice, oppression, distrust, and together ongoing experiences, in various fields, that confirm the cultural



revolution that the Charism is bringing about through the light, answers, hope that it bears. The synthesis between thought and life was expressed also in the synthesis among the different forms of expression: music, images, contemplation, moments of interiority among us and with nature; the workshops allowed each one to penetrate important categories such as encounter, relationship, conflict, dialoguem reciprocity. The life of historical



Jesus incarnated in his culture evidenced even more the rich humanism that the Gospel has, with values that can be found as seed in the prehispanic culture. Aware that as Latinamericans we are the heirs of all this, the present day challenges bring us to look for, together, in wisdom, new pathways of incarnation.

The active participation of many young people who have studied at Sophia or who participated in the Escuelas de Verano (EdV), was the guarantee of continuity, of the present and the future of Sophia ALC. The days spent at the Mariapolia El Diamante

## Sophia in Loppiano academic developments

An important academic novelty 2017/2018



At 10 years from December 7, 2007 – date of the document establishing Sophia given by the Holy See, and handed to Chiara – an important novelty: three new Courses of Masteral Degrees (MD) have been started, which correspond to relative Doctorate (D) titles:

### 1. Political and Economic Sciences (taught in greater part in English) articulated in:

- *Economics and Management*, designed to read and interpret the present economic context and to work in the enterprises and organizations in the perspective of social, civil economics and of communion; an agreement with the European Univeristy of Rome is in force for the attainment of the joint degree.
- *Political Science*, qualified in the attention to the international scenario and to the participatory dimension of citizenship, within the framework of political reflection and action that is inspired by universal fraternity; the drafting of an agreement with the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Perugia for the attainment of a joint degree is ongoing.

### 2. Trinitarian Ontology articulated in:

- *Theology*, qualified in the deepening of Christian revelation in the light of the Trinity and in dialogue with philosophy, the sciences, cultures and religions; for those with a bachelor's degree, an agreement with the Faculty of Theology of the Italia Centrale (Florence) for the attainment of a joint degree is ongoing. There is the possibility of a course on dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church within the framework of the *Patriarch Athenagoras – Chiara Lubich Chair*, erected in synergy with the ecumenical Patriarchate of Costantinople.
- *Philosophy*, qualified in the deepening of a relational ontology in dialogue with theology, the

offered the occasion for the executive Council of Sophia Alc to meet. Thus they were able to define the guidelines for the drafting of a proposal of implementation of the project in a new stage, that will be presented during the coming meeting of the Delegates of the Movement.

*Sophia Alc*



sciences, cultures and religions; an agreement with the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Perugia for the attainment of a joint degree is ongoing.

There is the possibility of organizing studies and research courses on the relationship between *scientific epistemology and trinitarian ontology* within the framework of the *Piero Pasolini Chair*.

### 3. Culture of Unity articulated in:

- *Social, Economic and Political Sciences*
- *Trinitarian Ontology*
- *Humanities (pedagogy, psychology)*

**Doctoral courses** – for those who did not pursue a Masteral Degree in Sophia: the following are provided for:

- 30 credits aimed at acquiring the inter- and transdisciplinary platform of the *culture of unity*
- *the promotion of a constant interdisciplinary and intercultural* not only on an academic level but also at the level of life experience.

A project of D can be agreed upon with another University Institute, in the form of a dual or joint D.

With the frequency of a year, through a personalized course of study, it is possible to

acquire *Diploma in the Culture of Unity* with a signed certificate stating the courses attended. Seminars, internships, formation courses, with recognized credits are offered by

- *Sophia Global Studies* Center in the perspective of interdisciplinary dialogue in the ambits of politics, economics, philosophy, theology, sciences, interreligious.
- *Evangelii gaudium* Center for study and research in the fields of ecclesiology, pastoral and mission theology, spiritual theology and theology of charisms, for a Church that is in missionary «going out».

The *School of Post-doctorate* proposes and itinerary wherein researchers of various disciplines are inserted in the academic experience of the Institute in order to develop together with the professors research programmes connected to his or her academic proposal.

For any communication or further information you can contact the academic Secretary of the Institute: (055-9051509)

[segreteria.generale@iu-sophia.org](mailto:segreteria.generale@iu-sophia.org)

or visit the website [www.iu-sophia.org](http://www.iu-sophia.org).

# With the Interparliamentary Assembly on Orthodoxy A friendship with profound roots

The President of the Focolare Movement, Maria Voce, welcomed a delegation of Orthodox politicians of the IOA, coming from Greece, Russia and Eastern Europe of the IOA last June 25



The IAO is an inter-parliamentarian group born from the Conference on «Orthodoxy in the new European reality», that was held in the Greek parliament in 1993, with Greek, Russian and Eastern European participants. Today it has spread beyond the borders of Europe. The IOA considers the common belonging to the Orthodox faith as a «starting point of encounter for the participation in the building of the complex contemporary reality». It is for this reason that it is seeking collaborations with the Pan-African Parliament and with the parliamentarian Union of Organizations of Islamic Cooperation.



and all the executive members, Maria Voce spoke of the common desire to bear witness to the Gospel in action in politics and in dialogue with those of other cultures and faiths. She underlined how the friendship between the Focolare and the IOA has profound roots in the common work for unity of Athenagoras and Chiara Lubich and in the contacts with Bartholomew I, of the Patriarchate of Constantinople and with Alexij and, recently with Kirill, of the Patriarchate of Moscow.

The President of the IOA and the Secretary General expressed a deep satisfaction in this meeting with Maria Voce who was «very close to an extraordinary and exceptional person», Chiara, and having lived for ten years «in Istanbul she has had the occasion to get to know the Orthodoxy in its most genuine expression».

The IOA hopes to increase our collaboration, as was underlined by hon. Popov in Parliament during the public session of the Assembly. The Movement of politics for unity is already cooperating with them for a forthcoming initiative in Beirut and we hope that this can be a contribution for peace in the Middle east.

*Letizia De Torre*

Their leaders expressed a great desire to meet the President of the Focolare Movement, with whom they have had a long-standing fruitful relationship in Greece and with the international Center of the Movement of politics for unity.

Addressing the president of IOA, hon. Popov, the secretary general, hon. Michailidis,





## The instrument of translations «Rede Colibri»

At the Mariapolis Ginetta the first workshop for translators and proofreaders for the portuguese language (Hummingbird network)

In the ambit if translations, the requests for formation materials of the intern members of the Movement all over the world are constantly increasing both at the Center and in the Zones. There is an urgent need to unite the forces and form a network of collaborators. We have many competent people in our big «global village» and the means of communication help us to form a network.

The awareness grew – also underlined at the last Assembly – of how translations are so fundamental for the formation of the members of the Movement and for the spread of the Charism.

This first Workshop for the portuguese language was held from June 30 to July 1. The collaboration between the Zone of Brazil, the Translation Office at the Center and the extern members of the Abbà School in the fields of Linguistics, Philology, Literature and Translation was fundamental for its concretization.

We landed with a years preparatory work in hand; the invitation was addressed to the members of the Movement of every vocation. We were around fifty among whom were professional translators, and those who had a passion for translation, proofreaders, experts in linguistics, semiotics, languages and literature.

The meditations, rigorously in Italian,

the lessons given by the experts from Brazil, Italy, Portugal, the workshops: one for the revision of a translation already done and another for the translation of a text from Italian to Portuguese, all occasions to share knowledge and to form ourselves in view of the work that requires not only dedication, but also linguistic competence.

The impressions express a lot: «A very rich experience as a Movement. I learned not only new concepts regarding the Portuguese language, the technique of translating and the technology, but also the attention that must be given to the Charism when doing translation»; «We made an experience of contemplation, life and work. This is the lesson that God gave us: translation work must always follow this line»; «It opened my heart for this work at the service of the Movement and of humanity».

The result? Aside from teh desire to repeat this workshop in order to deepen other aspects of translation, we formed a netwrok called «Rede Colibri (Hummingbird Network)», a bird that lives in Latin America, small but swift (a quality not to be taken for granted in our translators) and which has the strength to fly over the world.

Let us end with an impression: «Jesus in the midst shone brightly in fornt of my eyes in this hall». This time we can truly say: Jesus in the midst, translator.

*Iracema Amaral*



# Economy of Communion

## Get involved

In some countries those working for the Economy of Communion made an appointment with each other in order to strengthen their network and the spread of the principles which inspired the Eoc. Interesting news from Germany, the Usa, Cameroun and from Albania

**Germany.** May 2017: a workshop in Mannheim with around thirty participants, entrepreneurs and managers of companies coming from various parts of Germany, who came to visit the new «Co-Working Space» and to get to know better the four entrepreneurial and educative projects present there. Michael Zillekens, with the «Röser-Zillekens GmbH», recalled how it started when his partners decided to buy the big warehouse and to put it at the disposition of other young companies the office spaces available, taking advantage of the synergies and promoting and encouraging reciprocal exchange. Elisabetta and Johannes Epping with Stephan Schwarz, illustrated the possible developments of their coffee-roasting company. Three young engineers who are involved in the field of sustainable energy, transferred their office to the complex. The fourth partner the «Starkmacher e.V.», an initiative of formation and education that strives to sustain the talents of youth



Mannheim, Germania



Fontem, Camerun

from all over Europe by linking them through a network.

The exchange regarding prospects for the future for young people who want to start a business venture was very useful. It also included topics such as the conditions necessary to survive economically and to be able to develop without looking only at the profit but also seeing the necessities and needs of society.

