

From the Movement for Life

“Mother Teresa of Calcutta” Prize in memory of Chiara Lubich

Two women at the service of life: led by this theme, the awarding ceremony for the “Mother Teresa of Calcutta” European Prize for life in memory of Chiara Lubich was held Saturday afternoon in Campidoglio (Rome). The 10th of december, a significant date, was chosen to present this recognition, promoted by the European Movement for Life, because it marks the 63rd year since the signing of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The reason for the award was expressed at the opening ceremony by the President of the Movement for Life, Carlo Casini, who highlighted the *“limpid and constant defense and promotion of the right to life”* that Chiara Lubich practiced and also always promoted in the vast horizon of love for every person. The actions and support that Chiara Lubich gave to the Movement for Life ever since its birth were also underlined.

At the round-table moderated by Marco Taquinio, director of the newspaper Avvenire, the ex-president of the Council Giuliano Amato, professors Antonio Maria Baggio and Vincenzo Buonomo and the Hungarian Minister for Social and Family Affairs Miklos Soltesz presented their interventions. Also present were representatives of the Movements for Life of 15 European countries.

The mayor of Rome, Gianni Alemanno underlined how, just like the the Declaration of 1948, “these two women lived a very profound life” and he announced that he has already started the process for the dedication of a street in the capital to Chiara Lubich.

The Prize was handed to Maria Voce by Card. Ennio Antonelli, president of the Pontifical Council for the Family. The president of the Focolare Movement pointed out how Chiara Lubich’s thrust to work for the safeguarding of human rights has as its source the love for God and the love for all persons, each person: *“All persons are children of God and therefore brothers to one another; and Chiara worked so that universal brotherhood may be realized in the world. She did this for over 60 years, not so much by openly proclaiming human rights but rather by provoking in as many men and women as possible, an evangelical style of life, which has as a consequence the respect for all people and their rights.”*

The Prize, instituted by the Movement for Life in 2008, would like to give emphasis to the dimension of life in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It has as its symbol the reproduction of the bronze statue that the Italian Movement for Life gave to the European Council just the day after the fall of the Berlin Wall. The work of art “Hymn to Life” was made by the sculptor Sauro Cavallini, and is exhibited in the building of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg with the words: *“May love be the hope of Europe”* written at its base.

The awarding of the Prize in 2011 is the third edition. In the first edition (2008) the Prize was given in memory of Jerome Lejeune for his work in the field of genetics, in the second edition (2010) it was given to Eduardo Veràstegui for the film *“Bella”*.

The “Mother Teresa of Calcutta” European prize was mentioned by Pope Benedict XVI at the end of the Angelus on the Sunday of the 11th of december, as he greeted the representatives of the Movement for Life from Europe who came for the awarding ceremony.

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