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NEWSLETTER OF THE FOCOLARE MOVEMENT

YEAR XXXV JULY•AUGUST



Genfest 2018  
«Beyond all  
borders»  
in Manila

**50° in Ottmaring**  
The fruits  
of a «dream»  
of unity

**In Burkina Faso**  
Journalists  
in dialogue  
the African way

Genfest 2000



# «Moment of God»

Rocca di Papa, March 11, 1975

Dear Gen,

The Genfest is over but it has remained because, as we had hoped, it was truly a *moment of God*.

Letters are pouring in from all over the world with the most honest, moving and powerful testimonies to what God brought about in those two days.

You did really well Gen! But you weren't the ones to making such a resounding success of an event which could have passed off like any other.

It was God who did it. God was among you ... *there is no human explanation for this phenomenon*, the fact that so many people came.

Jesus is the explanation. He alone truly knows how to understand young people and once they have found Him, they follow Him.

Genfest 2018



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There were 20,000 of us there and yet how many more of us are there throughout the world? God knows how many there are...

All we know is that we are pushed from within to share our discovery with as many young people as possible.

We know that we have found the Teacher of life, of our life, and that He is the one towards whom we are heading, all united as brothers and sisters.

Each one of us is like a firebrand cast onto our part of the world. Those just beginning this experience might not feel quite like that, but by strengthening their unity with others, their firebrand will burn all the more brightly. Our revolution needs to spread: young people are waiting and searching for it yet they are going off-track. We were given a hand with the Genfest so let's give others a hand and grow in number! The guide to our life is the Gospel, which will never pass away. With Jesus' words, the world could be turned upside down. What is stopping us? Is it the daily news of delinquency among young people, the gutter press, the spread of evil or the sickness of drugs or hedonism?

No! The Gospel conquers all these things.

If we were able to live mutual love for two days, it's possible for us to live like that for our whole life.

Stay close to those who have been living this way for longer. Don't fall by the wayside and don't let yourselves be fooled by those who offer you teachers who are less qualified than ours.

The Gospel prepares us immediately with our feet on the ground to begin the revolution, and the Gospel keeps its promises.

Be living Gospels and amaze the world with your mutual love, attracting both young and old along our way.

Yes, the Genfest was a *point of arrival*. However, it should also be a *point of departure*.

From now on, God should write the story of our life that is His plan for us.

So let's go ahead in the divine adventure! The world belongs to the Truth. Everything else is destined to collapse. The Truth is Jesus.

*Yours, Chiara*

From *GEN*, February 1977



# GENFEST 2018 Beyond all borders

**Six thousand from 99 Countries, many of them Youth for a United World, together for the Genfest 2018, held for the first time in Asia from July 6th to 8th , entitled «Beyond all borders». Around a dozen Genfests in synergy in various parts of the world**

Since its inception in Italy in 1973, the Genfest has become a venue for young people to concretely demonstrate that a united world is possible. It was last celebrated in 2012 in Budapest, Hungary the first one held outside of Italy where thousands of youth from across the world participated. There too, all participants witnessed the launching of the “United World Project.” Since then, many endeavors have become reality majority of which were initiated in the subsequent years and were culminating in these days leading to the Genfest in Manila.

## The founding core in Asia

Embarking anew on this colossal and formidable task of organizing a world event, it is inevitable to trace back the very core from which all this creativity, stamina, and grace reverberates. It was in 1966 that through Chiara Lubich's initiative, Fr. Guido Mirti (Cengia) and Giovanna Vernuccio (Gio) established the first men and women respective Focolare Centers in Manila. Nobody knew then that it would evolve to what it is now, what social impact it would have in the Asian continent. From the two modest Focolares in Manila the focolarini and the focolarine, together with the local married focolarini sposati sposati slowly established Focolare communities first in Hongkong, then in Japan, Korea, Thailand, India, Pakistan, Vietnam and eventually in Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia and Myanmar. In the 52 years that passed, the Focolare Movement in the Philippines has evolved as the power house that would catapult the development of these Focolare communities in the whole of Asia where all the vocations have flourished and where all the branches and mass movements in the Focolare's organizational structure came into a living reality bearing fruits of unimaginable proportions; such as the Focolare Carpentry and Training Center. It was born in 1968 in a small shed with just two carpenters to help the youth and the teens and now it has 80 full-time workers. Then

there was the birth of the «Bukas Palad» Foundation, a social center which, since 1983, has been helping to improve the life of around ten thousand families among the poorest in Manila, through its feeding programme and free medical assistance for around seven thousand children and its livelihood projects. These are just two examples of the many developmental projects geared towards the society, that have been realized precisely in the Philippines.

## The liveliness of the preparations

In this context we must consider also the liveliness of all the work that preceded the Genfest 2018.

An international, ecumenical, interreligious and above all an intercultural team prepared the event – Carlo Gentile and Ding Dalisay, delegates of the Movement in the Philippines said. «Beyond all borders» did



not just mean going beyond one's borders, but going beyond all barriers in working styles, communication, interaction. The power of the Ideal, the fecundity of the Pact that was constantly renewed, the strength to overcome together every obstacle was clearly visible.

There were numerous «pre-Genfest» activities held in different localities in the Philippines: Dumaguete, Palawan, Davao, Cebu, Masbate and Tacloban in the south, Pangasinan, La Union and Baguio City in the north. While those in India, Thailand, Vietnam, Hongkong, and Korea were socio-cultural and inter-religious activities, they were organized with the main



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objective of offering the youth participants, who are coming to the Genfest in Manila, the opportunity to have a first-hand experience of universal brotherhood, that it is within reach, and that it is already a reality. The experience left most participants with an overwhelming desire to take the initiative of reliving this experience in their daily life, first within their family, next in the proximity of their community and environment and finally to society in general.

Looking closely at the different parts of the world where the «United World Project» was launched, certain commonalities come into evidence: the Youth for a United World has gained ground in realizing a global network of initiatives with fraternity as an end in mind. By being active protagonists of concretizing universal brotherhood they have meaningfully touched the lives of many people from different facets of society, especially those of other beliefs and religions, the underprivileged, the victims of injustice and the marginalized that do not

allow them to lead normal and peaceful lives. All the aspects of human life were taken into consideration: economy, human rights, interpersonal, intercultural and interreligious relationships, politics, education, the relationship with the environment, social media and communication, the arts. This is the springboard by which Genfest 2018 would enter the scene.

## The ribbon-cutting ceremony



Let us walk through the different stages. The ribbon-cutting ceremony was presided over by Emmaus Maria Voce and Jesús Morán. Immediately after, the people were accompanied to a pavilion to experience an interactive presentation called *ExpLo* which combined elements of different artistic forms. Guests at the *ExpLo* went through a twenty-minute interactive journey of life through self-discovery beginning with an exploration of the self or «the person», and continuing on to the five fundamental dimensions of the person as represented by the «word», «body», «earth», «heaven» and «future». The *ExpLo* was engaging and educational to the young people resulting to their being better informed on how they can be active protagonists in the story of a united humanity. In the evening, participants witnessed an exchange of culture and arts as expressed in varying forms such as songs, dances, mimes and instrument playing.

An innovation that was introduced in this 11th edition of the Genfest was the workshops and forums that were organized on the second day of the Genfest 2018. More than a hundred simultaneous workshops and forums on a wide variety of topics includ-



In Manila, happily waiting under the rain in front of the World Trade Center

ing politics, the media, economics, culture, sports, ecology and others were held in De La Salle University and other venues. The topics for each workshop and forum were selected by the Y4UW of the Philippines and other countries in a series of consultations on topics of interest they wished to learn and discuss. Authorities and experts in the particular subject matter were invited to lead the workshops and forums. The workshops and forums at their closing achieved their objective to empower these young people to think beyond themselves, to overcome borders and to do acts of kindness and love when they return to their respective communities.

### «Hands for humanity»

The youth participated in the activities of «Hands for humanity», coordinated by the «Bukas Palad» Foundation and other organizations, through workshops or forums that gave them the opportunity to acquire concrete experiences through various acts of generosity performed in various parts of the city. Among these were the: The Big Clean and Green Drive, *Teatrong Lansangan* (Street Theatre), See What I Feel (immersion with the blind). I Hear What I See (immersion with the deaf), Feeding 2000 (a feeding programme for children), Mangrove Coastal Cleanup in Manila Bay, Cheers for the Elderly, Feeding Program for Muslim Children, visit



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to the Mabuhay Buddhist Temple and Trash to Treasure. These were experiences that allowed the youth to do concrete actions and to «get involved» with the sector of humanity that was around them. In the afternoon, «Time Out for Peace», a solemn moment for a deeper experience of communion among people of different backgrounds was held. The second day of the Genfest 2018 was highlighted with an international night entitled “A United World”, celebrated through testimonies, songs and artistic, as well as folkloristic presentations from participants all over the world. One could feel an atmosphere of belonging to one human family where diversity was given value through solidarity and unity.

A solemn moment incisively expressed the encounter with the Ideal as the answer to many tragedies in the world today and the expectations in the hearts of the youth. The discovery of Jesus Forsaken, contextu-



600 actors onstage, dancers, singers and musicians chosen after a worldwide audition, like the 10 songs written by the gen and youth

# Pathways for a United World

**The «Many roads for a United World» proposed by Chiara Lubich in the Genfest of 1985, found a new impetus in the Genfest 2018**

The «Pathways for a United World», a course fully inserted in the «United World Project» was launched in Manila. It is based on «Many roads for a United World», a strategy proposed by Chiara to the Youth for a United World on the occasion of their birth during the Genfest 1985. It is a view of all the aspects of human life from the perspective of fraternity and indicates topics in the fields of economy, justice, politics, the environment, intercultural and interreligious dialogue, to be realized through in-depth studies, concrete actions and projects principally developed on the local level, but shared globally.



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The first Pathway – without excluding the others – that was proposed in Manila has a «reddish» hue: «Economy, work and communion», to answer to the growing inequality that is being experienced in the world today.

This pathway would like to offer also a concrete contribution to achieving the Goals for Sustainable Development of the Agenda 2030 of the United Nations, which has as its core the project «Zero Hunger».

In the website: [www.UnitedWorldProject.org](http://www.UnitedWorldProject.org) we will be making available the points to be deepened, lines of action, initiatives and concrete projects that are already ongoing.

This is a pathway that is already open which we can build together: [pathways@unitedworldproject.org](mailto:pathways@unitedworldproject.org)

<http://www.unitedworldproject.org/partecipate/pathways-to-fraternity/>

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alized in the strong experience of an young man from Iraq was very timely. The story of Chiara, her answer to the love of God, her leaving everything for Him, the discovery of the Gospel and that page of Jesus' testament were interpreted by a group of young people to show that in the «Chiara after » period we are all in this together.

In the evening dedicated to the international celebration entitled «A United World» one could feel an atmosphere of belonging, of being part of a common humanity wherein diversity was given value by solidarity and unity.

### The invitation

On the third day a Mass was concelebrated by the numerous Bishops and priests present. In his homily, card. Tagle, archbishop of manila, who had closely followed the preparations of the genfest, invited the young people to listen to the call of God and follow Him.

Jesús Morán shared his life experience and of how he was enamoured by the ideals of the Gen during his youth, so much so that he decided to give his life for unity and to answer to God's call. He encouraged the youth to have this passion for a united world.

Maria Voce indicated the way with three words that echoed like a wish and a guide: to love, to start again and to share. «Chiara has given you a challenge – she told them – and it is to be men and women of unity, who are able to bring in their heart the characteristic treasures of every culture and to share them with others: global men and women. [...] We know that the tip of an iceberg rests on a submerged base: and so fraternity is built on these daily gestures and actions done with a strong conviction that the most powerful instrument that we can use to renew the world is our heart. As long as our heart is beating, we can love, we can start again, we can share. Universal fraternity begins from my heart, from our heart».