### **North America. Hyde Park (New York).**

The annual meeting of the North American EoC was preceded for the first time by a Summer School with 25 young participants. Among the speakers were Tony Annette from Columbia University who gave a glimpse of the links with the encyclical of Pope Francis *Laudato si'*. Also present at the opening was John Gallagher of Maryville College. Two evangelical university professors wanted to accept the challenge of the Pope and so Andy Gustafson from Nebraska decided to present the EoC at the meeting of managers of the Business School within a Jesuit-run university, that was held two weeks



Mannheim, Germania



later; Scott Hanson presbyterian professor and administrative officer of the non-profit evangelical «Team» underlined that «this experience manifests the same presence of God that I see in my Church, in fact I would like the copyright of the Pope's talk as if it were our own, because it is what we need and what we want to live as presbyterians».

The experiences presented by many on how they staked their capital, talents and capabilities were important.

**Cameroun, Fontem.** June 2017. After serious preparation, 55 young entrepreneurs coming from different Countries initiated the first African «StartupLab». Sylvain Doua from the Ivory Coast, affirmed that «the supervisors, coming from various Countries of Europe and Africa, gave a very specific formation on the key instru-

price - a combination of sacrifice, work, faith and creativity. Giampietro Parolin explained in depth the notions of the balance sheet with an approach that challenged prejudices. Markus Ressler, consultant of the «Resolution» and an entrepreneur of the EoC, assisted by a methodology that is very simple, was able to involve each of the participants in the elaboration of their own business model. And so, the use of an instrument called CANVAS which was modified to include the interpersonal dimension with the EoC values, allowed them to better understand the combination of coherence to the processes and how an EoC enterprise functions.

**Albania, Tirana.** Also in the month of June, eight Albanian entrepreneurs met together. Maria Gabriella Baldarelli (professor at the University of Bologna and of the Sophia University Institute of Loppiano) proposed the principal instruments of the EoC that could be used within the company in order to develop reciprocity and fraternity.

The dialogue among the entrepreneurs was intense, as they shared their experiences. They then proposed a concrete project (the promotion of a start-up company), that could be an opportunity to give hope to many Albanian youth who are looking for a job. They expressed the desire to present the EoC to the Chamber of Commerce in Tirana. These are the first seeds of a new economy which here too can't wait to be born.

*prepared by the editorial board*



ments of a business». Anouk Grevin presented the values of the Economy of Communion, as they are lived and experienced by entrepreneurs all over the world. The startups familiarized themselves with the methodologies presented by Florencia Locascio and Pierre Chevalier, guided the young entrepreneurs in expressing as best as they could, the life of their enterprise of which its «success» has a



## Mariapolis 2017

# Towards «a greater love»

A bird's eye view of the Mariapolises that this year too sowed seeds of unity in our world today

If we take an atlas we can see everywhere the points where the Mariapolises have imprinted the footprints of Chiara and where the seed of her Ideal was sown in the hearts of many. Here we are presenting only a few whose news has reached us here in the editorial office as we were concluding this issue. The photos show the faces of a «people» with different facial characteristics, but similar in the luminosity of their gaze, the commitment manifested and the beauty of the venues chosen to serve as the backdrop of a temporary «city» dedicated to Mary.

is difficult to meet because of political or civil situations: «From trial to hope», where the face of Jesus Forsaken must be unveiled: «Mystery



New York (USA)

of love», and so on. The Mariapolises everywhere seemed to say, in the midst of the darkness in the world today: «Only at night can we see the stars».

The community of Mindanao in the **Philippines** met in Davao, that of **Cameroun** in Sangmelima, that of **Puerto Rico** in the mountains of Aguas Buenas. There were many participants in the Mariapolis of Marseilles in **France**. There was one also in the center of **Macedonia** in

Kicevo, another in Manaus in the **Amazons**. In the Little town Arco-Íris of **Portugal** the temporary Mariapolis joined the permanent one. Among the many Mariapolises held in **Italy**, we mention those held in Falcade, Bardonecchia and in La Verna in the places of St. Francis. For **Lebanon** there were three points where new buds sprouted: in Ain-Ebel, in Mieh near Sidon and in the Region of Cedars in the North. In Dunganarvan there was the Mariapolis of **Ireland**



Tlemcen (Algeria)

Here is a quick look, without any precise order, that bring us from one continent to another, because the Mariapolises of 2017 have similar characteristics since they have chosen to focus on «a greater love», that for Jesus Forsaken, which is expressed with the characteristics of each place. The titles show this: where there are divisions: «Together we build peace», where courage is needed to heal conflicts: «Dare to work for peace», where it



and in Tlemcen that for **Algeria** with a significant presence of Muslims. In the **Usa** the Mariapolis Luminosa was true to its name. Then there was the diversity in unity that characterized the Mariapolis in Cáceres-Extremadura, **Spain**, that of Tharae, in the north-east of **Thailand**, or that of Kerala-Trivandrum in **India**. The Mariapolis also found a home in Kerrville, Texas, in Santa Isabel in Spain, in São Carlos, within the state of São Paulo, **Brazil**, in Ontario and on the Pacific Coast in **Canada**, in **Lithuania**, in West Virginia... and so many other places. Here are some details on a few of them.

**USA, Pacific region.** «GOing back home we want to continue to create the community where love is the center». This was the conclusion that was reached by the circa 280 participants in the mariapolis of the Pacific region, held from July 1 to 4 in Oakhurst, Usa, near Yosemite National Park in California. In a moment wherein American society is marked by divisions and dissensions, the strong experience of an unconditional and open welcome touched above all those who came for the first time to such a gathering.

The preparations for the Mariapolis were characterized by beautiful teamwork that involved members from different branches of the Movement. The local

communities also took on a role of leadership. Another important element was the generosity of many who concretely lived the communion of goods, starting with fundraising which began just a month after last year's Mariapolis. The participation of the young people was edifying who, with their enthusiasm and maturity, took on various responsibilities.

**Sweden, Stockholm.** Of the more than 100 participants in the Swedish Mariapolis, almost half were Lutherans. «Days of celebration» was the phrase used to describe the meeting from June 28 to July 2 held at the Pastoral Center, surrounded by the greenery of nature and a very beautiful lake.

The main theme presented during the morning programmes was the figure of Jesus Forsaken linked to personal or family problems. In the afternoons the «mariapolites» could choose among different groups to deepen various topics, play parlour games, join a choir, participate in a handicrafts workshop, go on a canoe ride, or bake pizza and sweets. Since the programme was not too structured, the families had time to stay together. Spontaneous groups were formed of parents who took care of the children of the others. In spite of some of the more serious themes they were days characterized by a great joy and by a healthy relaxation. «We must continue this even when we go back home » one of the participants summarized.



**Vietnam, Vung Tau.** «Full of joy and gratitude» this was how the 350 participants of the Mariapolis held from March 10 to 12 in the small city of Vung Tau, outside Ho Chi Minh City in Vietnam, went home. The title «Mystery of love» became the backdrop to the deepening of the theme of the year: «Jesus Forsaken», which profoundly touched Christians of various denominations, Buddhists and persons with no religious belief. Concrete love was tangible among the 350 participants that generated communion, joy, freedom and happiness and also the ability to face one's own daily sufferings and difficulties. Particularly impressive were the profound and concrete experiences shared by various families who go against the current of the mentality of the world that surrounds them.



Vung Tau (Vietnam)

secret to finding the light in the nights that mark humanity today. «I want to take time to listen to all the people I am involved with» someone said at the end, «because I understood that I can discover the face of Jesus Forsaken in them». Another said: «Just as He is the light for my path so too I would like to be a light there where I am in my environment».

**Burundi, Ngozi and Bururi.** The local communities of the Movement in Burundi decided to organize two simultaneous Mariapolises this year: one had 560 participants in the diocese of Ngozi in the north of the Country, the other with 300 persons in the diocese of Bururi in the south. The choice was made in order to meet the difficulties of many to make long trips, because often they come to the Mariapolis on foot.

In Burundi too the central theme of the Mariapolis was Jesus in his abandonment, who was – once again – revealed as the



Espírito Santo (Brasil)

**Venezuela, Maracaibo.** In the midst of the difficult situation of the Country the Mariapolis of Maracaibo in the Northwest of Venezuela was held at the end of April. Due to economic difficulties the meeting lasted only for two days and the 136 participants brought their own meals and would go home to sleep. Precisely because of this choice many were able to participate for the first time in a Mariapolis. There were youth, adolescents, children, complete families, seminarians, and also three pastors of the Presbyterian Church.

The local community who was tasked with preparing the Mariapolis in the midst of rather difficult circumstances made the experience of many interventions of Divine providence: chairs, table cloths, meals for those who didn't bring theirs, snacks sufficient for everyone. And the effects of the Mariapolis – they wrote us – were the same as that of the other Countries: joy, fullness, the desire to love, to start again.

*Prepared by the editorial board*

Stoccolma (Svezia)



# Temporary Focolares

## Living water for fraternity

Families, Volunteers, priests, gen, religious. Not just focolarini moved around, even from one Continent to another, for the temporary focolares that were lit up even in the farthest places. Often in the frontiers. To quench the thirst of arid lands and to witness the growth of open communities

**Northwest Canada.** A month spent in the town of Whati, with an indigenous tribe, upon the invitation of Bishop Mark Hagemoen of Yellowknife, to help in the evangelization of the people in the remote regions of the Country. There were five of them who formed the team.

From Canada: Joy (focolarina in Toronto), Mari (focolarina in Montreal), Fr. Harry Clarke (priest Volunteer of Kelowna – British Columbia), with Mike and Marilena Murray (a married couple both Volunteers of Washington DC, Usa). They didn't know each other but the Ideal made them immediately a family. The people they visited have suffered much and even today continue to suffer. The encounter was therefore with Jesus Forsaken. The providence received for the trip confirmed that it was the will of God and the guarantee of the fruits that would come..

**Indonesia.** An experience of service and fraternity is what Lucia Petrucci and Fabio Chinca, a young married couple from Lombardy who went to Medan in the north of Sumatra Island, experienced when they went



to assist the local community of the Movement there. Together with two gen and a Volunteer they made a stop-over in one of the poor families that are being helped by the support at a distance of AFN onlus. The house

which is located in a rundown and dilapidated neighborhood, needed a total renovation. They began to work for this, purchasing the material needed with the money that they raised in Italy and the funds donated by a Social Center. They also went to visit the community of Berastagi, a city dominated by the volcano Sinabung, that is continuously active. A simple, dignified community made up mostly of farmers who try to go ahead in spite of the difficulties and the loss of their crops and harvest due to the ashes from the volcano. They participated in the monthly Word of life meeting. On the day of the 72° anniversary of





Kazakistan

the Independence of the Country the focolare organized a celebration for the community with the presence of young families and their children. It was followed by a weekend of formation and updating with some couples of the Movement at the Catholic Center of Medan. They were two days full of graces. Each of the couples present shared something about their journeys and of how the Ideal of Chiara has given them light even in the midst of the darkness of trials. They all left bringing in their hearts this new Indonesian family.

**Kazakhstan.** The new light of the presence of Jesus in the midst has arrived. Fr. Luca, Agnieszka, Jarka, Zdenek (of the focolare centers of Moscow, Prague and Brno respectively), together with two young people from the place: Vika and Sacha, made up the temporary focolare in Taldykorgan where Fr. Luca Baino ofm has been living now for several years and where he has started a Word of life group. After the Mariapolis in Kapciagaj, with 31 participants, Dominik, Anna Gloria and Larissa, a Volunteer, all from Moscow joined them..

The programme was centered above all on living with Jesus in the midst, working with the people and inviting them to spend the evenings together, sharing with them the Ideal, which left a flavour of the sacred in everyone. They participated in the town's celebration in honour of the capital Astana and they got to know some directors of the various departments of the government. The person in charge of Religious Affairs accompanied them to visit the regional mosque together

with Fr. Alexander, his friend they also visited an Orthodox church. The Bishop of Almaty, Mons. Jose Luis Mumbella Serra, who attended the Mariapolis of Kapciagaj, said that Chiara Lubich saves the Church. We were deeply convinced that Kazakhstan is a Country that tends towards unity. The dream of the people who live there is to have a permanent focolare center.



Libano

**Lebanon and Sudan.** «Dare for peace», this is the title of the Mariapolis held in the north of Lebanon (360 participants), which began the adventure of the temporary focolare that lasted for 20 days. They departed for the region of Sidon, where Christians have suffered a lot due to persecutions. The Bishops indicated four priorities: youth, children, young couples and the Muslim-Christian dialogue. In agreement with the parish priests, they worked in four villages, two Melchites (Greek-Catholic) and two Maronites. The group was made up of 30 to 40 people, of various origins and vocation in the Movement. In some moments the temporary focolare was enriched by the presence of five Algerian gen2. An important moment was the welcome given by a Sunni imam to the main mosque of Sidon, who then brought them to the Greek-Catholic cathedral and to the Greek-Orthodox one, explaining all the details of these churches.



Perù

Then, departure for Khartoum in Sudan, to experience an «Oasis of encounter», in the spirit of interreligious dialogue. Some families of Khartoum were welcomed in the Mariapolis Center of Ain Aar during the war in 2006 and from that moment on the relationship of profound friendship remains alive. Aside from the 40 members of the temporary focolare, another 50 persons from Lebanon joined the group to make this experience of fraternity, welcomed by the Muslim families of the place. The impressions speak of complete giving, of a focolare without walls that goes out to meet that portion of humanity in a land that is thirsting for love, peace, openness and hope. A group of gen2 who are interested in knowing more about the vocation to the focolare continued this experience at the mariapolis Center Ain Aar.

**Perù.** Communities that go out grow. Vicente, of the focolare of Bilbao-Spain, with other two focolarini and a married couple of Volunteers of Spain collaborated to form a temporary focolare Arequipa. The stages were the following: the Mariapolis of Tacna, only the second after some years in this city just on the border of Chile; the Family Day centered on forming ourselves to «go out»; the meeting with seminarians, who are being given weekly formation by the women's focolare center; the Mariapolis of Sicuani. Fr. Pulino, a priest who has attended the school in Loppiano, invited 124 representatives of the parish who come from different towns/ We saw the birth of the Parish Movement. And still many other meetings, retreats, private talks...

The communities are «going out», enthusiastic to enter into all the realities of society.

**Puerto Rico.** 15 days at the service of the youth with the first Mariapolis of San Juan, a Congress in Patillas in order to share the gen life and a one-week vacation with a group of 35 girls and boys. This was the experience of Antonio Vallejo and Carlos Bajo, focolarini of the Mariapolis Luminosa and of Washington, Madalena Peres, focolarina of Colombia, Juliana and Inmaris, gen2 girls of Colombia and Santo Domingo.

Chiara's Ideal passed into the hearts of the young people in an always more «active» listening. Some of them expressed the desire to continue this experience in a Little town and a young boy showed interest in the life of the focolare. The communion generated with the adults who were accompanying these teens and with the local communities, who did not spare their energy to make this meeting a success, was very beautiful. We experienced that it is truly the community which forms the new generations and that Jesus the Teacher will bring them ahead because he can see in them that thirst for the infinite that only He can satisfy.

*prepared by the editorial board*

Many of the experiences of the «temporary focolares» are still ongoing or have just finished. We will continue to talk about them in the next issues of the Newsletter. For more information: [ut.omnes@focolare.org](mailto:ut.omnes@focolare.org)

Porto Rico



## Exercises in communion

# The charism of unity becomes a gift

In various parts of the world during the months of July and August there were some unusual spiritual exercises held

At the Mariapolis Center of Saint Pierre de Chartreuse (France), Giovanna Porrino and Michel Vandeleene, presented the theme «The glory of the Abandoned One, consolation of the humiliated» to the persons of different vocations and states of life.



In Lubumbashi (Democratic republic of Congo), Florence Gillet and Fr. Léon Sirabahenda of Burundi, presented: «The priest today in the light of the spirituality of communion» to 100 priests, (of which around ten were religious) coming from 16 different dioceses.

in Montreal (Canada), Florence and Michel animated a retreat for 16 monks and nuns of the Monastic Fraternity of Jerusalem. The theme: «In order to love Him let us realize among us the new commandment of Jesus».

Aside from the lessons and the moments of silence dedicated to personal meditation, these retreats offered the possibility of sharing in small groups, to increase the communion among everyone. They were truly «exercises of communion».

At Saint-Pierre de Chartreuse, the retreat was organized by the men and women religious of the Movement in France. Present



were 70 persons of different vocations and states of life. The biblical and theological-spiritual approach was presented Giovanna Porrino, a specialist of the Old Testament, and by Michel Vandeleene, a specialist in the spirituality of Chiara Lubich. They wrote: «The theme on Jesus Forsaken Risen deepened in the perspective of Chiara made us enter into the bosom of the Father. Before leaving this "Tabor" of Saint-Pierre, all of us consecrated ourselves to Him: "I have only one Spouse on earth"».

In Lubumbashi, the community of the Movement had already been thinking for some time to dedicate themselves during the summer to the priestly world, as requested by various priests who, after a period spent in the priests' school in Nairobi, wanted to share the gift they had received to their brother priests. On their faith and with the love of the whole community that had given a beautiful witness, they tried to look for providence, prepare the meeting venue, the accommodations, prepared the meals for everybody, thus providing for not only the retreat of the priests but also two meetings for seminarians(see box).

This is what the Secretary of the Episcopal Conference of Katanga shared in his last homily, about what happened



after the six days of retreat: «Coming here, some of us were asking themselves: "What do the lay people have to teach us?". Here they taught us how to become priests again, over and beyond our conditioning, beyond appearances, and beyond our titles, just as someone said with sincerity and humility. More than a retreat it was a school where we learned to become priests... This school for priests has thrown a challenge to each one of us... We were challenged in the reality of communion... The Focolare Movement does not have the monopoly of the spirituality of communion but it has the privilege of becoming the road sign for the world... Now we must bring home the new "wine" (communion) that will give flavour to our life as priests».

**In Montreal**, the monks and nuns of eight different nationalities, founded in 1075 in Paris by Fr. Pierre-Marie Delfieux, «contemplatives in the city», after a first contact with the Charism 15 years ago through Natalia Dallapiccola and Michel, they expressed the desire to deepen the spirituality of communion. The retreat with them lasted five and a half days and, to sum it up in the words of one of the nuns, «a light breeze passed among us that started a process of communion that will go ahead».

*Florence Gillet, Giovanna Porrino,  
Fr. Léon Sirabahenda, Michel Vandeleene*



## With the seminarians of Katanga Feast and solemnity

Promoted by the Bishops of the region and by the Rectors of the Seminaries, the two retreats (from June 21 to July 1) for the seminarians of Katanga (RDC) were animated by Yannick Clabaut, focolarino of Kinshasa, Fr. Mimmo Arena, O.M.I., and by Gianluca Falconi, focolarino of Lyon who came for the occasion.