Many were certainly in awe because of the tremendous impact that the Genfest 2018 had in their youthful lives. Davit, a Gen from Manila, who was part of the international team that prepared the Genfest shared that while he was a passive participant in 2012, this time he had taken a more active role and that he felt being called strongly to be an active contributor for a united world

Among the «post-Genfest» activities, the Youth for a United World also enthusiastically participated in a School in Tagaytay City, in the Mariapolis Peace, the little town of the Movement there.



The entire event was an initiative of the whole Movement in collaboration with the Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP), the Commission for higher education (CHED) and UNESCO.

As the last notes of a song faded in the main hall, everyone could literally sense that these three days' activities have impressed upon him or her a breath so freshly reminiscent of authentic freedom and liberation that only come when universal love pervades as was recounted by Jesus Moran when he shared his life experience. Undoubtedly, we can say in all truthfulness, that this Genfest will remain as a true experience of God.

*BJ Funk, from Manila*

To view the Genfest again:  
<https://www.youtube.com/user/genfest2012/videos>

# Gen3 in action getting involved in «#Zero Hunger»

**Sports and civic commitment were interwoven this year in the programmes of the international congresses of the gen3 girls and boys held in the month of June**



In Loppiano the gen3 boys «got involved» tackling the topic of sports with a special deepening on the problem of world hunger. This was a theme that was also the central point of the gen3 girls' congress held in Castel Gandolfo. The Goal «Zero Hunger», which means to eliminate hunger and poverty by the year 2030, is in accordance with the 17 Goals for Sustainable development that the Member States of the UN approved, committing themselves to realizing them within a span of 15 years (2015-2030). The FAO (Food & Agricultural Organization) of the UN is particularly involved in this Goal. It is in view of this that the new generations of the Focolare Movement are in the frontline to work for this Goal. For the gen3 girls their commitment was realized also through a visit to the main headquarters of this United Nations organization in Rome where they received the passport as the first citizens of #Zero Hunger.

## THE GEN3 BOYS

### In the game of life... give the best of yourself

In Loppiano a school for sports animators and assistants for teens of gen3 age and a congress of gen3 boys from ages 9 to 13.

«What is the difference between Eduardo and his backpack?». This is how the first course for sports animators of the gen3 began in the School for those who were preparing to become gen3 assistants. In Loppiano from June 16th to 24th, we were the protagonists for nine days. Coming from six Nations, our formation consisted in discovering the «Invisible One in sports».

Halfway through the week the teens aged 9 to 13 arrived. «Up to that moment I thought that it would be easy to stay with them, helping them to experience and live reciprocal love. But when I saw them getting off the bus, I understood that I had to make a “leap of quality” in the relationships with the other gen3 with whom I had shared the first few days together, but above all I had to grow in my relationship with Jesus. Their joy emanated all over even from their backpacks bursting with sleeping bags, foldable mattresses etc. To see them was like “diving” into a heart full of joy».

The title of the congress was: «The game is... to get involved». Naturally the theme was focused on playing the game and on sports, but we also talked about the problem of hunger in the world.

One characteristic of how we lived these days together was ... getting involved! There were five inputs that set the tone everyday: 1) to give the best of yourself... participating with joy; 2) to treat everyone with respect: everyone is important; 3) never give up, even when everything seems difficult; 4) to applaud the success of the others as if it were your own; 5) because the biggest goals can only be achieved together.



Aside from personal commitment, team spirit was fundamental, it was a very important dynamics for our personal growth, because it helped us to overcome individualism and the solitude that we often find around us. This was seen also in the experiences that many shared during the evening vigil at the conclusion of the congress where we gave each one a copy of the Gospels

After these days, we had the confirmation of what we had answered to the question we were asked on the first day regarding the backpack.

The backpack would return home the same as when it arrived; instead each one of us would be going home transformed, enriched by all that we had experienced.

The little city of Loppiano was the most suitable background to make such an experience. One of the inhabitants described those days of our «invasion» in this way: «I want to immediately express my gratitude for the invasion of the gen3 into our houses here in Loppiano ... I could feel that our little city experienced a wave of life and of joy. The children and the teens bring with them a blessing, which is more than their natural and very beautiful innocence and simplicity. They remind us that as adults, unless we strive to keep a whiff of that innocence in us, we will never enter the Kingdom and above all that every child is everyone's child».

*the gen3 boys of the School*



## THE GEN3 GIRLS

### The strength to follow Jesus and... being the first citizens of «Zero Hunger»

We deepened the life of the first Christian communities, where the breath of the Spirit gave them the strength to follow Jesus even up to the point of martyrdom. During our visit to FAO it was a moment that spoke of the future.

«Can you hear Lithuanian? Slovakian? Albanese ? ...». The checking of the translations is a regular task: we are more than 600 gen3 girls, from ages 9 to 13, gathered together for our congress held in Castel Gandolfo from June 21th to 24th.

We discovered that we came from 17 European nations and even from Brazil! Many were gen4: this was notable because of the never-ending line of those who were walking through the flowered arch, a symbol of «passing» on to gen3.

With skits, experiences and the sharing of experts, we deepened the life of the first Christian communities and the action of the Holy Spirit.

We took advantage of every moment to get to know each other, to play, dance together, in group with different nationalities we understood each other with the help of the few English words that we knew and ... the help of the assistants. Like the first Christians we put into big baskets which we brought to the altar, the communion of goods that we had gathered throughout the year.

One of the most special moments was our trip to Rome, where we visited

## At the FAO with our Commitment Card: Head, Heart and Hands!

The Charism forms people with great ideals, with a heart that beats to the rhythm of today with global horizons and dimensions, but very concrete. The gen3 were an example of this, when they went as guests for a day in the Rome headquarters of the FAO. The reason for their visit was to give an impetus to the awareness of the activities focusing towards the goal of «Zero Hunger» to be fulfilled by 2030. Today 800 million people in the world suffer from hunger. In the last 10 years this data has decreased, while last year, because of the wars and climate change it has started to increase again.



Last June 22nd 2018 the gen3 girls entered the prestigious Plenary Hall which is usually occupied by the ambassadors of the different member Countries. This was a first, also for FAO. On that occasion there was a live streaming link-up with the 400 gen3 boys in Loppiano and with many others.

the headquarters of FAO and then the catacombs.

At FAO we were welcomed in the plenary hall which is usually occupied by the ambassadors of the different Countries: and this was the first time that the hall was filled with many very young girls. But ours was not just a sim-

It was a great honour, joy and emotion for the gen3 girls. And a surprise for the administrators of this worldwide institution: «I am really happy to see this hall full of young women» commented Marcela Villareal, director of the FAO Division for partnership and cooperation South-South. «I have been working for FAO for more than 20 years, I have spoken an infinite number of times in this hall, but I have never seen it this beautiful. Today all of you will become the first citizens of “Zero Hunger”. With the rights and duties that must be respected».

But what are the duties of citizens of “Zero Hunger”? «A third of the world’s food is wasted and is thrown away as garbage», affirmed Laura Hernández from the FAO office for diffusion and promotional activities. «There are things that you can do at home. For example when there is left-over food, you can freeze it and eat it the next day. In the restaurant too, what is left-over can be taken home ...».

In profound silence, Elena and Agnese, two gen3, began to speak: «We are greatly honoured and happy to be here. We truly feel that we are part of the Generation “Zero Hunger”. Only by uniting our efforts, can we reach such a high objective of “Zero Hunger” by 2030».

Some gen3 gathered ideas in order to understand how to solve the problem of hunger in the world and made their own commitment Card, expressed by a motto, that of the

three H: head, heart and hands . «“Head” for us means to be informed and to study the problem both on a worldwide level and in our own city. “Heart” means that we have to become more aware ourselves and share this to many others too. We must involve as many people as possible in order to reach our goal. And finally we must do concrete actions using our “Hands”».

At the end of the visit, the gen3 submitted their commitment Cards. Then the symbolic gesture of the passport. They all became the first citizens of #ZeroHunger.

In the corridors of FAO these comments were heard: «We must do this every year». Thank you... this meeting did more good for us than for the young girls... we who are here always within these four walls. They have given meaning to our work here». A security guard commented as the gen3 were leaving: «This is our future...».



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ple visit, it was to ratify a commitment which we had already made: to work so that by 2030 no one would ever again die of hunger.

This responsibility, taken in our road towards a united world, inflames us and helps us to live today like the first Christians. In the catacombs, we got to know the radicalness

of their lives and we asked Jesus to give us their same courage. Every gen went home with two symbols: a small lamp, to signify our promise to bring Jesus in the midst everywhere and the passport as the first citizens of «Zero Hunger».

*Irene Hosmer (14 years old)*



In preparation for the meeting of the Delegates of the Movement 2018

## A renewed enthusiasm for «That all may be One»

**In the zones and at the centre preparations are ongoing for the annual meeting of the Delegates.** Among the topics foreseen, besides the theme of the year there will be a deepening of the talk of Pope Francis in Loppiano, ecumenism and a special look at *Pathways for a United World* launched at the Genfest of Manila in the context of the UWP: a high potential for the whole Movement

After the 2017 meeting exclusively for the Delegates of the Zone, this year they return for the appointment in Castel Gandolfo comprised of more sessions, this time two and a more «substantial» presence of the Movement:

12th -23th September

Asia, Latin America,  
North America and Oceania;

3rd -14th October

Africa, Middle East and Europe

In each of the 22 Zones, the following are preparing to participate with the delegates of the Zone and those responsible for the zonette: Volunteers, priests, gen2, Family-Focolares, leaders of local communities, and representatives of the Zone and zonetta Councils. There will be around 280 people in each of the sessions, besides 65 members of the General Council.

We asked Vida Rus and Augusto Parody, councillors at the Centre of the Movement for respectively for North America and Latin America, about the contents of the meeting.

## Can you tell us something about the programme?

Each session will last for two weeks. The first will be dedicated above all to deepen the theme that will guide the Movement during 2018/19: «The Holy Spirit, soul of the Church».

In this context we would like to «dig deeper» into the talk of Pope Francis in Loppiano. As Emmaus said, it is a programmatic talk and it is necessary to analyse in depth its contents; the Delegates too, who compose the commission and with whom we are working in the preparation of the programme, expressed how much the Zones are waiting for this meeting.

During the first week a special emphasis will be given to the life of the Zones locally also through the meetings of Emmaus and Jesús with each Big Zone, with the presence of all the participants: a worldwide communion that will help to widen hearts to the measure of «that all may be one».

A topic that will be given particular importance is ecumenism. During these years we have lived a greater commitment in this regard, sealed by the Declaration of Ottmaring in February 2017. Significant experiences have emerged such as the Chiara Lubich-Athenagoras Chair at Sophia, the ecumenical Week and also the personal experience of Emmaus which was highlighted during her latest trips to Palermo and Greece, as well as the participation of Jesús Morán in Geneva on the occasion of the 70° anniversary of the World Council of Churches. We would like to focus more on this reality in order to understand better the specific, essential contribution of the charism of unity to ecumenical dialogue.

During the second week we will tackle the objectives that we hope to attain in

the coming two years: the «new sowing», the younger generations, the incarnation of the Charism with a special focus on the mass movements. These are the topics that emerged during the retreat 2018 of the General Council which were put into focus and enriched during the dialogue with the Delegates during our journeys. We gathered this expectation: «Topics?». Yes, few and very concrete. Therefore we start from life, from experiences: a patrimony which when shared can be a source of enrichment and stimulus for everyone.