151 present (36 minor seminarians, 112 students of philosophy and theology, and 13 young religious from different orders), welcomed with generosity and attention by the focolare and the local community of Lubumbashi.

The programmes presented the spirituality of unity, as the spirituality of the Church-Communion. The points presented, in particular on how to face every kind of personal ecclesial and social difficulty, with love for Jesus Forsaken, opened up the dimension of the Church-Communion. In the same way the experiences lived in the social context by the Volunteers of the region, were useful in the journey of the seminarians who are orearing to become priests for the whole community. Fr. Anselme (just a few years ago he was still a seminarian and the white of the genS) shared his experience highlighting the art of loving.

At the concluding Mass of each retreat it was proposed to make the «pact of reciprocal love». Intense moments, solemn too, and for the major seminarians a real explosion of joy, with songs and dances, that was indescribable.

Many expressed the desire to remain in contact. All there is to do now is to continue to give the gift of the Ideal, so necessary in this land whose political and social situation is quite complex.

*Yannick, Mimmo, Gianluca, with the focolare centers of Lubumbashi*

# Ecclesial world

## Africa and its living stones

A trip to get to know the protagonists of the Church-communion in a region rich in values and ecclesial commitment lived between problems and prophy



Burundi

Africa is the Continent of the future. For the Church too. This is what the persons in-charge of the parish and diocesan Movments (Fr. Mariano Frigerio, Maria do Sameiro Freitas and Marco Bartolomei) and the Center for priests and genS (Fr. Antonio Bacelar, Fr. Istvan Kopasz, Fr. Zbyszek Wolkowicz) experienced first hand, during a recent trip passing through vari-ous African Countries, where they got to know and encouraged the life of the charism of unity in a region of the world wherein evangelization, that arrived just a century ago, is putting down profound roots.

First stop-over **Fontem (Cameroun)**, where a group of around thirty priests gathered including a good number from the Central

African Republic. They are priests who carry out their ministry mandated by the 360 degree dialogue: with the various Churches, the tradi-tional religions, the Muslims, etc. A work that has not gone unobserved and which attracts, in the midst of criticisms there are also signs of respect and esteem from the local officials. They were accompanied by numerous lay peo-ple, those committed to different parish ac-



Repubblica Centrafricana

tivities, who shared thier strong experiences of evangelization in an area filled with social and political tensions. For these people, the life of communion is fundamental. It is from this that they draw strength, spiritual energy and courage to formulate the opportune pastoral pros-pects for their growth in faith as well as that of their people.

Second stop-over **Mariapoli Pieros (Kenya)**, the little town is found in the area of Nairobi. A meeting of three days with themes on the Church in Kenya, inculturation, the documents of the magisterium, and not the least of which is the *luvenescit Ecclesiae*, was planned. The



Sierra Leone

anticipation was great, also because it was an answer to the request of around fifty priests, seminarians and lay people coming from various dioceses, to develop the ecclesial reality of the Movement in the Country. Based on some experiences - like for example in the diocese of Meru where the Movement is present in 17 of its 67 parishes and they are already working on an interparochial level - they saw the efficacy of a methodology of irradiation that begins with the life of the Word lived in small communities: an ecclesial structure adopted by almost all the Episcopal Conferences in Africa. The last day saw the arrival of seven seminarians who represented the 150 seminarians who are in five of the eight seminaries in Kenya who are in contact with the Movement.

Then in **Burundi**, the troubled nation marked, in its recent past, by a heavy fratricidal war. Here too those who came from the Center were able to meet around thirty priests coming from all the eight dioceses of the Country and who each represent a point of attraction for many youth and other priests/

Fr. Zbyszek and Fr. Mariano, also visited the four major seminaries which are forming forty seminarians who follow the spirituality of the Focolare Movement, who shared profound evangelical experiences and a radicalness of life. A Bishop said that in almost all the parishes of the Country there are the groups of the Word of life inspired by the Focolare Movement: an important presence, in a society wherein peace and reconciliation are the key words for the future of the Nation.

The visit to **Burkina Faso** had two stages: Ouagadougou, the capital, and Bobo-Dioulasso, where the Focolare arrived way back in the '90s. The testimonies of priests, religious, representatives of local communities, also from Mali and Niger, were very important. There were moments of celebration too with the community that was full of life and joy. Here the peculiarity was



represented by the presence of Muslims in various meetings, who, when asked if they were disturbed by all the talk about parishes and dioceses of the Catholic Church, replied that the life which the Movement proposes is useful and applicable also to the followers of Islam.

In the **Ivory Coast** there were stop-overs in Abidjan, the capital, and then in the Little town Vittoria in Man. Here too we could grasp the positive effects of the insertion of the Movement in the local Church. Significant in this sense was the meeting with the entire parish community in the area around Abidjan and with the parish that is located within the Little town. They are opening up always new prospects for the launching and expansion of the Charism in the surrounding areas.

Final stop-over, **Sierra Leone**, a nation where there is still no focal center, but wherein, since the '80s the Saverian priests Fr. Carlo Di Sopra and Fr. Antonio Guiotto, have given rise to a living communities in practically the entire Country, in spite of the devastation of the war and the ebola crisis which has devastated the already precarious socio-economical situation of the country. Here we saw how the many people helped by the Ideal to overcome humanly impossible situations,



are now the points of reference for many: adults, couples, youth, teens, children. The meeting with around forty youth who shared their commitment in the university, in the prisons, in pastoral work, in evangelization, was very touching. A Country eager to get back up and start again. With people like these, certainly the recovery will be fast.

«Our» six travellers came back with a great gratitude in their hearts for all that

they have received from these peoples and from their culture. And with a dream: that the Ideal of unity can always penetrate more and more into the African society, where the Church is often the only limpid voice among the many challenges that this Continent has to measure up to. A wish, that for the wealth of life experienced there, this hope will become for them, a certainty.

*prepared by Anna Friso*

## A laboratory of unity

Committed members and youth of the Parish and Diocesan Movements and genS in Loppiano for an experience of formation and to get to know the Work of Mary more in depth



«I depart with the greatest desire to love and to bring the joy experienced during these days everywhere, starting with myself. This is just one of the many impressions. 265 participants, of which 30 were priests and 25 seminarians, from 20 nations. In the five days spent together (from July 30 to August 5) we saw how these young people, as they themselves said, «arrive in one way and leave transformed».

Loppiano was the venue chosen to be their laboratory. In spite of the extreme summer heat, no one was missing at the roll-call. The programme also included an evening with

the schools of the men and women focolarini, with the Gen Verde, Sophia University Institute, the Economy of Communion... aside from the visit to the various realities in the little city. The inhabitants of Loppiano were also impressed in seeing these «free, simple, serene and ideally formed» young people. Bellissima The Adoration of the Eucharist was very beautiful, which took place at the shrine of the Theotokos, and was concluded by the pact of reciprocal love.

The «guiding soul» of those days were the group meetings, where everyone concretely experienced the beauty of the life of unity.

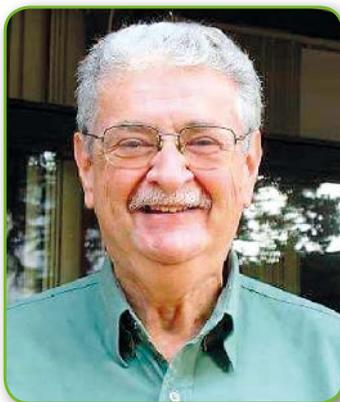
Now there is a great desire to go ahead, also by diversifying the meetings: on the Central level for the committed members (to be held next year in Castelgandolfo); at the Zonal and Zonette levels for the new ones (there are already some proposals).

*prepared by the secretariat of the parish and diocesan Movements and the genS center*



## Celso Frioli

*«The word of Christ lives among you in abundance»  
(Col 3,16)*



Born in 1940 in Sorocaba, in the State of San Paolo (Brazil), since he was young Celso felt the desire to do something to lessen the inequality between the rich and poor in his Country. While studying Law at the university, he met the Ideal and soon after he felt the call of God to consecrate himself in the way of the focolare. «My convictions – he wrote to Chiara - were bringing me to accept even armed conflict as the answer to our problems. But with your Ideal, now I am more than ever certain that the only answer for the world is to live the Ideal». During his year of formation (1964) he confirmed to Chiara his choice and wrote: «The cross will be my torch, unity my strength, joy my light». After Loppiano he went to different focolare centers in Southeast Brazil and in the city of San Paolo. He worked for almost twenty years in «Cidade Nova» taking charge in the administration of the publishing house.

In '69 he shared this experience with Chiara: «Every moment of our life must be solemn. This changes our life and makes the others see in us our readiness to love and to generate the presence of Jesus in the focolare and also with the persons that have not yet encountered Him». And in '72, after a meeting in Rome he confided: «One thing touched me profoundly: Mary who was all clothed in the Word of God. I realized that I can try to be a "little Mary" and to actively participate in the transformation of the world by living the Gospel».

«In '84 his mother died. In that occasion Celso shared that he had asked Jesus for her to go back to the sacraments, a grace which she obtained together with her acceptance of the choice that her son had made, and to which she had always been against.

During the final period of his life, inspite of his various limitations, he was constantly

committed to always have mutual love in the focolare. He participated in the life of the Movement and welcomed everyone in good spirits. A month before his flight to God, which was on July 18, he was brought to the ICU due to a serious infection. He continued to express his gratitude to the women and men focolarini and to the community for their prayers and love which have sustained him. His funeral was celebrated at the mariapolis Ginetta in an atmosphere of serenity and solemnity. Many called it a moment of spiritual retreat.

## Raf Fontana

*«I am the light of the world, whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life» (Jn 8,12)*

Focolarino in Loppiano, Raf left for Heaven on June 30 at the age of 94. In Syracuse, his city of origin, he had a good job in a bank, but he met the ideal in the '50s and he left everything to enter the focolare. His life was totally given to God and to the brothers, rich in adventure and surprises that brought him to the focolare centers of Parma, Florence, Bologna, Milan, Cagliari, Barcelona, Istanbul and, lastly to the Mariapolis Renata.

In 1975 from Milan he moved to Rocca di Papa, an experience that he recalls like this: «Our focolare was made up of Antonio Petrilli, Igino Giordani, Mario Brini and, part-time, Ezio Tancini. A series of beautiful experiences thus began for me in a focolare where the presence of Jesus in



the midst was constant; each one strived to give the best of himself! I went from one marvel to another, seeing Igino Giordani, a man who is so rich in culture and wisdom, who never allowed his talents to weigh down my intellectual mediocrity and who was the leader in humility and love».

In '85 Raf was ordained a priest. In '98 he sent to Chiara some of his thoughts which she perceived as fruits of his unity with Jesus: «At times I felt like rebelling, and saying: "no, this is too much". But then, thinking about the absurdity of the cross, this thoughts immediately leave me and is transformed into love». «Make me vigilant, Lord, in understanding that in trials it is You who is knocking at my door; and make me quick

in sharing in the present moment the abandonment that You suffered in the past». «Oh what a joy, Lord, when all around is darkness; and only You remain, splendid Light». «What a consolation, Lord, to know that, in spite of our shortcomings, You love us just the way we are and remain faithful to your design of love». And in another of his writings: «In these times when we are so attentive to recharging our mobile phones let's not forget to recharge our souls with charity».

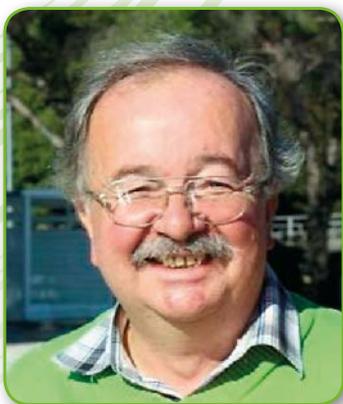
In the final period of his life his words were always more essential, full of love, just as he himself wished for: «Lord, make me love you in such a way that I will steal Paradise from you like the good thief».

## Rudi Fabjan

### *God with us: the great treasure*

Married focolarino of Slovenia, Rudi was one of the first youth from the former Yugoslavia to meet the Movement. Possessing a strong and radical character, at 25 years old he married Minka and forming a family focolare that will be blessed with three children: Marija, Peter and Meta, focolarina who is at present in Moscow. Their house was always open to people of all social categories, with or without religious beliefs, rich and poor. For many, Rudi was a brother and a father. Chiara, in giving him a new name: Emanuele - which means God is with us - wrote to him: «If Jesus is with you then nothing will ever be lacking, and no human power will ever take away this great treasure from you». And it is from Jesus present among them that Rudi and Minka drew strength and courage to move to Zagabria (Croatia) for the Movement, together with their children who were still small, leaving behind a secure job and their house to go and live in a small apartment. From there they worked for the development of the Movement in a particular way among the families.

With the outbreak of the Balkan war, living in Zagabria - a crucial area because of the



convergence of many refugees – they lend themselves fully to the assistance of these people both in the coordination of the relief goods that arrive from the Movement from all over the world as well as taking care of the mothers and children who remained alone.

When the Little own «Faro», began in 1995 they prepared for another transfer, leaving their house in Zagabria to some refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina. In Križevci, among other things, Rudi collaborated in starting small business enterprises that provided jobs for unemployed people, also participating in the birth of the «Ray of sunshine» kindergarten.

On July 15, after a brief stay in the hospital which did not reveal the seriousness of his situation, at 68 years old Rudi left for Heaven. Emmaus, in sharing this news to the focolare centers around the world cited what he had written to Chiara that reflects his spiritual depth: «I will try to live: "I will be a saint is I am a saint at once" with the greatest intensity. I know that to do this I must love Him, our Spouse. I feel that I am starting to love Him with my heart and the things I do I don't do for my own sanctity, but for Him, to realize His dream "that all may be one"» (june '80).

# Brigitte Haslbeck

*«If anyone listens to my voice and opens the door to me, I will come to him, dine with him and he with me» (Ap 3,20)*

Daughter of a restorer in Baviera (Germany), at 24 years old Brigitte was confined to the hospital due to a serious infection. A doctor spoke to her about the Ideal and together with her husband Josef they began to participate in the New Families and to go to the focolare. Soon after Brigitte discovered that she had a serious illness. She entrusted herself completely to God and intensified her decision to living for unity. And so



the vocation to become married focolarini matured in her and in her husband. Their desire to have children seemed impossible to fulfill, but instead after a few years Pirmin was born. The Ideal filled the life of Brigitte and Josef, who became the pillars of the Movement in their city and for the entire region. Their home was open to everyone, especially for the young people whom they considered as their own children.

Brigitte loved life, beauty, people. God was everything for her and she wanted to do His will remaining faithful in the small things, as well as in the big things that her illness imposed on her. She wrote to Chiara to reassure her that when she lives like this: «my limitations, my worries and my anxieties disappear. What matters only is my “yes” to Jesus Forsaken». Attentive, sensible, discreet, she never thought about herself and she never made her illness and the battle she was waging, a burden for others. «When I lost my hair - she wrote to Chiara - Bruna Tomasi told me: “Your hairs are counted by God. Give them to Him like flowers as a sign of your love”. I cried for joy. Even my illness has meaning, and for this I thank God». During the inevitable moments of rebellion, she trusted in Jesus in the midst, sharing with simplicity and openness the state of her soul, believing in the love of God and of the brothers. «With Josef – she

shared with humility – we try to live with Jesus in the midst as if He were the third person among us and this gives us peace. It is a time of grace». Three weeks before she died, during the last retreat in Vienna she confided: «I really hope to open the door to Him when that Moment comes!». That Moment for her arrived on May 24 at the age of 60.

# Enzo La Terra

*One of the first married focolarini*

Of Sicilian origin, Enzo was among the first married focolarini who together with Foco, Spartaco Lucarini, Danilo Zanzucchi and a few others - in the presence of Chiara - gave their lives to Jesus as married focolarini. He, in fact, in Syracuse (1955), encountered the Ideal and in that same year was invited by Chiara, through Vale to come to the Mariapolis in Fiera di Primiero where he arrived after a 27 hour trip. He was deeply concerned about the division among the Churches, made more acute by the contacts that he had just recently made with the evangelical Baptist Church attracted by their love for the Sacred Scripture and their social actions. In the Mariapolis he had long conversations everyday with Chiara, who spoke to him about a Church that would one day be poor and stripped of all superstructures and she encouraged him to love always. Enzo returned to Sicily transformed and he committed himself to spreading the «great light» of the Ideal in his environment.



His work for the Postal Services brought him to Turin where in '60 he married Angela, who would also become a married focolarina. Chiara wrote them a telegram: «Very much present with all the focolarini, I ask Mary to bless you and my wish is that Jesus will always be present in your focolare». They will eventually become the initiators and animators for many years of the New Families Movement in Piedmont, Valle d'Aosta and Liguria.

Even after the departure of Angela for Heaven in '98, Enzo continued to live at the service of others in spite of the limitations imposed by his health. He wrote: «My life as a focolarino continues towards the encounter with Jesus. Prayer has become the basis of my daily life. I try to give all the love I have for the neighbour I meet. My not being able to be physically present in the focolare is substituted by my spiritual presence, that I keep alive everyday. I pray and offer every suffering for the Movement and for all those who are suffering» (December 2016).

On July 6, at the age of 85, Enzo left for the heavenly Mariapolis. The Word of Life that Chiara gave him as the programme for his Holy Journey, seemed to be his spiritual testament: «Think of the things that are above, not the things of the earth. You in fact are dead and your life is now hidden with Christ in God!» (Col 3,2-3).



## Enrique Jorge González (Quique)

*«Where your treasure is, there too is your heart!» (Mt 6,21)*

Among the first married focolarini of Argentina, Quique met the Ideal at 19 precisely when the focolare arrived in that land. He was already working as a technician in a construction company and was engaged to Reina Victoria. Their relationship was strongly rooted in God and it will be Vittorio Sabbione (the focolarino priest who founded the Argentinian Zona) who would preside at and bless their marriage. Their family was an open one, with six children and 12 grandchildren, that shared the Ideal to many families. During the preparation of the Familyfest '81, finding out that a couple did not have enough money to participate, they put in common their gold wedding rings.

At 43 years old he was diagnosed with a serious illness which he faced with great courage,

supported personally by Chiara. A year after the operation, when he began to experience problems in moving and speaking, he wrote to Chiara: «It was a very intense year, full of lights and shadows. And it was precisely this combination of joys and sufferings that has made me grow in the love for God and the neighbour. On Good Friday I had a very difficult day, but I remember that it was beautiful because I had the impression that I could celebrate my Mass there in my sickbed in the hospital».

In 1995, invited to attend a celebration of the Jewish Community, he got to know two rabbis: it was the beginning of his passion for interreligious dialogue which he followed as the person in-charge in the Zone of Buenos Aires.