To give continuity in a particular way on the local and global level, we will also deepen the «Pathways for a United World» launched in the Genfest of Manila as part of the «United World Project»: a great potential for the entire Movement.

During the afternoon sessions of this second week there will be occasions to meet, according to the needs of each Zone, with the Councillors of the Aspects, the centres of the branches and the dialogues.

## How are you preparing for this meeting?

An *ad hoc* committee, composed of members of the General Council and Delegates in the Zones, have been working on this for some months now.

We are aware of the great diversity of the Zones, that live in social contexts with unique and specific challenges. And so the greatest attention will be given to the unity among us, to listening to each other, during the two meetings that will be held.

This atmosphere of reciprocal love will help us to understand together how to go ahead with a renewed enthusiasm in our journey towards «That all may be one».

*prepared by the editorial board*

# It will be the future that will come to us

**A symposium from June 22nd to 24th to celebrate the 50 years of a place that has faithfully borne witness through its life that unity is possible**

«Ottmaring – a sacred place. A place of strength, of communion of love. A place both protective and open. A place to praise God. A place of mission towards the “sacred places” in these dark times, in these times of uncertainty, a place where God resides». This is what Ernst Öffner, regional bishop-emeritus of the Lutheran Church in Augsburg wrote in the guest book - «with great gratitude in my heart» - before he left the Symposium.



A «round table discussion» with friends of various Christian communities

There were 240 participants who came, to «celebrate, express our gratitude and encourage», guided by the verse from the Gospel of John which was used as the title of the Symposium: «The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us ... (Jn 1:14)».

From the very first moment an atmosphere of family was created, as if among «companions on a journey». Present were friends from different Christian Churches communities, various personalities (the regional Evangelical Bishop of Augsburg, Michael Grabow with his wife; the Roma-

nian Orthodox metropolitan for Germany and central Europe, Serafim Joantă; the person in-charge of ecumenism for the Evangelical Church in Bavaria, Maria Stettner, and the mayor of Friedberg, Roland Eichmann), and the inhabitants of the Centre . It was defined as a «celebration for the glory of God», for Him who more than 50 years ago had guided communities which were so different (The community of common life and the Community of the Cross ( - Bruderschaften - and the Focolare Movement) to begin an original and concrete ecumenical adventure. CONTROLLARE CON MARIA SULLE BRUDERSHAFT IN PLURALE.

In the rich and varied programme, there were stories, talks, deep communion, video-flash, photos, prayers, liturgies, moments of relaxation and deepening. With gratitude there were memories shared of the beginnings and the «common founders», Chiara Lubich and Pastor Klaus Hess. Even as the important steps of these past decades were recalled there was no nostalgia for past times, but what prevailed was the gratitude and trust in God, who had accompanied the Centre and its inhabitants in the ups and downs of this adventure. He gave them the courage to overcome the inevitable misunderstandings and the possible incongruencies encountered in this ecumenical collaboration between three communities whose Churches are still on the way to restoring unity.

The wellwishes that came from all over expressed gratitude and profound apprecia-

tion such as those from Cardinal Kasper and Cardinal Kurt Koch, from the Apostolic Nuncio in Venezuela, Bishop Aldo Giordano, from Rabbi Henry G. Brandt. Maria Voce in her message said: «“The Lord has done great things” [Psalm 125 (125),3] in these years! Your ecumenical experience, which is based on a communion that is already a reality has brought so much fruit in and among the Churches, This journey, substantiated by a tried and tested faithfulness, is a beacon of light that has reached many parts of the world».

Many local politicians expressed their gratitude for «having found in the ecumenical Centre of life a trusted partner, always ready to collaborate and to give an example of openness and dialogue in society».

Touching experiences came from people who as youngsters had spent some time in Ottmaring and who now – after 15, 20 years – do not hesitate to say that that experience has revealed many of their talents and capabilities thanks to having «experienced the freedom to develop themselves and to decide to choose God». They «found the place to discover the best of themselves in a whole that was much greater than the parts».

Even if the event was prepared with much attention and love for more than a year, none of the inhabitants expected such a response: «It



Metropolitan Serafim, Peter Forst, Andrea Grabow, Michael Grabow (regional Bishop of the Evangelical Church of Augsburg), Maria Magerl, Franz Sedlmeier (professor of the Old Testament from Augsburg)

seemed as if the entire hall was like an echo chamber, that gave back to us in a totally new way all that we have prepared. An effect which can only be explained in unity: you give one thing and you receive it back with a new and amplified echo». «It made us recall that page of *Paradise '49* where Chiara speaks of the Trinitarian life. It involved and included everything – past, present and future!». A future – all those present were convinced – that «is fascinating, not because of the projects that we will do, but because in them, it will be the Spirit who will be meeting us halfway. We will understand this by listening together to His voice, that will make itself heard as in the past».

Gabi Ballweg



Moments of profound communion



# permanent Mariapolises Priviledged venues of fraternity

**In the wake of the Pope's historical visit to Loppiano,  
a week-end to focus on the seven permanent  
Mariapolises of Western Europe**

Western Europe, a vast Zone, with its 14 "zonette" (from Portugal to Belgium, from Spain to Finland), the seven little towns<sup>1</sup> and the two Mariapolis Centres. A beautiful design of the «WE» to look at with new eyes and the overwhelming push given by the meeting with Pope Francis in Loppiano last May 10th.



The persons responsible for these different structures, together with the delegates of the Movement in the Zone, Maria Verhegge and Henri-Louis Roche, as well as with the councillors of the Center of the Movement for Europe, Donna Kempt and Severin Schmid, and those of the aspect of the Blue, Vita Zanolini and Vitek Valtr, tried to do this from the 8th to the 10th of June in

1 **Belgium**, Mariapolis Vita; **France**, Arny, People of God; **Great Britain**, Welwyn Garden City, Bernard Pawley; **Ireland**, Lieta; **Netherlands**, Mariënkroon; **Portugal**, Arco Iris; **Spain**, Exterior Castle.

Arny, the permanent Mariapolis of France.

At the end of those «three days» we can say: mission accomplished, over and beyond our expectattions through a collective discernment regarding the future of the seven little towns and their sustainability. It was a very strong experience if reciprocity between zonette-zone-little town-center, with a vision always open to the world.

As the basis of all this was the meeting fFebruary 2018 in Castel Gandolfo, where they studied in-depth the 25 permanent Mariapolises of the Movement in the world, their reality, their design and realization Emmaus Voce and Jesús Morán in that occasion underlined, among other things, that there is nothing lacking in a little town which bears witness to the world of reciprocal love among its members of various vocations who live there permanently. Thus every little town, even if it is small, is a privileged venue where one can make an experience of God and of fraternity.



## From the talk of Pope Francis in Loppiano

The charisma of unity is a providential stimulus and a powerful support for experiencing this evangelical mystic of the “we”, that is, walking together in the history of the men and women of our time as «of one heart and soul». [...] It is not only a spiritual fact, but a concrete reality with formidable results — if we live it and if we authentically and courageously affirm its various dimensions — at the social, cultural, political, economic levels.... Jesus redeemed not only the individual person, but also social relations (cf. *Evangelii Gaudium*, n. 178). Taking this fact seriously means moulding a new face of the city of men according to God’s loving plan. [...] You are just at the beginning. It is a small seed cast into the furrows of history and already sprouting and thriving, but it must root itself firmly and bear substantial fruit, at the service of the mission of the message and the incarnation of the Gospel of Jesus which the Church is called to live today. And this requires humility, openness, synergy, a capacity to risk. We must use all of this: humility and a capacity to risk, together, openness and synergy. We must make use of all of these. (dovresti mettere dove hai preso ... traduzione ufficiale del sito penso )

Sharing joys, sufferings, challenges, we experienced that it is only in the reciprocity between “zonetta” and the little town and together with the Zone as a whole, can the little town realize itself according to the design of God. Just as the “zonetta” form the Zone through the reciprocal love among them, so too the little towns revealed themselves to be just one reality that emerged from the communion of their specific characteristics. We saw them as «one permanent Mariapolis» distributed in seven Countries and this made us catch a glimpse of something about the unity of the European continent in its diversity.

«To live» and experience this meeting in a little town like Arny, with few infrastructures, brought us to the essential: witness before everything else, a focus on the life of reciprocal love among its inhabitants and the words of Chiara in her extraordinary talk in Loppiano in 1980 regarding the law of the Little towns.

Among other things, we realized that a little town can bear abundant fruits and can fulfil its beneficial function, in the measure in which all the members of the Movement in their respective “zonetta”, also those that cannot directly commit themselves in it, have the little towns in their heart.

We concluded the meeting with the pact of reciprocal love, also among the little towns, placing our signatures behind the map of the 25 little towns in the world.

*Donna Kempt, Severin Schmid, Vita Zanolini, Vitek Valtr, Maria Verhegge, Henri-Louis Roche*



## In North America

# Potentials beyond our expectations

**At the Mariapolis Luminosa the first meeting  
of the women and men Volunteers of North America**



The «new set-up» releases synergies and potentials that are beyond our expectations or maybe still unexpressed; it pushes with renewed strength to be, each one and together, the incarnation of that «design» which is expressed through a precise vocation.

This is what 400 of us men and women Volunteers of North America experienced when we met at the Mariapolis Luminosa last April 26th to 29th. The first big novelty: we were coming from Canada, the USA and from Haiti. Together with us in this «historic» moment were Vida Rus and Ray Asprer, councillors at the Centre of the Movement for the Big Zone of North America, Fanny Bava Furnò and Luca Moser, central delegates of New Humanity, the delegates of the Zone Paloma Cabetas and Enrico Donzelli and all the persons responsible for the Zonetta and the Focolare Centres..

«I understood that the “new set-up» does not change who we are – or better, who we must be. What changes are some of the ways to become who we must be». This is what one of the participants shared.

The programme was woven around the deepening of our faithfulness to the original inspiration of Chiara and the search for new ways

that is needed to remain up-to-date and relevant today. There were sessions on topics such as the «new set-up» and the multi-faceted reality of the Work of Mary, co-responsibility, incarnation and the vocation, communion and the specific communion of good among the Volunteers, the «*Via Mariae* (Way of Mary)».

A common characteristic was the re-discovery of our identity as a «Volunteers of God» today in the Movement and a renewed commitment to incarnate the ideal in our environments: «The moments of suspension, the “blind leaps” of faith, “losing”, but all are a part of the following the plan of God». «The image of New Humanity as a “network of galleries of light” made me understand it in a completely new way: it begins with me, because every act of love that I do for my neighbour lights up a dark gallery and builds fragments of reciprocity. I can be New Humanity in every moment; this gave me courage!».

*the women and men Volunteers  
of North America*





## Gen4

# To see children in the light of the Charism

**In Angola three stopovers to lay the foundations for the project EduxEdu**

It was the first time that Angola was considered as a Country predominantly «young» with a high index of children and adolescents and a great demand for formation. Together with Maria Helena Benjamin and Pep Cánoves, who came specifically for this meeting from the gen4 Centre, they dedicated ten days (May 12th - 22nd) to study together this age group in the light of the Charism and to offer to educators some concrete proposals.