In the past 15 years a progressive deterioration of his condition began until he completely lost his ability to move around by himself. Quique nevertheless maintained his lucidity and his attentiveness to the others, as well as a great love for the focolare and for the whole Movement.

On July 22, at the age of 76, after a long confinement in the hospital, he concluded his Holy Journey. His family requested that his wake be held in the focolare center to underline that it was his spiritual home. The funeral was a witness of the affection that the community has always had for him.

## sr. Diane Collesano

*«Shine in their midst like stars in the world, holding fast to the word of life» (Phil 2, 15-16)*



Among the first gen of New York, Diane felt that God was calling her to live the Ideal as a dawn of Charity, a vocation to which she would always remain faithful in spite of the winds of protests that were blowing during the first years following the (Second Vatican) Council. Active in the field of education, she dedicated herself with passion and love to teaching, and eventually she also taught Environmental Theology, and also became the directress of a high school. In her being the Spouse of Jesus Forsaken,

# fr. Joaquín Martínez Vega

*A giant taken by the hand  
by Jesus Forsaken*



At 19 years old Joaquín entered the Spanish novitiate of the Oblates of Mary (OMI) with the dream of becoming a missionary. After his ordination, convinced that he was leaving to bring the Gospel to far-off lands, he was instead assigned to teach in the various Spanish institutes. Fr. Joaquín knew that «My thoughts are not Your thoughts» (cf. Is. 55, 8-9) and welcomed this change taking it from the hands of God. Then he was also asked to take

she contributed with joy to the life of her community, profoundly united with Chiara in the service to the Movement. In 2003 when she was 50 years old she wrote: «I have passed the great threshold. I know that it's just a number, but it gives me the opportunity to stop and to be grateful for the many possibilities that I have had in my life. Knowing the Ideal remains a central point in for my heart».

In 2011 she became sick. «I know that many of you – she wrote to the Focolare community – have prayed so that I may break the news well to my father, regarding the result of the biopsy. To tell him this was one of the most difficult moment of my life. He cried: no 87-year old man wants to see his only child die. I am praying that this experience becomes a grace for him». As the illness became more serious she wrote: «I am at peace. God is faithful and he accompanies me in everything, and I know that I have the unity of the whole Movement and the support of my congregation. All these underline that absolute love who is Jesus Forsaken».

A month before going to meet the Spouse she wrote: «I don't have the strength to go the Mariapolis Luminosa. I embrace Jesus Forsaken, especially with regards to my father. I go ahead in the present moment, believing that God is faithful and that unity is a reality that has been worth my entire life». At 62 years old, on May 28, the day of the Ascension, Diane was ready to go to Heaven.

*Maria Luce Ronconi*

up the responsibility for the magazine of the congregation, to manage a house of spirituality for the youth. He would also become the master of novices and a provincial superior.

At 10 years of his priesthood (1970) he made an experience which, as he himself describe, would mark his entire life. «I was immersed in a frenetic activism and the post-conciliar Church was confused and divided. I went into a profound crisis. I wanted to leave Spain and so I wrote to the Oblates in Cameroun and Congo who replied that they would welcome me willingly. And so I presented my request to the father provincial who advised me to spend a month if I wanted to discernment. Before going to Manresa something unexpected happened to me: the Mariapolis. There I realized that the root of all my problems was myself who didn't want to embrace the Cross (Jesus Forsaken). With this new light everything became clear. I no longer needed the spiritual exercises of St. Ignatius; I had already made my decision: to follow the vocation of the Oblates in the Work of Mary. Much later I was asked to conduct the spiritual exercises of the Province. What did I talk about? I spoke of the spirituality of unity: God-Love, the choice of God, the will of God, the new commandment of reciprocal love, the Cross (Jesus Forsaken), the Church, Mary, using the experiences and writings of our Founder. And then they asked me to present the same theme at the international Oblate's Congress for his beatification in 1975».

Finally, at 70 years old, Fr. Joaquín was sent as a missionary to Venezuela, convinced that he would remain there for the rest of his life. Instead soon after he was called back to Rome to become a member of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints,

On February 4, at the age of 83, his race ended. Jesus Forsaken always remained as his guide. In the final months of his life, unable to read any longer, he would look at the picture of Jesus Forsaken on his tablet, often repeating to the religious of Madrid who were taking care of him: «Together, all together, only one heart and one soul».

*fr. Mariano Steffan*

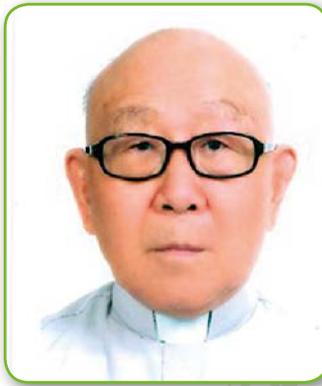
# fr. Joseph Wang

*«Sickness is not a misfortune  
but a vocation»*

Priest focolarino of Hebei (China), together with his Bishop and other priests of the diocese accepted the invitation to move to San Paolo (Brazil) to take care of the numerous Chinese community which lives in that archdiocese, and also to escape from the death threats of the regime in their country. Here he had the chance to participate in a Mariapolis. From the very first day, with tears in his eyes he confided to the other priests: «Today I met the true God, God Love!».

His life was renewed. He participated in the priests' school at the Center and upon returning to Brazil he worked tirelessly to spread the Ideal among his co-nationals, especially to the youth. He followed closely the painful situation in his Country and tried all the ways to communicate with the Chinese priests in Latin America and in Europe to tell them that the only pathway for the Church in China is that of charity among the priests and the faithful.

Much later he returned to China permanently, but his actions caused him to be expelled from the Country. To the two policemen who accompanied



him to the airport and who asked him why he was so peaceful, he answered: «I am peaceful because, just as it is now up to this moment, I will continue to do the will of God there where I am going». He went to Taiwan, where he got in contact with the focolare centers there. He brought ahead his priestly mission spreading the Ideal of unity everywhere.

As he grew older he went to retire in a home for sick priests. But even from his wheelchair he continued to sow love. When I went to visit him, a nun who is a nurse told me: «Fr. Wang is the joy of this house. He never complains and encourages everyone. He had many visitors, especially young people». After asking me for news about all the members of the priests' Center, Fr. Joseph told me: «Sickness is not a misfortune, but a vocation». These words have always remained fixed in my heart. I saw in him a living witness of his entire life throughout all those years that he was confined in a wheelchair.

On July 24, at 95 years old, Fr. Joseph flew up to Heven, sustained up to the end by the priests and religious of the Movement.

*Fr. Enrico Pepe*

# fr. Joaquim Duarte Pedrosa

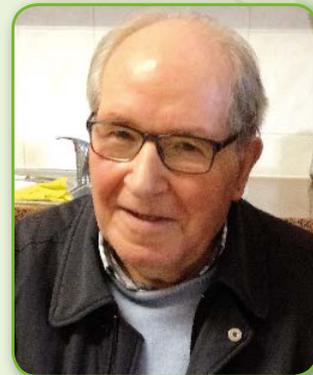
*«You are the body of Christ» (1 Cor 12,27)*

Priest focolarino of the diocese of Leiria (Portugal), Fr. Joaquim was 40 years old when he met the charism of Chiara Lubich. With great conviction he made this his own, committing himself to its spread among priests and laity with a special attention given to the Parish Movement.

During his priesthood, aside from being a parish priest for more than 50 years, he was the vicar and diocesan assitant of the rural Catholic Action, episcopal delegate for consecrated life: responsibilities which inspired the trust and

esteem of the various diocesan Bishops. He tries to continually update himself in order to proclaim the Gospel adequately, attentive to the world of culture, theatre, cinema, music, for the purpose of making the life of the community grow and to come closer to the young people. He took special care of priestly vocations and those to the consecrated life.

At 75 he retired from active ministry, remaining nevertheless available for all those who went to him for advice and spiritual direction. He



## fr. Franz Josef Albrecht

«Come to me all you who are weary and oppressed» (Mt 11,28)

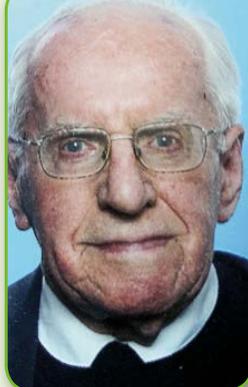
Fr. Franz Josef, priest focolarino of Germany, was convinced that God had called him thanks to the prayers of his mother and the courage of his father to openly speak against the Nazi regime. At 20 years old he was a soldier in different European Countries, from Italy to Norway, and in 1945, he became a prisoner of war and was sent to the «seminary behind barbed wire» of the Abbé Stock in Chartres (France). Returning to his homeland, he became a priest, participated in a Mariapolis: and so began his journey with the Focolare Movement which brought him to discover Jesus Forsaken as his «only Good», a love that will accompany him for his whole life.

His house in Allgäu was always open to all: many priests spent their holidays there. His relationship of trust with Jesus and the warmth of his rapport with everyone made his words very attractive. Fr. Franz Josef was a simple and humble pastor, but there were many who would come even from faraway just to make their confession and to receive his blessing.

was also the chaplain of the Poor Clare sisters. A fall caused his health to turn for the worse. Fully aware of his situation he confided to his brother priests of the Focolare his desire to go to Paradise, because there «he would be able to see God more perfectly».

With his total acceptance of his sufferings and in communion with Jesus Forsaken, on June 1 at the age of 85, he went home to the Father. «He was truly a man of God – said Fr. Antonio Bacelar, central delegate of the priest focolarini and his countryman – a good shepherd in the Church, zealous and tireless servant of the Christian community: a person who knew how to love and to serve with the art of dialogue».