The first stopover, the island of Mussulo, less than 15 kilometers from the port of Luanda, to visit the *Centro Infantil Pequena Chama* (CIPC), a social action that receives financial aid from the support at a distance programme of AFNonlus. Besides the joy experienced by getting to know the children, what was most interesting was the dialogue with the young teachers and workers with whom an attentive evaluation was made of this educational reality that is so important for the development of the island. The work was started by some members of the Movement in the beginning of 1990 when there was the ongoing atrocious war that decimated an entire generation and the

country is now gradually becoming more stable. Their belief in the child and his dignity as a person has had and continues to have today, a strong impact in the organizations of government, in the society of Luanda and in all those who visit the Centre, reawakening in all the commitment to work together for the



building of a new Angola.

Two meetings followed in two different cities, held specifically for assistants and animators, both present and future. The objective was to present also here in Angola the programme of EduxEdu, the educational platform that is spreading with success in various parts of the world.

In Lubango there were 59 participants. The interest shown by the local Church was

important, not only for this project but also for the other activities of the Movement; in Luanda, the capital, there were around 90 participants. Both presentations opened up a wide-ranging dialogue wherein the best of each one emerged. In an epoch in which the educational challenges are almost insurmountable, it was important to see the participants light up with new hope and the renewed enthusiasm to teach; they also expressed appreciation for this proposal to educate the young by educating oneself. There was a unanimous desire to apply this project and to bring it ahead here too, to become protagonists in building one's family, one's environment and as a consequence, Angolan society.

A month after this first meeting other two appointments of EduxEdu were realized in Luanda and in Namibe in the south of the country.

*Isabel Laranjeira,  
Eric Mwangi Irungu*



## Trip to Greece

# The promising fruits of a long sowing

**In Greece upon the invitation of Patriarch Bartholomew to participate in an international Symposium for the preservation of the environment, Maria Emmaus Voce also met the community of the Focolare Movement**



Emmaus was in Greece, from June 5th to 10th. She was invited by Patriarch Bartholomew, organizer of the event, to participate in the Symposium «Towards a greener Attica - Preserve the planet and protects its people». There were more than 200 invited guests, experts and representatives of various Churches and religions. It was therefore also an occasion to meet «many people – Emmaus herself said - who have appreciated our work in the field of ecology and who wanted to know more about our activities in this regard».

Patriarch Bartholomew has been in the frontline for many years working in favour of the environment. Together with Pope Francis they signed a declaration to establish the «Day for the Protection of Creation» which, since 2017, is being celebrated every year on September 1st. The message from Pope Francis was read before the sessions began. (oppure era letto all'inizio del Symposium per cui sarebbe "was read in the opening session".)

Rev. Dr. John Chryssavgis, theological consultant of the ecumenical Patriarch with regards to ecology,

expressed the great esteem and the joy of the Patriarch for the presence of Maria Voce in the Symposium which has brought the closeness of the whole Focolare Movement to him.

The entire Symposium was very interesting. There was a strong sense of responsibility to work towards decreasing air pollution by 2030.

**On June 9th before leaving Greece Emmaus met some members** of the small community in this «Orthodox» land. The



Focolare centre has been present in Athens since 1985 because of the strong ties of esteem and friendship between the ecumenical Patriarch and the Focolare Movement. It was Emmaus herself, being in Istanbul at that time, who saw the community take its first steps.

In Focolare there were around thirty people, Orthodox and Catholic, coming from Athens, Syros and Cyprus. In presenting themselves, each one shared how their encounter with the Charism transformed their life, their way of relating to others, bringing a sense of serenity, of vitality which they strongly hope to continue and to bring to their environments.

They also asked Emmaus some questions on how to go ahead. «Interesting question – Emmaus said - which gave me the chance to deepen and highlight the unique strength that we have: that which comes from Jesus in the midst. Whatever necessity, whatever need arises, we must come together and look for the answers and ways to face them together. Even difficult situations regarding ecumenism, which may seem to us to be at a standstill.

We left each other with the commitment to live in such a way as to bear witness to the presence of God among us, to bear witness to the Gospel».

Here are some of their impressions: «Looking at the situation in Greece where it seems that we are doing so little, I was touched by the answer of Emmaus: it is true that we don't do much, but it is God who makes small things great!». «She put us in what is essential. Thank you for having given us the certainty that we are together along the right path. And this is not something small!».

*prepared by the editorial board*

[See the interview of Emmaus of June 9th 2018 in Mariapoli online](#)



# Dicastery for the Laity, Family and Life

## The word to the youth

At the the annual meeting of ecclesial Movements and new Communities the youth and the coming Synod were at the forefront

«The young people were at the origin of many ecclesial Movements»; «the youth are actively involved in evangelization» and there is «a very close link between the faith experience and the vocational journey». These are some of the points that the cardinal prefect of the Dicastery for the Laity, Family and Life, Kevin Farrell underlined during their annual meeting which had as its theme, «The youth, faith and vocational discernment». The representatives of around forty Movements and Ecclesial Communities, some of whom were accompanied by a young person, met on June 19th in the headquarters of the Dicastery, in Transtevere. The Focolare Movement was



©foto di Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life

The youth of the Movement present in Transtevere in dialogue with card. Baldisseri, on the right is card. Farrell

Introduced by card. Farrell, the meeting also saw the contributions of mons. Carlos Simón Vázquez, delegate for Family and Life, Fr. Alexandre Awi Mello, secretary of the Dicastery, and Giovanna Guerrieri Nalin, from the Office of the Youth.

The interventions of the representatives of the Movements and Communities offered a wide and diversified panorama of the youth reality, the process of accompaniment and vocational discernment, and were listened to with great attention by the participants.

Emmaus highlighted the experience of the Focolare Movement underlining that the «apostolic initiatives directed towards young people in the areas of announcing the faith and of vocation, can be rooted in the characteristic experience born from the charism of unity». Nelson explained how the Sophia University Institute aims to enable the interaction of areas of knowledge through an academic project centred on the experience of communitarian study wherein research, thought and life are integrated together. He also shared about other opportunities for youth formation, such as the



The intervention of Maria Emmaus Voce and Nelson Vanegas from the World Gen Centre

represented by its president Maria Emmaus Voce, accompanied by Nelson Vanegas, Salvadorian, from the World Gen Centre.

The meeting coincided with the publication of the «*Instrumentum laboris*» (Working Document) on which the Bishops would base their discussions in the forthcoming Synod of October dedicated to the youth. Card. Lorenzo Baldisseri, secretary general of the Synod of Bishops, outlined its goals, the expectations and prospects.

# In Dublin

## 9th World Meeting of Families

Joy and expectations in Ireland for the visit of Pope Francis

The inauguration on August 21st will signal the start in Dublin of a series of events with astounding numbers: a Congress (22nd-24th) at the RDS Campus for more than 30.000 participants, linked to specific activities for the 5,000 children that will accompany them. In 60.000 they will welcome Pope Francis in Croke Park for the Festival of the family, with experiences from the five continents and the contributions of international artists.



Sunday 26th the concluding Mass presided by the Holy Father will take place at Phoenix Park where 600.000 persons will be present.

From the start the Focolare community in Ireland were committed to support the activities in preparation for the great event, all centred on the apostolic exhortation *Amoris Laetitia* and proposing to everyone the «dice of the family» prepared by the New Families of Ireland using sayings of Chiara and phrases taken from the exhortation.

The participation of the Focolare Movement in the programme of the international meeting is significant in the various round-table discussions of personalities and families of the Movement, both Irish and also from different parts of the world, who will be asked to give their contribution on various topics: from passing on the faith, to the reason for marrying in Church, from the role of grandparents to the presentation of the catechism to children, from the educational role of the parents to the respect for the planet as our common home.

A sizeable group is involved in the programme for the children where we have been entrusted with two sessions every day. For the artistic part a song composed by a family-focolare inspired by the three «magic» words that Francis suggests to couples: «Thank you, sorry, please» was chosen, while others will form part of the choir for the concluding Mass.

Paola Santostefano

international and national gen schools or congresses during which the youth are given the opportunity for theological and moral formation, fruit of journeying together, according to a style of accompaniment which was confirmed by the words of Pope Francis. The Genfests were also presented as a formative experience that is based on the continuous efforts at inclusion, dialogue, acceptance, welcome and listening to the other.

At the conclusion Emmaus spontaneously spoke up to thank the Vatican Dicastery for having enhanced the communion and sharing among everyone.

*prepared by the editorial board*



# Loppiano

## Two newly elected Administrative Councils

### Loppiano Prima Cooperative

Forty five years of activities, forty five years of life this 2018. An important anniversary for the Loppiano Prima Cooperative which coincides with the Assembly of its members and the changing of the Administrative Council. The new president is Flavio Pezzina.

*Flavio, how was the Assembly 2018 for all your members?*

«There were 600 of us at the Assembly between those who were physically present and those who sent proxies. The numerous participation is an important fact. The Assembly had been prepared with the members in a journey of dialogue, discussion and analysis of the present situation with all its prospects and critical areas».

*According to you, what can the members expects from the new Administrative Council?*

«I believe that they expect from every novelty and rightly so, a change of pace. Certainly it cannot be done with a snap of the fingers. But the work done during these month to create the conditions for change were positively received. The letter of Emmaus and Jesús (see box) was also very important. And finally, I find it dutiful to express my, our gratitude to the

previous Administrative Council who made themselves readily available in this delicate process of transition».

*What is the composition of the new Council?*

«Beside myself , a focolarino residing in Loppiano where I was responsible for the aspect of Economy and work, there is : Beatrice Vecchione, a Volunteer with a long experience of collaboration in some projects of the Movement; Armida Nottoli Biagiotti, a Volunteer from Lucca and an expert in business, *marketing* and economics; Francesco

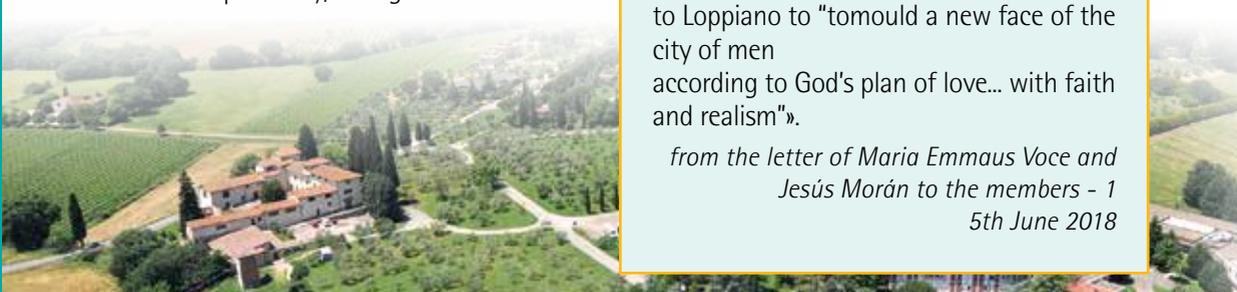
«The Cooperative did not have an easy life, we all know it. Different situations and difficulties have crossed its path throughout these decades, but it has always come out a winner».

from the letter of Jesús Morán to the members - 8th June 2018)

«The Word of Jesus that Chiara gave to the Cooperative at its birth: "Seek first the Kingdom of God and His Justice and all the rest will be given to you besides" (Mt 6:33), echoes today like an invitation that is timely now more than ever because it answers the invitation that Pope Francis gave to Loppiano to "tomould a new face of the city of men

according to God's plan of love... with faith and realism"».

from the letter of Maria Emmaus Voce and Jesús Morán to the members - 1 5th June 2018





Pochetti, a Volunteer and accountant already working in the Cooperative; Francesco Marchi, a graduate of Agriculture and Oenology (wine-making) and a resident of Bologna. Beatrice and I represent a piece of the "historical memory", in the sense that we knew the founders of the Cooperative».

*prepared by the editorial board*

### E. of C. Ltd benefit society

Giorgio Del Signore, 55 years old, from Rome, is the new president of the «E.of C. Ltd benefit society» the managing group of the Lionello Bonfanti Industrial Park. It will be flanked by a Administrative Council that has been enlarged and gifted with greater competencies. As one of the first entrepreneurs who joined the E.o C. he has worked continuously for the Economy of Communion, taking up responsibilities at the local, regional and national levels. He is a founding partner of the Lionello Bonfanti Industrial Park and the AIEC "Associazione Internazionale per una Economia di Comunità" (International Association for an Economy of Communion), and was the contact point for the entrepreneurs of Lazio (AIPEC-Lazio).

*Giorgio, what will be in the next three-year plan for the Lionello Bonfanti Industrial Park?*

«We would like to concentrate on the development of the peculiarities that have strongly motivated the birth of the E.o C. Ltd

and the participation of its 5.700 members residing in all parts of Italy. I am referring to its being a part of the citadel of Loppiano, a characterizing element for all the E. o C. Industrial Parks in accordance with vision of Chiara and its being a "polarizing" reality for every business and initiative of the EoC in Italy. For the Lionello Bonfanti Industrial Park to become always more at the service of the common good and produce valued commodities and securities of every kind, we cannot disregard or ignore these two elements».

*The Administrative Council has been enlarged to nine members. Can you introduce these members to us?*

«The new Administrative Council of the Industrial Park is extremely rich on a human and professional level; with me are Sandra Della Bella, entrepreneur with the Industrial Park; Koen Vanreusel, entrepreneur and founder of the EoC Industrial Park in Belgium; Marco Cabassi, entrepreneur from Milan; Carlo Pigino, manager of a big European multinational company; Fabio Vitale, financial expert working in a



European Bank; Tina D'Oronzo, expert in anti-money laundering; Flavia Cerino, lawyer with experience in the ambit of migration, reception and integration; Maria Gaglione, teacher and representative of the Italian youth of the EoC»

*Antonella Ferrucci*

# Journalists in dialogue the African way

**Burkina Faso: 45 participants at the second seminar organized in French-speaking West Africa, after the one held in the Ivory Coast there is great enthusiasm to work and to serve the truth among the local reporters.**

It ended with the giving of diplomas at the international seminar of «dialogic journalism» held in Burkina Faso. The last day was marked by the continuous coming and going of the electricity, almost as if to bear witness to the great difficulties that journalists have to face in this part of the world. Here reporters are little everyday heroes.

The seminar was held in Bobo Dioulasso from June 9th to 13th 2018 organized by NetOne in collaboration with the local members of the Focolare Movement. They were expecting around 25 participants but the demand was much greater and some candidates could no longer be accommodated. In the end there were a total of 45 participants coming from the Ivory Coast, Mali, Niger, Cameroun, Bénin and Burkina Faso. Six participants were Muslim (in a Country which is 60% Islamic) and two

seminarians. There were 25 journalists and 20 communication students.

The programme was centred in particular on the lesser known aspects of glo-



balization; on the techniques, the language and methods of journalism today, with special attention to journalism in social networks; also tackled were the pronouncements of the Catholic Church with regards to ethically correct information according to the code of conduct and which is also effective for pastoral work.

On Sunday afternoon around a hundred people were invited to participate in the seminar for a greater involvement and discussion with local experts, both in the fields of professional information as well as in pastoral work. The theme for the session was on «Journalism and migration».

The organizers also set-up a permanent formation at the end of this course, with monthly meetings via *skype* or other means of video conferencing and an information technology platform to continue these exercises of formation in journalism.

The professors were besides Michele Zanzucchi of NetOne, three African

La Vecchia Moschea di Bobo Dioulasso



journalists: Guy Constant Ehoumi Olawolé, journalist in Porto Novo (Benin), experts in professional code of conduct and ethics in journalism, Ibrahima Touré of the Ivory Coast, a Muslim journalist in Man, with ten years of experience working for the major media outlets in the city of Man and Armand Djoualeu, established and well-known journalist from Cameroun and based in Douala, African correspondent for *Città Nuova* and editor of *Africa Time News*.

Divided into three laboratories the participants came up with three magazines during this five-day seminar that were fully conceptualized and realized there and then. This was the best occasion for the young people present to immediately put into practice what they have learned in the courses held by the professors.

It seemed to us that the goal of putting together in relationships of collaboration active journalists, media operators, communications experts, social workers, politicians, representatives of NGOs, academicians and pastoral workers, in order to better understand the way in which mass media can be a useful tool in the understanding of serious phenomena that proliferate in these lands (jihadism, migration, demographic growth, unemployment...) has been achieved. So to with the aim of finding solutions to such phenomena by offering adequate narrative and communicative instruments was realized.

The great difficulty of electricity supply and digital connection in the Countries of the Sahel and generally in West Africa



accompanied our formation courses forcing the participants – who could not always use their computers – to go back to the traditional sources of written journalism, which made up the foundations for a *tout court* journalism.

The presence of various representatives of the local Church gave us the opportunity to insert the course within the great ongoing pastoral effort in the regional Church to offer to young professionals those cultural instruments and techniques that can help them in the new evangelization of the Christian communities and the entire society, which is credible in everyday life, and in formulating correct information in the Christian spirit.

The collaborative participation of the Muslims present, who were sensitive to interreligious dialogue and already in contact with the Focolare Movement for many years, was very useful because of the Islamic context within which these journalists exercise their profession every day in the region.

We also tried to give value to the local culture with visits to specific places such as the Ancient Mosque of Bobo Dioulasso and to meet with personalities of culture and those from the local Church.

Michele Zanzucchi

## Synergies in motion

# Città Nuova for Italy

An unprecedented appointment this year at the Mariapolis nCentre at Castel Gandolfo for the publishing Group

During the weekend of June 16th and 17th there was the meeting of those in Italy working for the promotion and spread of the contents of the publications of Città Nuova magazines and books also in the presence of some agents who are involved in professional sales activities. The novelty was the live *streaming* that allowed many others to follow the entire programme on a national level and also

of the publishing house, alternated their interventions with those of some authors and journalists realized through video. The interaction with the territory and with those present was exciting and fascinating, a sign of the widespread desire to deepen the themes presented and to participate in civic and ecclesial life.

In the afternoon Rosalba Poli and Andrea Goller, delegates of the Focolare Movement for Italy, were linked up with the Councils of the 22 Italian "zonette".

Three years after the birth of the Italian Zone, we have noticed a growing



A working session which is followed thanks to the live streaming

to interact with interventions, questions and perplexities. In the afternoon an interactive link-up via *zoom* was added for a total of more than 600 people who were able «participate» in the meeting.

On Saturday morning three hot topics were at the centre of attention: citizenship, education, Church in dialogue. Aurora Nicosia, director of the information sector , and Luca Gentile, director



Luca Gentile, director of the publishing house  
Aurora Nicosia, director of the information sector



## The encouragement

Maria Emmaus Voce: «I want to encourage them, support them in their commitment to bear witness that a people who believe in fraternity exists. Also to highlight the fundamental values, with that clarity that the Gospel reading of today has re-proposed to us, saying "yes, yes, no, no". All this that courage that can only come from the certainty of carefully considering everything with Jesus in the midst and therefore in unity among you and in the light of the charism of unity. So good job and best, best wishes to Città Nuova».

Jesús Morán «As you yourselves have written today it is more than ever necessary to have truthful, authentic means of communication and information and to communicate ideas in this sense, because we live in a world where there are many narrations which are not credible. Now we have very much at heart that we, as the Focolare Movement, can have this instrument for formation and information for all of us. So take courage and go ahead!».

need for synergy and collaboration in the most varied ambits so as to give provide effectiveness and incisiveness to the actions of the Focolare Movement in the

territory together with the urgency of identifying new and streamlined structures that would answer to the four key words indicated by Emmaus: maintain, develop, deepen, connect. An avalanche of messages, sms, WhatsApp, video interventions literally invaded the smartphones and the interactive link-up that was placed at the disposition of everyone so as to make a collective experience that someone defined as «synodal». Rosalba and Andrea, who were not intimidated by the «barrage» of questions that they were peppered with tried to answer by giving life, together with all the others, to an unprecedented experience of dialogue and of listening to the various cultural sensitivities. But after almost three hours someone still had a question: what has Città Nuova got to do with the life of the Movement in Italy? Città Nuova is our dress, the vehicle for our culture, it is more than ever functional with the «new set-up», it allows us to express ourselves with cultural categories that everyone can understand, was the answer given.

On Sunday morning the sessions continued listening again to the surprise greeting of Emmaus and Jesús during the Link Up of the previous evening which we have included in the box. Moderated by Giacomo Muratori, business and marketing director, they tried to «give legs to the projects» with the working groups formed according to the possible new territorial subdivision of Italy, a kind of «simulation» in order to identify those who could unite the territories, connect the different experiences already ongoing based on the proposal of six "P"s, or six guiding

words: «Problema (Problem)»: what are the emerging problems in our territories? «Pensiero (Idea)»: what are the ideas or thoughts that we can offer through Città Nuova? «Parole (Words)» and «Persone (People)»: which writings or authors can help us to face that specific problem? «Progetti (Projects)» and «Partner»: what projects can be started and with whom

can we work as partners in our territory? Here are some comments: «we were doing the same things and we did not know it», «someone in the group pointed out that in his area there is unemployment, it is not possible to meet expenses up to the end of the month, with what

courage can we even propose to him or her to subscribe to a magazine? It was surprising and indicative that the answer came from the same participants themselves: *Città Nuova* as a cultural action in the territory that calls to action commitment, hearts and hands to gather the challenges and try to solve them».

The next appointments: LoppianoLab 29th-30th September and 13th October, with the «Città Nuova Day», an event which will be celebrated in different ways from city to city but simultaneously in the whole of Italy.

Marta Chierico



A G and R P, delegates of the Focolare Movement for Italy

## Living City Usa

The North American version of *Città Nuova* was given an award by the Catholic Press Association of Green Bay (Wisconsin – Usa)

La Catholic Media Conference ha conferito tre riconoscimenti alla rivista *Living City*: l'assegnazione del terzo posto per la categoria «Rivista nazionale di interesse generale» dopo *America* e *U.S. Catholic*, con la menzione: «Grande pubblicazione, sia per portata che per qualità del contenuto editoriale. La scelta degli argomenti offre una prospettiva sia dei grandi sviluppi, sia della vita quotidiana»; terzo posto anche per la categoria «Profilo di personalità: leader religioso» con la pubblicazione del profilo del defunto card. Miloslav Vlk, già arcivescovo di Praga: «Il prete lavavetri»; una menzione d'onore per l'intervista a p. Robert Dunn, colpito in giovane età dalla sclerosi multipla, intitolata «La vita al massimo».

Susanne Janssen



# New Humanity (Nuova Umanità) Review

A great instrument of dialogue

*Nuova Umanità* continues to be a great instrument on the frontline in the dialogue with cultures, traditions and religious faiths. The last issues were much appreciated by the readers who have been subscribers of the review for years, as well as those who have just started reading it. The articles that were especially liked were those regarding the explorations of the universe of young people (*NU230*), the present challenges of the Church in this global era (*NU229*), the problem of corruption (*NU228*), the contradictions of devotionism???? that goes hand in hand with organized crime (*NU227*), the future of labour unions (*NU226*), etc.



The draft of the two covers of the next issues of *Nuova Umanità*



based on the design of the unity of the peoples of the Old Continent.. In this way we want to contribute to the political debate on Europe showing the reasons for trust and solidarity, values often threatened by a growing dissatisfaction with the European institutions.