Fr. Jorge Guarda



In love with the will of God, which he saw as an expression of His love, he accepted to leave his beautiful mountains to go and render his service as parish priest near Ottmaring. It was a choice that each year revealed itself to be beneficial also for him as he later retired and went to live in the Little town of Ottmaring where he continued to serve in the small daily activities. When lately he began to experience difficulty in breathing he told the Lord: «If you call me – here I am, from this moment on I say my *adsum* (present!)!». On May 25, at the age of 95, the Father called him to Himself to give him the just recompense for a life all steeped in love.

Fr. Gerhard Bauer

## fr. Francesco Soccol

«Jesus in the midst is making me a new creature»

Priest focolarino of the diocese of Belluno, on August 2, at the age of 66, during a mountain hike, Fr. Francesco left unexpectedly for Heaven. His Bishop, Mons. Marangoni, spoke of him like this: «a brother, a friend, a spiritual father for everyone. A

man of encounter. There is no one whoever went to him who did not feel welcome, in the way that Pope Bergoglio is teaching us to do».

Francesco met the Ideal in the seminary at 18 years old. He received his Word of life from Chiara: «I will betroth you to myself in faithfulness» (Os. 2, 22), a faithfulness which will become characteristic of his life and a person and as a priest. He wrote to Chiara in '84: «You have brought me into a new and more profound dimension of the Ideal. The unity in the focolare depends on the unity that I am able to make with Jesus Forsaken. From my



relationship with Him, in his abandonment, true life is born».

In '93, struck by the stories of the first focolarino who during the feast of Christ the King offered their lives to Jesus so that unity may be realized, confided to Chiara: «Sunday was the feast of Christ the King and I strongly feel that I too would like to offer my life to God in the Work of Mary in a totally new way so that His plan may be fulfilled».

In 2001 he spent a year at the center of spirituality for priests *Vinea Mea*. He shared again with Chiara: «It has been five months now that I am in Loppiano and your wish that I make a profound experience of unity and of

universality is a living reality that permeates my life more and more. Never before, like this time, have I understood that God is working on me profoundly: I realized this even more when I returned to my parish for a few days during Christmas. I saw the people, the facts and my own life with new eyes. I felt that Jesus the Risen One, is alive and present in our midst, and He is making me a new creature; He is slowly taking possession of my life». For his funeral that cathedral was full of people, as a witness of the gift of a pastor who was able to realize that Marian priesthood that blossoms from the charism of unity.

*Fr. Antonio Bacelar*



## fr. Piero Bocco

*«...I too would like to be a star for the Church...»*

Priest focolarino of Turin, on the 5th of August, caught by a sudden illness as he

was on his way home after the vigil Mass of the Transfiguration, Fr. Piero parked his car at the side of the road and he left for his final and definite Tabor. He was 55 years old. He was found, late at night by a police patrol.

In the final years in the seminary Piero felt that his vocation was in danger and there was the risk of demolishing everything that God had done in him. His encounter with the Ideal at 22 years old was «a rediscovery of Christ as my everything. I went to the Bishop to tell him of my intention to be admitted to the holy orders. I understood that I must possess Him alone as my Ideal and nothing else, not even the priesthood». He immersed himself totally in the life of the gens, even spending a year at the center of the Movement. Two years later a heart ailment that he was carrying for 18 years suddenly grew worse (his doctors gave him only six months to

live). «I discovered Jesus Forsaken to be loved in this reality – he wrote to Chiara - and the love of God for me, this has turned my life upside-down». An operation allowed to lead an almost normal life, even if it later caused his premature death.

Ordained a priest, following the invitation of his Bishop, with other two priests they formed one of the first pastoral units of the diocese. This later allowed him to spend a period in 2002 at the *Vinea Mea* in Loppiano. From there he wrote to Chiara: «I want to place once again my “yes” to Jesus Forsaken in your hands with the decision to call Him by name in the various difficulties of life». In 2007 he again wrote: «It is night! It is the night of the world, a night of the Church, a night of humanity. Then suddenly a star – you, Chiara – came to brighten the night. I too would like to be a star for the Church, a star that shines your light. Thank you Chiara!».

A companion of the focolare recalled: «He was always the first to keep in contact through the telephone or personally. He had a thirst for unity and of creating the family which influenced also whoever was beside him, just as in the» (he was the moderator of four parishes, living in one of them).

Four Bishops, more than a hundred priests and countless people participated in his funeral to thank him for being this «star» that now certainly shines in Heaven because he was prepared to do this while here on earth.

*Fr. Giovanni Gullino*



## Carla Casali

*A woman of peace and in continuous service to others*

Born in the province of Reggio Emilia (Italy), Carla received a non-religious formation but marked by great values. She was still a student when a classmate spoke to her about the Focolare Movement. This was the turning point of her life: «I felt the gratuity of the love of God – she wrote to Chiara – a love which makes everything possible and which gives us everything in spite of our poor self. For this reason I feel that my answer to this, his love, must also be given freely».

Gifted with an acute intelligence, she worked as a social worker with great professionalism and innovation, to the point of coming up with the idea, together with others, for an important socio-educative service for patients with Aids. This experience, a fruit of years of research, was translated into a book, written with others, that was able to convince the institutions to start this new service. Carla was also involved in interreligious dialogue, in collaboration with various cultural associations. In her, a Volunteer of God, one could see the gifts of wisdom, the ability to listen, discretion. She dedicated her time and energy to building profound relationships also within the local community, incarnating faithfully the Word of life she received from Chiara: «Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God» (Mt 5-9).

When she was diagnosed with an illness, a period of alternating light and darkness began, but nevertheless, the desire to be faithful to God never stopped. She shared to Emmaus: «Your theme on the Word is quite demanding yes, but at the same time it is “possible”. It is possible to live the Word, to keep Jesus in the midst, to incarnate the Ideal of unity in the social realities today: a great support for my new choice of God». Emmaus answered: «Let us continue the Holy Journey in the faithfulness to Jesus Forsaken, Carla, so as to accelerate the realization of “That all may be one”».

She left us on January 21, at the age of 71. At her funeral, the testimony of Bouchra Abdellah, a Muslim, president of the cultural association of the city, was important: «A woman of peace, of few words but in continuous service to others, Carla always welcomed us very willingly in her house. Now she is in the Truth, while we are still journeying, but I feel her very much present».

*Daniela Nicolini Palmieri*

## Juan Carlos Fernández Marquez

*Imprenditore, volontario di Dio e diacono permanente*

Married to Maribel, who is also a Volunteer, Juan Carlos, of Cadice (Spain), met the Ideal in the '80s. An encounter - he says - «not with a Movement but with a way of life», to which he adheres with evangelical radicalness. He made the Word of life his daily clothing, becoming a faithful apostle of its diffusion, in the parish and in everywhere he went. He got involved in the various activities of the Movement, especially in the New Families together with Maribel. Chiara had just launched the Economy of Communion in 1991 when Juan Carlos, who with his brother Manuel (married focolarino) were managing a family business, adhered to it with great enthusiasm.



His concrete love and social commitment, made his parish priest and his Bishop propose that he become a permanent Deacon. Trials were not lacking, with his children, the business: all occasions for an always new «yes» to Jesus Forsaken. This is what Juan Carlos also said when he was diagnosed with an illness that brought him – in a span of time – to a physical and even intellectual deterioration. He would often: «If God asks me for my

life, here I am Lord!», giving a powerful witness, together with Maribel, of an illness lived in unity among them and with their respective nuclei.

The day of his departure for the heavenly Mariapolis, came on January 16, with an unexpected gift: one of his children came to greet him after many years of a difficult relationship. Immediately after, at the age of 74, he began his flight to God.

*Toni Torres*

## Mary Langton

*«Because we are collaborators of God» (1 Cor 3,9)*

Volunteer of Boston (USA), married with six children, she was almost 50 years old when she met the Focolare Movement. Profoundly touched by the love of the focolarine Mary, who had always wanted to teach the world to «sing in harmony» understood that this can only happen if she loved each person one at a time, making an effort to do so everyday. And so her life



changed drastically: she began to see God in the persons she met and she discovered that every encounter with the neighbour was like «going to the chapel».

She became a member of the first nucleus of North America and eventually she became responsible for it. When she and her husband moved to Florida, she gave life to a new community there and continued to be solid and flourishing even when they returned to Boston. With the launching of the Economy of Communion, at the age of 71 she started a recycling activity of clothes and household items, to which Chiara gave the name «mini-market of Elegance». For years she shared her substantial profits for the poor and for the formation to the spirituality of unity.

When an illness which she thought she had overcome re-appeared, she entrusted herself totally to God: «if You want it, I want it too». And up to the end – the community testified – Mary had a dynamic heart, a limpid soul, she was a «gift of joy» for everyone. On April 25, at 96 years old, she left for Heaven. We know that she was welcomed by Mary, whom Chiara

had told her to consider as her «guide and mother».

*Patricia Gildard*

## Alessandro Castellani

*A rich, luminous life, lived with generosity and love*

Alessandro, Volunteer of the Castelli Romani (Italy), concluded his «holy journey» on April 7 at the age of 87. His life was rich, varied, luminous, lived with generosity and love for the every neighbour. Married to Giusi, they had two children: Loredana and Daniela. There was a family wherein love was visible and concrete, a love which they extended also to their grandchildren for whom Grandpa Alessandro showed a special tenderness.