In another number the 30 years of the fall of the Berlin Wall will be remembered and the repercussions on a world level of such an historical event. Intellectuals from the five continents have been invited to give their contributions with a special focus on Eastern Europe and the Far East.

*eNU1*, is the first e-book of *Nuova Umanità* dedicated to articles by Piero Coda on the theology of

The coming issue will focus on the present-day frontiers of ecumenism, with articles written by experts in this field. On the same wavelength'ecumenismo, the last issue of 2018 will be dedicated to Islam - Christian dialogue with contributions by muslims and catholics. In the 2019 programme there is an exceptional offer: for the occasion of the European elections the review will dedicate an entire number to the vision of Euoprea

unity, is still available on the website [cittanuova.it/enu](http://cittanuova.it/enu). It is a collection of the more significant theological articles of the Review. It is an instrument, a source from which to glean knowledge about the genesis and development of what is born from the charism of unity. Subscribers can purchase it for a special price.

Alberto Lo Presti

## With Hindu friends Pilgrimage to the source

At the beginning of June around forty Hindus and Christians went on a «pilgrimage» in Italy, whose roots can be found in the profound spiritual friendship that was born during the journeys Chiara Lubich made to India in 2001 and in 2003.

Pilgrimages, having a wide variety of expressions, make up a fundamental element of all religious traditions. This includes those from the Indian sub-continent where the *tirtha* represents as central aspect of the *sanathana dharma*, the universal order, as defined by those faiths. These are journeys, often long ones covering thousands of kilometers that bring the pilgrims to certain localities, temples that are particularly important or to a tomb or place where the ashes of a person respected because of the sanctity of his or her life are kept. The origin or source of some rivers, considered as sacred, are also the destination of pilgrimages. Among these is Gangotri, the source of the Ganges River, is, without a doubt, the one which attracts millions of faithful.



We must therefore situate in this context the recent experience of a «pilgrimage» that a group of Hindus, who have known the spirituality of the Focolare Movement for many years, made in Italy.

In agreement with the Focolare Centre in India they called it a «pilgrimage to the source». The roots of this experience lived by around forty Hindus and Christians, is the search for a profound spiritual friendship that began during the journeys of Chiara to India in 2001 and 2003. It was defined as «a dialogue of hearts and minds», words that express in a very significant way not only the spiritual depth but also the value of the thoughts generated during the time spent together. On those occasions and in the succeeding Symposiums – born precisely due to the theological and philosophical sensitivity of these Hindus – Chiara herself chose to share some of her mystical intuitions experienced during the summer of 1949. In spite of being profoundly rooted in the Christian tradition these experiences were welcomed with great profundity by all of them and gave rise to a dialogue which developed through the years with continuity and ulterior deepening.

At the end of 2016 Fr. Fabio Ciardi and Judith Povilus of the Abbà School and Roberto Catalano of the Centre





A Tonadico, alla «Baita Paradiso»

for Interreligious Dialogue held a two-day Seminar, together with members of the Focolare in India, to continue this communion on the mystical experiences with results that were truly enriching also for these two expressions of the Movement. The «*pilgrimage to the source*» was the second step which they wanted to take precisely in Tonadico and Fiera di Primiero, where that unique experience 1949 took place. It was a real pilgrimage also for the members of the Abbà School, with almost all of its members present, for the Centre of interreligious Dialogue and for the focolarini who accompanied the group. The experience was enriched by the presence of mons. Felix Machado, Bishop of Vasai (in the region of Mumbai), who for years worked at the Pontifical Council for interreligious Dialogue in the Vatican and who is at present the president of the Commission for Ecumenism and Interreligious Dialogue of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC).

The days were marked by moments of study and of reflection, wrote Fr. Fabio Ciardi, which were held in the great hall on the top floor of the ancient Town Hall of Tonadico; there were also moments of pilgrimage to the various places where in 1949 Chiara and her group lived this singular experience of God: the Church of St. Anthony, of St. Sebastian, the shrine of the Madonna of Light and the Church of Fiera. Three topics were the objects of study, each one quite different from the other but at the same time linked by a

common vision from "Above": love, nature, the city. A vision rich in perspectives: the christian one, that of the academic traditions of the hindus of Mumbai and of the Bahai of New Delhi, the social one of the Ghandians of Coimbatore. The «pilgrimage» to the various places made us live a spiritual experience of great depth. There were moments of intense silence and of prayer that ended in spontaneous song. Leaving the Church of St. Sebastian, several people shed tears of joy. Walking along the small streets of the town and along the pathways in the forest, the greetings of the people encountered along the way, contemplating together the peaks of the mountains and the flow of the limpid waters of the streams ... everything contributed to creating a contemplative community.

The «pilgrimage» then continued to Loppiano, which included in a special way



A Loppiano, nel Santuario della Theotokos, di fronte al quadro dipinto da un artista induù

the Sophia University Institute and then on to Assisi. It concluded at the Centre of the Movement with a morning spent in the house of Chiara and in front of her tomb. All moments which underlined a profound and mysterious spiritual consonance between a charism born within the Catholic Church and people of great spiritual sensitivity who follow the millenary traditions of India.

Roberto Catalano

## A new vision of the Old continent

The European continent also together with the big enterprise of the European Union has a particular vocation for «unity in diversity». «Together for Europe» is a pilot-experience of a new way of life for «That all may be one»

Whoever had the chance of passing by the Centre of the Movement this year would most likely have seen a great movement of people, furniture and boxes: visible signs of a promised streamlining. The international Secretariat of «Together for Europe» («TfE») also found a new office in the building of the Dialogues, in synergy with Centro «Uno» and with the Centre for dialogue within the Catholic Church. A step that has paid a price but opens to a new «together» here at the Centre.

The changes have freed us from what is superfluous and changeable to concentrate on that which is unchangeable: the Charism, the Charisms. In the midst of today's tensions the «TfE» too must face the challenges of Europe and it wants to focus its attention on its vocation. Without forgetting the political, social and ecclesial focus, it wants to keep alive the relationships among the various Charisms, in such a way that «together» in the cities they will know how to give their answers.

The annual meeting of the Friends of «TfE» last November 2017 in Vienna highlighted the culture that emerges from its history



and which brings a new vision of Europe. It focused on the diversity between the East and West. What followed were small but important steps: in some cities on the Continent they celebrated 9th May as the «Day of «Together for Europe»». A group from Austria visited the Slovenian «Friends» in Ljubljana.

The next appointment with the European «Friends» will be this November in Prague, land of the *hussites*, of the «spring-time», of the «velvet revolution». There we will be at the Centre of Europe, where European history has experienced decisive turning points in these last centuries. Some of the members of the Organizing Committee went to the Czech capital last March to get to know it and to prepare together for the next step. The great history of the Czech people will serve as the background for this new journey of «Together for Europe», a platform of dialogue that experiences reciprocal acceptance through reconciled diversities. All this to change history!

*Iлона Toth*

[www.together4europe.org](http://www.together4europe.org)



# SocialOne

## Visualizing the present imagining the future

«Sociological imagination and social promotion: the category of love to visualize the changes in action and to imagine the new futures», this was the title of the international convention of Social-One that was held on June 7th and 8th 2018 at the University of Salerno (Italy)

130 participants: academicians, sociology scholars, operators, professionals and social workers coming from Europe (Poland, Albania, Spain, France and Italy), from South America (Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Chile and Santo Domingo), from the United States, with a few representatives from Africa (Mali).



Such a numerous participation of qualified persons, not all members of the Movement was made possible by the journey undertaken during the preparation of the meeting. Point of convergence for everyone: the mission of our discipline and social professions cannot remain neutral, but must be at the service of the men and women of today, at the service of a body of knowledge that must be an instrument to observe and work for a more united world, for a more humane society, peaceful, fair and convivial.

Some topics were presented together with the subjects under study: a woman professor and a young refugee from a detention centre in Sardinia talked about the topic of migration; another presentation was made by a social worker together with a client of a centre.

The plurality of points of view together with theoretical, cultural and methodological perspectives was innovative. We saw the Polish, coming from a markedly Catholic culture side by side with structuralists from Brescia, scholars of the gift and of convivialism side by side with foucaultians, postmarxists and militants of the No



Occupy movement. Every relationship had a very different background which, without sounding out of tune, contributed to the common vision. Each one felt involved in the common perspective of the agapic action, not only from a relational and acceptance point of view, but also from the

scientific and cultural perspective. The ideal proposed by Chiara Lubich is made for our times, for a vision of the «pluriversal», united world that is precisely non-uniform, but variegated, while at the same time convergent in many aspects.

The possibility of a link-up with Vera Araujo from Brazil (considered as the co-founder of the research network Social-One together with Chiara) encouraged the emergence of a proposal to make a real and true pact of collaboration between the generations wherein each one works side by side with the other.

Particular care was given to the relationship between theory and practice. Chiara in fact founded SocialOne having in mind the dynamic relationship between life and thought, by putting together the sociologists with the operators and professionals in the field of sociology. This is why the convention also promoted a «Social Expo» of good practices that involved associations, public and private organizations, groups of volunteers and networks that operate in society and which contribute to the innovation and promotion of a united world.

*Silvia Cataldi*

## «Pedagogy in dialogue» When everyone is a teacher

**In Slovenia a seminar with 90 participants.  
Followed via *live streaming* in various  
parts of the world**

In the logic of participatory research, the journey of the Inundation of Pedagogy is enacted by going on-site. It was Slovenia's turn last June 15th to 17th, where the Raggio di Sole (Ray of the Sun) School has been in operation for fifteen years. The «reading» of this experience brought the participants from France, Italy, Spain, Macedonia, Serbia, Croatia and Slovenia to the school to witness first-hand the daily life of the teachers and the children. They were welcomed by an atmosphere of a profound understanding among the components of this educative community. «Everyone is a teacher - said Slavi Snoj, the person in-charge - those who prepare the meals, those who work in the administration, the teachers, the assistants». The characteristic of the educator or teacher is the one who, together with the others, helps the children to «bloom and flourish».

The presentation of Education and unity (Inundation of Pedagogy) was prepared by Teresa Boi. A dialogue between Michele de Beni and Giuseppe Milan, showed the essential elements of the pedagogy of communion. Maria Ferro highlighted how much the pedagogical dimension is central in the thoughts and mind of Chiara Lubich. The reflection together with the teachers of five of the pre-schools of eastern Europe, who share and incarnate the Pedagogy born from the charism of unity was the occasion for new realizations on how to bring ahead and give value to the experience of these past years.

*M. Dolores Diaz Vaquero*



# Rose Tizzano

«*God loves those who give with joy*» (2 Cor 9,7)

Rose was born in Grenoble (France) into a family of Italian origins (Naples) and grew up with Christian and human values. She had a beautiful voice and studied at the Conservatory. She got to know the spirituality of unity at the age of 23. Three years later, her parents moved to another place and decided to give their apartment to 2 focolarine from Italy. Rose happily remained with them to help build the new Focolare community. The following year (1958) she and the whole family went to the Mariapolis at Fiera di Primiero. Rose had given her life to God taking private vows several years previously and felt ready to start her life as a focolarina. She lived in various countries: England, Luxembourg and Belgium, where she worked with Fr. Werenfried van Straaten. In 1971 she moved to Rome to the Center of the Focolare Movement where she looked after Chiara's house; then she continued working for her as part of her secretariat. Chiara knew about her singing talent and would often ask her to join the Mass choir, sometimes to sing solo at parties and festivities.