When he was still quite young, he enlisted in the Air Force where he earned the respect of many because of his seriousness and faithfulness to the Institution. At a certain point he met the Focolare Movement and, fascinated by its evangelical

message, he made it his own. He was always ready to help many people concretely. In the homes for the elderly or in the centers for persons with disabilities he would bring his smile and his words of comfort to each of the persons he visited. With his nucleus members, he was truly a builder of unity, he would put in common his experiences of the Gospel lived. He was faithful to the charisma of unity and took on various responsibilities in the branch of the Volunteers and in the Movement.

In the final years of his life he had an illness that gradually weakened him but which never touched the most profound core of his soul. He lived with courage and wisdom in the will of God up to the end, surrounded by the love of his family and of the community.

*Pino Tasca*



# Maria Otilia Ferreira da Rocha Cunha

*«Whether we live or we die,  
we belong to the Lord» (Rom 14,8)*



Married and mother of seven children, Maria Otilia, Volunteer of Portugal, is remembered for her gentleness and her ability to highlight the positive in each one. Generous and open, she gave and received with the same simplicity. In the family she was the bond that united its various members. In the nucleus she was always the first to share her experiences on the Word of life. She was also active in the parish and many were edified by her words of wisdom.

When she was diagnosed with a serious illness she was well prepared. She accepted everything from the hands of God and also even if she knew that she would not get well, out of love for her children she accepted the treatment without ever complaining. Everytime someone went to visit her they would find her in God, always with a smile. On her birthday a lady went to her to entrust her with a particular situation. Maria Otilia, after listening to her assured her prayers, she gave the lady a bunch of flowers that she had just received as a gift. To the Volunteers of her nucleus she confided: «I thank God everyday for the life that He continues to give me, even if I know that I don't belong here. Everything that I am and that I do is an expression of His love. I ask for only one thing: that He help me to remain in His will». At the age of 71, she concluded her earthly life in order to reach eternal glory on May 28.

*Michela Vaz Patto*

# Giovanni Arzuffi

*«A child of the Gospel» with the great  
dream of unity in his heart*

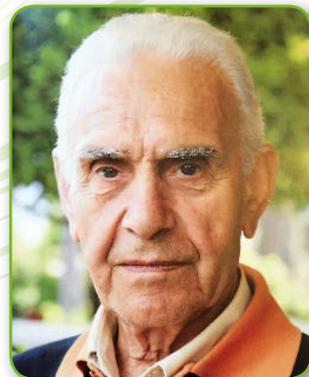
Among the first Volunteers of Bergamo, Giovanni received an authentic Christian upbringing from his family, marked by a profound relationship with God and an openness to the neighbour.

Gifted with an eclectic intelligence he knew how to do the most varied professional activities to which he also directed his nine children, among whom is Tarcisio, focolarino in Montet.

Always attentive to the needs of whoever was beside him, there are those who still remember him because he had given them a coloured TV that he had received from another client who had just bought a newer model, in exchange for a black and white one that he wasn't able to repair.

The discovery of the Ideal of Chiara was for him the confirmation of the quality of those sentiments of love and Christian charity that he already had in his heart due to grace. From that moment on his Christian life accelerated even more. He had a special love and care for the new generations: in his house one could find areas for the activities of the Gen and the Youth for a united world, all working intently for their different «operations». He also worked much for the spread of Città Nuova and for the development of the Loppiano Prima Cooperative.

Wisdom, discretion, readiness, welcome, are the characteristics of Giovanni. Meek, humble, generous, carrying in his heart the great dream of unity, he was truly a child of the Gospel, up to the end. On April 9, at 93 years old, surrounded by his children and his wife Anna, he went back to the House of the Father.



*Eugenio Lorenzi*

# Carlo Baudino

*A great love for Mary*

Volunteer of the zonetta of Turin, at 14 years old Carlo began to work in a factory to help maintain his family. His living devotion to Mary made him accept with enthusiasm the invitation to know the Movement and subsequently to take an active part in it. Every year he would attend the Mariapolis in Fiera di Primiero, which he would reach by scooter, leaving his work and the evening and arriving early morning, always bringing with him new friends. Soon he shared the ideal also to his sisters, his mother, his brother. In the meantime, he moved with his family to Ivrea where he continued to spread the Ideal to as many people as possible.

In 1963 he married Teresa and they had three children. In the meantime Carlo became a Volunteer and with Teresa they began to participate in the meetings of the New Families.

His job as a goldsmith led to his transfer with the family to Massa-Carrara, where with Teresa they contributed to building the family of the Movement there.



After seven years they return once again to Turin and for a period Carlo was responsible for a nucleus. A Volunteer recalled those years: «I would look forward to the meeting as if it were the most beautiful thing to happen during the week. Carlo, with his meekness, his love in listening and his wisdom, radiated peace and joy. In him one could feel the presence of our

heavenly Mother». Many in fact said, that in his way of building relationships one could see his great love for Mary. In the final years of his life he became more and more merciful and attentive to the needs of those who passed beside him: a young man in prison and his family, a teen who had difficulty in finding direction in life. There were so many who found in him support and participation in their life as if they were the favoured child.

On March 10, at 83 years old, after days when he continuously recited the «Hail Mary», he serenely left this world surrounded by Teresa, his family and the community of the Movement.

*Fabrizio Fracchia*

# Bona Fide Adolf Oswin Selemani

*Jesus Forsaken,  
her preferential choice*

Bona Fide, Volunteer, is originally from Kapalala, a village in the diocese of Mbeya in Tanzania. She was 34 years old when she met the Ideal which she welcomed with great enthusiasm and which became the all of her life. With love she shared it to her children and to many, many others. In spite of the fact that she was earning well, she tried to live simply so as to be able to give to those in need. She was profoundly grateful to Chiara for having taught her how to love Jesus Forsaken everytime He presented himself she made a preferential choice of Him. Her precarious health caused her to spend



many months in bed. In her suffering she would repeat: «trials and storms may come, but I will never abandon the Ideal».

In her final weeks of life she affirmed that she felt a special relationship with Chiara and with Paradise. On May 20, at just 50 years old, after having received the anointing of the sick from her cousin

Bishop Eusebious Nzigilwa, Bona Fides made her flight to God. She will be remembered for her docility, her smile, her contagious joy, her ability to listen, the courage she transmitted also to those who were on the brink of giving up and who, thanks to her, found the strength to start again.

*Amity Purity*



## Maria Rosaria Fedele Rossi

*There was the atmosphere of Paradise in her home*

At 23 years old, Maria Rosaria, of the Zonetta of Naples, participated in the Mariapolis of Fiera di Primiero. The discovery of God Love turned her life upside-down, so much so that she wanted to spend some time in the focolare center in Rome before her wedding. When she returned, she married Enzo: and thus began her adventure as a wife and mother of four children. Her house was always open to welcome above all the men and women focolarini who came to her city. A Volunteer, she later became responsible for a nucleo; she would prepare carefully and thoroughly for each meeting so as to give life to the presence of Jesus in the midst.

Welcoming, determined, generous, attentive to the needs of others, she bore witness to the beauty of God. She loved the Madonna with great faith and drew spiritual energy from the Eucharist and from the unity with the whole Movement. When she could no longer participate in some meetings, she tried nevertheless to live whatever emerged from each meeting.

As her strength diminished, she offered her sufferings for the Movement, supported by the community. On May 30, at the age of 82, her journey towards God was completed. «With a few gestures she revealed her soul», the priest at her funeral said. «Rosaria was like a second mother for me – an adherent declared - she was always available and ready to listen. In her house we breathed the atmosphere of Paradise».

*Matilde Mondella Viola*

**I nostri parenti** The following passed on to the Next Life: **Rose, mother of Ala Maria**, focolarina in India; **the mother of Monika Maria Grotz**, focolarina in Yogyakarta (Indonesia); **the mother of Anabel Santaolalla**, focolarina in Madrid; **Henry, brother of Sadie Calvo**, focolarina in San José (Costa Rica); the mother of **Leonie Ratodiarimalala**, focolarina in the Mariapolis Piero (Kenya); **Caterina, mother of Angela Wew**, focolarina in Bangkok; **Alexis, brother of Esperance Nzisabira**, focolarina in Togo; **Mario, brother of Emilce Torres**, focolarina in Argentina.

## Enrica Michelangioli Canni

*«Lord you know everything, you know that I love you» (Jn 21,1-14)*

Everyone remembers Enrica - Volunteer of the Zonetta of Milan – as a person who was always ready to love, open to the will of God, a woman capable of looking at suffering humanity and to participate with all of herself to alleviate the difficulties. With her passion to unify the city of men with the city of God she became a reference point for many. In profound unity with her husband Salvatore, with a great commitment she accepted and concluded different activities in the ecclesial and social fields. Their house in the mountains was always open to welcome anyone.



At more than seventy years old she found the will and the courage to enroll at the Institute of Higher Learning for Religious Sciences in order to deepen her theological and biblical knowledge, sitting for all the exams. Thanks to her competence, she collaborated with the UPM, giving lessons and exams with great seriousness but always attentive in helping and encouraging everyone.

Until her strength allowed it, she participated in the meetings of the Movement; when, a year ago, she was able to go for the last time in focolare, she was radiant, grateful to God for the gift of being able «to go back one more time to my family». On April 16, at the age of 94 anni, Enrica went to meet Jesus, to whom she had always turned to with faith repeating, with her words and with her life, that phrase of St. Peter that Chiara had given to her as her Word of life: «Lord you know everything, you know that I love you».

*Francesca Scauda Candeloro*

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Our relatives

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