In the 1980's and '90's Rose underwent much suffering in her family; she lost her three sisters and her mother one after the other. What sustained her was her love for Jesus Forsaken, which, she wrote, "gives meaning to each circumstance and prepares me for the true Life". Another source of strength were the years she had lived close to Chiara; she treasured that time, especially the many anecdotes that she witnessed personally. The intense love that she experienced transpired from her actions.

Years of much physical suffering followed, obliging her to often be hospitalized. She lived this period, aware that these are steps on her holy journey. Last May her condition worsened.



The very painful therapy she underwent made her discover new aspects of love that brought her to a deeper union with Jesus. She confided, "I have never understood Jesus Forsaken as I have done in this period." She would repeat Chiara's meditation like a prayer, "I have only one Spouse on earth."

At one point it was particularly difficult and she asked herself, "Why, Jesus, why?" At the thought of Jesus Forsaken she brightened up and broke into a serene smile. During this period the delicate and refined love that characterized her whole life was reciprocated in many ways; she was surrounded with much love and care by the focolarine, the members of the Focolare community, her relatives, her attending physicians and acquaintances. She passed away on June 15 at the age of 87.

# Květoslava (Květa) Hyrslova Elzinicova

*A life lived for a renewed humanity*



A scholar, scientist, educator, author and interpreter, Květa passed away serenely last March at the age of 88. She was from the Czech Republic.

She was married to Zbyňek and had an only son, Alan, who died at a young age. During this very sad period in her life, a priest spoke to her about God-Love. She and her husband soon became close to the spirituality of Chiara Lubich and became Focolare volunteers, giving testimony of their choice

of God especially in intellectual, diplomatic, ecumenical and political circles. Květa lived as a Christian in a concrete way and without fuss. For many people she was someone you could trust, a mother, affectionate, patient, always available to help also with personal difficulties.

She was a member of PEN (Poets, Essayists, Novelists) International; She received the "Medal of Merit" from the President of the Czech Republic in 2009. She was a Germanist like her husband who experienced the hardships of Nazi imprisonment. Květa was committed to Czech-German dialogue and was convinced that "the best reciprocal knowledge and right conduct are not enough: the Gospel should become a player in the game". She introduced Card. Vlk to the people she knew to help in his efforts to

promote peace and pardon between the two nations. These common efforts brought fruits in the Focolare and in the Church.

At their 60th wedding anniversary, Květa e Zbyňek published an autobiography entitled "Thanks to the Focolare Movement". In these latter years Květa's health started failing, but Zbyňek turned ill unexpectedly and died. A new phase began in Květa's life. She accepted everything from God's hands; she had to be hospitalized frequently and gradually lost mobility. Two weeks before her death, she solemnly received the sacrament of the sick. She had considered the Focolare Movement as "her" family for over thirty years and now rests in the cemetery of "The Pact", the Focolare town in Prague.

*Anne Marie Palenickova*

## Fiorella Marcenaro De Rocha Gutierrez

*A heart wide open  
to umanità*



Fiorella passed away last January 4 at 84 years of age. She was a volunteer from Columbia. At the age of 43, through the Focolare, she discovered that God loved her the way she was, with her limitations and her mistakes. This realization brought about a radical conversion in her that gave her the strength to cut ties with everything that was preventing her from building an authentic relationship with God. She shared her discovery with her family, friends and colleagues, drawing them into a life-changing "adventure". She formed an "environmental cell" at work comprising a dozen people. Her heart was wide open to humanity. She was involved in a social center run by the Focolare in the outskirts of Bogotá for families at risk; she helped to place people who were jobless,

doing so with a delicate and immediate love. Every year she would organize fundraising activities in order to celebrate Christmas with the children. She was able to raise the money necessary for a child who had problems with an ankle and had to undergo various surgeries.

Chiara Lubich had given her the Word of Life "Whoever welcomes my commandments and lives by them, are the ones who love me, and they shall be loved by my Father and I, too, will love them and will manifest myself to them." (Jn 14,21). This became the foundation of her actions together with her preferential love for Jesus Forsaken, which helped her through the difficult situations in her life, for example, her loss of hearing and a long illness which she lived with a smile constantly on her lips.

Those who knew Fiorella speak of her as a champion of universal love, a great woman that never judged others, a fighter whose life was coherent with what she believed in.

*Mariela Hernandez Gonzales*

# Nino Pagliaricci

*A full and fruitful life*

Born and bred in Abruzzo, Nino and his family moved to the Castelli Romani, Rome, in the 1960's



for work reasons; it was there that he met the Focolare. He and his wife Stella joined a group of families while their three children joined the Gen. The person who introduced them to the Focolare soon realized that they had all the elements needed to become the animators of the group. They accepted the role

eagerly and took on the task with great delicacy and dedication, giving support and guidance to many couples entrusted to them. Since then, as members of the New Families Movement, they threw themselves into many activities for families at local and international levels.

Nino was concrete and precise and didn't hesitate in sharing his experiences of living the Gospel in his family, at work, with friends. His experiences expressed his profound relationship with God. His love for Stella which was reciprocated and visible influenced friends and acquaintances and also his own children who have taken the same way as their parents. One of them, Sara, is a married focolarina. Stella had a serious car accident and was immobile for a long time. Nino showed a great capacity to serve and look after her with delicacy and efficiency, at the same time maintaining his involvement in the New Families. Stella passed away nine years before his death. Even at an advanced age, Nino continued to dedicate time and energy to help families and widows with the same immediacy and delicacy as before.

He passed away on March 6 at the age of 88, concluding his earthly life in his typical style, quietly, leaving behind him the good taste of a life lived to the full.

*Cesare Borin*

# Gertrude Adam

*The concreteness of love*

Born in a small rural village in Alsace, 25 kilometers from Strasbourg (France), at 33 years of age Gertrude went to work in Paris. At the same time she did a night course that allowed her to return to Alsace and work as a secretary. An aunt who was a religious introduced her to the Focolare Movement and in 1964 she attended a Mariapolis where she discovered a new way to live as a Christian.

She became a volunteer and was dedicated to developing the Focolare in her country. A focolarina gave witness to this: "Whenever we would go there for meetings, we'd find everything ready. The meeting rooms would be prepared harmoniously and there would be exquisite cocktails typical of Alsazia." Gertrude also gave a big contribution in setting up the Mariapolis Center at St. Pierre de Chartreuse, and looked after its accounting for many years. She had a great capacity for this and was entrusted with the financial aspect of the Movement's activities. For many years she acted as treasurer of the *Génération Nouvelle Association*.

Her dedication to the poor was edifying. For over twenty years in Caritas, she organized the annual Christmas dinner for the homeless, Holy Masses for the Center of Re-education of Traumatology, and the monthly outings for the "wounded by life".

She courageously faced the first signs of health problems and open-heart surgery. Following an ischaemia, she gradually lost mobility and had to be confined in a hospice where she stayed for four years, accompanied lovingly by her relatives and friends of the Focolare. Last September 6, 2017, she passed away at the age of 84. At her funeral, the priest invited all present to continue the thrust of charity that was Gertrude's legacy.



*Thérèse Chanel*

# Annamaria Angeletti

*One of the first volunteers of the Marche Region*

Annamaria was from Ancona (Italy) and worked as an accountant in a transportation company. She met the Movement through an aunt who invited her to the Mariapolis at Fiera di Primiero. There she discovered God who is Love, deepened the charism of Unity and met Chiara Lubich. Her life was transformed. She became a pioneer of the Movement in her region and was the point of reference for the community until the time a Focolare Center was opened there. All her free time was dedicated to the Movement. Every Sunday, together with other volunteers, she would travel to various cities to promote the New City magazine, keeping in her heart "For You, Jesus". She was always ready to serve and be of help, thus giving



witness to God's Love to all. She had a deep relationship with the other volunteers and also spent moments of relaxing with them. Ten years ago, she was diagnosed with a degenerative brain illness. It wasn't easy for her and her family to accept this illness, especially since it meant being confined in a specialized

clinic. Little by little all that was superfluous disappeared and only the essential remained: the work of God in her soul. People who went to visit her up to her last days would find her in that peace that came from her faithfulness to the Risen Christ.

On November 26, 2017, at 84 years, she reached the house of the Father. The volunteers said that Annamaria truly accomplished her Word of Life, "I complete in my flesh what is lacking in the sufferings of Christ." (Col 1,24).

*Elisabetta Balloni*

# Jo Ann Schlitt

*Reaching out to others with open arms*

Originally from Cuba, Jo Ann lived most of her life in the United States. Mother of nine, she and her husband worked in the Social Services and through the years they took care of 400 children and adolescents; for these kids their home was an "emergency refuge". Jo Ann looked after their physical and emotional needs, making them feel loved and important. As their dedication for the children grew, their circle of friends diminished, "but God had something in mind: to let us meet the big family of the Focolare Movement," she said.

Jo Ann became a volunteer and opened their home for meetings, Christmas parties,



reunions of all sorts, even as a vacation place. She generously provided the focolare houses with domestic appliances and donated chairs for the meeting hall of the focolare community. She was creative and artistic and strove to transform spaces so that they would reflect God's beauty. As she looked at the statue of our Lady of Light by

Centro Ave, she commented, "Mary wasn't immobile, she was always loving, going towards others with open arms." This is how Jo Ann was trying to live, reaching out towards others to love, to give, to welcome.

After several years of being seriously ill, she passed away on November 29, 2017 at the age of 77.

*Marilena Murray*

# Denise Khoury Hajjar

«*This is the will of God, your sanctification*» (Tess 4,3)

Denise was from Egypt. At the age of 16, she met Jean and they got married soon after. After the birth of three children, for political reasons they moved to Lebanon, where they had two more children. During the civil war their store was burned down. Both volunteers, they faced the situation with great courage, but the long years of war jeopardized Jean's health who died after pardoning and renewing relationships with all. For Denise, widowhood was the start of a life of total dedication to her family and to the Focolare. With extraordinary wisdom and humility, she was always there when she was needed, ready to give material and spiritual help to those in need. Her love for one of her children with special needs led her to be involved in Faith and Light (an international association for children with



disabilities and their families). Denise helped to establish this association in Lebanon and was its national president for many years.

In January 2017 she was diagnosed with a serious illness that gradually made her completely dependent. Denise did not cease to abandon herself to God and, without lamenting, she continued

to smile and be attentive to the people around her. She left serenely for the Heavenly Mariapolis on July 28, 2017 at 82 years of age. A few days before passing away, she let us know that we shouldn't be saddened by her death because she was sure that Mary would come to take her. Her spiritual journey was an inspiration for many people. At the funeral, the priest confided, "I felt that I was celebrating a heavenly wedding feast. Denise has left her mark, changing the lives of many." The volunteers of Lebanon are profoundly greatly to God for having given Denise to us as a luminous example.

*Rita Harouny*

# Elisabeth Akum Fonta Mangwei

«*Go and proclaim the kingdom of God*» (Lc 9,60)

An elementary school teacher by profession, Elisabeth became, first assistant, then chancellor head of the Court. She was one of the first from Bamenda (Camerun) to know the Focolare. The Gospel changed her life completely. From being someone "important", she learned to relate to whoever she would encounter. She became a volunteer and lived her vocation generously for over forty years. Outspoken and a fighter, she was not afraid to speak the truth, healing every



sort of adversity she would find with the spirit of unity. Her presence generated an atmosphere of hope and the push to take action, trusting in God. She had the gift of humor and was able to lighten difficult situations and hard feelings with love and a laugh. Her honesty and sense of justice made her a good mother to her children and a good counsellor for many people

that she led to become Christian, and often, also members of the Focolare.

The community considered her like a pearl, a storybook full of wisdom, a woman whose smile gave witness to a radical commitment. She passed away on December 29, 2017, at the age of 78.

*Dorothy Ngeh Kum*

# Massimo Ferazzani

*A presence that heals and converts hearts*

At 23 years old Massimo, from the province of Ancona, met the Focolare Movement and, as he himself asserts, he was conquered. Already involved in many parish and benevolent activities he was in fact in search of a living and radical spirituality that would help him to make the Gospel come alive in his life. Among the people he met Lorena, with whom he would form a beautiful family enriched with three children. Difficult moments were not lacking: Lorena got sick and was in danger of dying, a very strong moment that made the foundation of their marriage more solid as well as strengthening their love and their personal choice of God. Massimo became a Volunteer and his wife a married focolarina.

In 1995 he assumed the responsibility for a nucleo, then became a member of the «centretto» of the men Volunteers. From 1997 to 2012 with Lorena they were responsible for the Teens for Unity in the zonetta and from 2010 they



opened in the parish a Caritas counter for families in difficulty together with others. He continued his services there up to the end, weaving relationships with persons of all ages, cultures, religions, untying knots and welcoming each person as a brother or sister.

When he learned about his illness in 2013, he confided: «I am not afraid» and thus he began the last stage of his Holy Journey in the normality of everyday life, intensifying his prayers and his relationship with everyone. His embrace of Jesus Forsaken made him experience the love of God as Father: «He knows very well what is the best for me». In his final days he was able to have a profound dialogue with each of his children, discovering once more «the beauty of family love that is a reflection of Trinitarian love».

On April 19, at the age of 63, his earthly life ended, after having outlined the details of this funeral, «simple and creating solidarity». It was a celebration. Many people shared with the family about the strong presence of God that they felt in Massimo that healed and converted hearts.

*Giorgio Belardinelli*

## Siria Stronati Viola

*With her the little things become great*



Through the New Families, Siria di Chiaravalle (Ancona - Italy) experienced the spirituality of unity as lived in married life as a couple. Living the Ideal she welcomed everyone with love and radiated a strong witness of Jesus in the midst. Then she discovered the vocation of a Volunteer and she embraces it with a great commitment. For more than twenty years she was active in the parish as a catechist, delicately sowing with love the novelty of the life she had found in the Movement.

Her experiences of the life of the Gospel, was one of the strengths the community. The nucleo meetings were held in her house, always with an atmosphere of celebration and welcome. Wherever she goes even the small things become great; the ordinary become extraordinary. She took care of her husband Angelo, afflicted with Alzheimer, with great dedication, never leaving his side up to the end. When she became a widow, she worked for the spread of the Movement offering subscriptions to *Città Nuova* for those who could not afford it. She was generous, concrete, and always ready to serve every neighbour in all his or her material and spiritual needs. Her last gift was to the Movement, to whom she had left all her possessions. On December 16, 2017 she concluded her earthly adventure at the age of 90.

*Elisabetta Balloni*

## Rosario (Nene) Canoy

«Who wants to be the greatest among you must become your servant» (Mk 10,43)

Volunteer of Leyte (the Philippines), Nene was still very young when she participated in her first Mariapolis in Tacloban. Her childhood was strongly marked by the violent death of her mother and the abandonment of her father who became an alcoholic. No longer able to rely on her parents, her two brothers and younger sister, each went their own way. Nene was able to finish her studies working extremely hard to be able to pay her school fees. In the Mariapolis she discovered that she had many relationships that must be renewed by the light of the Gospel: in school, with her friends and above all with her family. She understood too that every suffering she had experienced in life are also expressions of the love of God. She used technology to get in touch with her siblings whom she had lost contact, so as to tell them the God is love. With surprise, she discovered that they too had felt the presence of God in their lives.



Nene lived her life in the service of others. Coming to know that some youth could not attend the Mariapolis due to lack of money, she contacted her friends and with courage and great faith she asked for their financial support. Surprisingly, one after the other, they gave

to her envelopes filled with cash and other supplies that allowed the youth to attend the Mariapolis. At the age of 27, she decided to move to the Mariapolis Peace, the little town of the Focolare Movement in Tagaytay. After a period of time, she returned to her city and took care mainly of the youth and the gen girls: for each one of them she was a sister and a mother. The vocation to the focolare of some of them is a fruit of her love and her faithfulness to the Ideal.

Last January she was diagnosed to be in the last stage of a serious illness. Ready to say her «yes» to the will of God, she refused all expensive and useless treatments so as to be clearheaded up to the end. Her constant smile was an expression of her interior life all filled with God. On March 27 she went to meet Jesus at the age of 55.

*Bernardita Gucor*

## Rosa Margarita (Rosita) Lovera de Ferrer

«Little girl, I tell you, get up» (Mk 5,41)

Rosita, one of the first Volunteers of Caracas (Venezuela), grew up serenely with her four brothers. She married a soldier and they had two children, but soon after their relationship went into crisis and they separated. The encounter with the ideal changed her life; she would offer to go to other cities to share her Christian experience, inflaming the different communities she encountered with the love of God. She would listen attentively to everyone, her house was always open for



the Movement, especially for the gen. She took care of her mother - who lived with her and helped her raise the children - with great love and attention, even leaving her job at the Ministry of Education for a period of time.

When her illness appeared, it was long and painful, but she said her «yes» to Jesus Forsaken. Her memory began to fade, but when the women Volunteers would come to visit her, she would immediately ask about Chiara and would happily recite the Rosary with them. She left us last January 22, at the age of 70. She is the first Venezuelan Volunteer in Heaven.

*Dilia Yolanda Natera Yopez*

# Vittorina Nava Binda

*«In quiet and in trust shall be your strength» (Is 30,15)*

Volunteer of Molteno (Lecco – Italy), on January 24, at 78 years old, Vittorina concluded her «holy journey» after a life lived in great faith, lived with simplicity and coherence.

She became a widow at 27 years old with a baby just a few months old. She was an elementary school teacher and she worked tirelessly for her students, leaving an indelible memory of her in each one. One of them, upon hearing of her death, wrote in a newspaper: «... She put in common everything that can be defined as “added value” and even beyond... ». Her son too followed in her footsteps behind Chiara: their relationship aside from being mother and son, was above all



Jesus to Jesus. When she retired, she dedicated her time to volunteer work and with others they began a school to teach Italian to immigrants.

Six years ago the discovery of a serious illness. Vittorina's relationship with Jesus intensified, prayer and the present moment were

her strength. When she was told that she only had a few months to live, her «yes» was decisive: «It is hard – she admitted - but it is alright». She received the anointing of the sick while still lucid and surrounded by her family. The priest then remained alone with her, later he shared his amazement at the profundity of her soul.

*Francesca Scauda Candeloro*

# Gertrud Bischofberger Schildknecht

*She radiated joy to everyone*

Growing up in a beautiful family in the french part of Switzerland, Gertrud, who knew how to speak many languages, became the secretary of a prestigious watchmaker. Due to the Diaspora, she had to leave her job, where she was very much respected, and moved with her parents to eastern Switzerland. There she met Franz, her future husband. From her neighbours who were a family-focolare, she discovered the spirituality of unity and was fascinated by it. Together with them, they gave rise to a flourishing community of adults and children committed to living the Ideal. Both being Volunteers, Franz and Gertrud made their home available for all the meetings of the Focolare, dedicating their time and efforts for the development of the Movement. Gertrud, who by then had four children, radiated joy and gratitude for the gifts they had received from God.

After Franz retired, he became ill with Parkinson's and together they said their «yes». Their involvement in the Movement had to be



reduced, but Gertrud continued to be at the service of families who were experiencing her same situation by sharing her experiences and her talent for music. After the death of her husband she too began to experience deteriorating health. She decided to move to a home for the elderly, and continued, until she was able, to attend her nucleo meetings, giving her contribution and always keeping up with the news of all the other Volunteers.

She fell down several times and the subsequent operations made her health even worse. After having celebrated her 86° birthday with her family, last December 17 she went to join Franz and all our family Up there in heaven.

*Ruth Imja Lutz*

## Our relatives

The following passed on to the Next life: **Cecile, sister of Michel Pochet**, focolarino in the Roman Mariapolis; **John, father of Anastasia Thiong'o**, focolarina in Uganda; **Antonio José, father of Carolina Agudelo**, focolarina in Cochabamba (Bolivia); **Mei Fong Wong, mother of Gesuina**

## Gina Sardo Viscuglia in Macaluso



*She brought ahead the Movement while lying in her sickbed*

Born in Belgium and moving to Sicily (Italy), Gina married Enrico. They met the Focolare Movement together

and joined it with enthusiasm, immediately becoming committed members of the Parish Movement. Gina dedicated herself to teaching catechism and bringing the Eucharist to the sick.

Her life was illuminated by the Gospel and brought her to an always more intense relationship with Jesus, which she then shared with many people who would confide in her, giving an answer, advice, hope to each one. In love with harmony and beauty, she expressed her love for life also through her paintings. Last February, on the occasion of the feast day of the parish's patron saint, the parish community held an exhibit with her paintings.

For a couple of years Gina was sick, experiencing continuous excruciating pain. Docile to the will of God, she always had a smile for whoever came to visit her: «From my sickbed I bring ahead the Movement» she convincingly said. Everyone was edified by her life: «Gina is the example of how to live suffering – they said – a soul transformed by the love of God, you can see Heaven in her eyes». On May 2, God called her to Himself at the age of 66.

*Secretariat of the Parish Movement of Palermo*

## Cristina Russo Gallo

*«I came to bring the Fire (of love) on earth and how I wish it were already burning» (Lk 12,49)*

Nurse, labour unionist, full of life and projects, Cristina di Vercelli (Italy) became a Volunteer after an intense journey of inner searching. Generous in giving her time, a listening ear, her expertise, she knew how to make herself one with everybody, especially with people who had no religious beliefs. She was greatly admired by them for her clarity and totalitarianism.

The long and difficult illness took everything away from her. Her husband, Roberto, also a Volunteer, accompanied her every step of the way. They had a very young daughter who was long-awaited and welcomed as a gift from God through the intercession of Foco. On March 15, at just 56 years old, Cristina began her journey towards her encounter with Jesus. The local newspapers published affectionate memories from her colleagues and the long and difficult illness strips her of everything. How she is accompanied step-by-step by her husband, Roberto, who is a volunteer, as well as by her companions in the labour union, describing how she welcomed everyone warmly, and about her genuine passion and commitment in the defence of the least.

At the funeral a friend who was also a nurse said: «Working for the others has been the thread that wove through your life. Being a nurse means to touch the sick, to care for their body, their spirit, their anguish; this is our mandate, this was your mandate».



*Daniela Isnardi Reyneri*

**Yo**, focolarina in Atlanta (Usa); **Nelson**, father of **Domi Franco**, focolarino in Loppiano; **Roberto**, father of **Anna Maria (Marodi) La Vecchia**, focolarina in Sassari; **Suk Dyun**, mother of **Fiorita Cheng**, focolarina in the Roman Mariapolis; **Enrides**, brother of **Izide Casatti**, focolarina in the Mariapolis Ginetta (Brazil); **Annunziata**, mother of **Valentino Agri**, focolarino in India; **Raimundo**, father of **Ana**

**Cecilia Bentes**, focolarina in Curitiba (Brazil); **Juarez**, brother of **Joselia Borges**, married focolarina in Belo Horizonte (Brazil); **Aquiles**, father of **Mabel Bianconi**, focolarina in Buenos Aires; **Aurelia**, mother of **Jorge Santana**, **Joaquín**, father of **Pedro Almela** and **Ana María**, mother of **Eduardo Ortubia**, all focolarini in Madrid.

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