

MARIAPOLI

Notiziario del movimento dei focolari



Christmas 2012
**Making space for
your brother**

**Members of the
Reformed Church and
Catholics in Switzerland**
Aiming at reciprocity

**Social Weeks
in France**
The contribution of the
Focolare Movement

The Pearl

In speaking to the almost one thousand focolarini who were gathered at Castel Gandolfo for their Christmas meeting, I said that I would have announced a "pearl".

What kind of pearl was it?

Everything is a pearl; our Ideal, our spirituality, is made up of many precious pearls, because they come from God, from his Spirit.

But among all of these, on that day I saw one shine out in a special way: the very particular path that the Lord revealed to us in order to arrive to him, to reach union with God.

We know that through the centuries, exceptional people, saints, have emerged in the Church, and we know that they are considered such precisely because they had succeeded in reaching union with God.

In what way and at what price?

Often by withdrawing from the world and by isolating themselves in deserts, or by closing themselves up in convents, protected by walls, far from the temptations of the world, in order to facilitate their relationship with the Lord present in their heart.

But our times today require other forms and the Holy Spirit adapts to these new changes.

Today, as Foco said, "holiness must go out beyond the convents; to be present in homes, in schools, on the streets,

in offices, in Parliaments..." because today, more than before, also the lay people are called to holiness.

And so, how can people who are not isolated, not sheltered by walls, deprived of all the expedients that the spiritual life once required, find union with God while remaining in the midst of the world?

Not only are they not protected by anything, but they are always surrounded by other men and women who in the past were preferred to be kept at a distance.

And here we begin to see the pearl sparkling.

The Holy Spirit, enlightening us with his charism, said to us: your brother, your sister, the very ones who could have been seen in the past as obstacles, can become your way to God, an opening, a door, a path, a passageway that leads to union with Him.

On one condition, of course: that they are not the ones who influence us with their way of acting which is often only human, but that we influence them with our supernatural

way of acting. How? We know the answer: by loving them. By loving them one by one throughout the day. Loving them with that art of loving, which is divine, because it's possible only through the love that the Holy Spirit infused in our heart.

And by now, we all know the conditions to fulfill it.

If we do this, what happens?

In the evening, for example, when we pray, and then during the day as well, when we are able to recollect ourselves for a few moments alone with



Loppiano - 01.1999

God, we will become aware of his presence.

He came to us because we went out to him in our brothers and sisters.

In this way we experience that union which many of us are familiar with, but which we're not yet able to define or classify, perhaps because it is new. It is perceived by the senses of the soul and it fills our heart with love.

Thus, in his presence, we can talk over all our concerns with him.

Moreover, it follows then, that if we have gained this by loving our neighbors, they are not only our beneficiaries, but our benefactors as well: they have given us the best of what we had hoped for.

Therefore, we should approach them with gratitude and this will keep us humble, a virtue which is very important in loving.

Let's all try to live this. If it has been the experience of many, as I said, in the whole Movement for more than 50 years, we wouldn't want it to become less now.

Thus, with this special union with God, we will be charged with heavenly fuel and we'll be able to reach out again to other brothers and sisters with a love that is always more delicate, more perfect, more sublime.

And we'll quickly proceed towards the goal we have set for ourselves: union with God and union with neighbors, "until all will be one".

But everything depends on having high regard for, on appreciating the pearl that God has given us: our particular path to arrive to him: our brother, our sister.

It is a new, modern way, also in view of the fact that John Paul II said that the way of the Church today is the human person.

Chiara

Word of Life 2013

January | «Go and learn what this means, "I desire mercy, not sacrifice"» (Mt 9,13).

February | «We know that we have transferred from death to life, because we love the brothers and sisters» (1 Jn. 3,14).

March | «Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her» (Jn. 8,7).

April | «Do not make complaints against one another, brothers» (Jas. 5,9).

May | «Give, and there will be gifts for you: a full measure, pressed down, shaken together, and overflowing, will be poured into your lap» (Lk 6,38).

June | «If you endure steadfastly when you've done good and suffer for it, this is commendable before God» (1 Pet 2,20)..

July | «All the Law has been fulfilled in a single commandment: Love your neighbor as yourself» (Gal 5,14).

August | «If you love those who love you, what credit can you expect? Even sinners love those who love them» (Lk 6,32).

September | «Our love must be not just words or mere talk, but something active and genuine» (1 Jn 3,18).

October | «The only thing you should owe to anyone is love for one another, for to love the other person is to fulfill the law» (Rom 13,8).

November | «Be generous to one another, sympathetic, forgiving each other as readily as God forgave you in Christ» (Eph 4,32).

December | «May the Lord increase and enrich your love for each other and for all, so that it matches ours for you» (1 Thess 3,12).

In Focus

Ecumenical Dialogue Aiming at reciprocity in daily life

The charism of unity
amongst Catholics and Reformed
Church members in Switzerland.

A focolarina from the
Reformed Church reports.

"You have to be deeply rooted in a point to be able to open up yourself towards others" a Reformed pastor recently said, when referring to the fact that the Focolare Movement is deeply rooted in the Catholic Church. This expression, basically, recalls what Chiara and the Opera have always aimed at: living "in the manner of the Trinity".

Emmaus and Giancarlo visited Switzerland (4 – 11 November 2012) and their trip was an opportunity to have a sincere evaluation of how to put "Trinitarian dynamics" into practice among Christians coming from different Churches.

At the World Council of Churches

Lukas Visser, a Reformed theologian and observer at Vatican Council II, met Chiara in 1963. He laid the groundwork for her visit to the World Council of Churches (WCC) in Geneva, in 1967. On that occasion Chiara narrated her experience about Jesus forsaken as a way to reach unity even among the Churches. To satisfy a request made at the time, Tessa Wehrle, a focolarina, worked at the WCC for forty years and built vital relationships with Ecumenical figures from the world over. Chiara returned to the WCC in 1982 and in 2002 (ref. Mariapoli 11/2002).



The early contacts

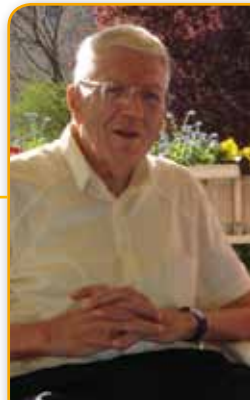
Was it only by chance that the first contact with the Movement in Switzerland started off in 1955 thanks to Hans Brüttsch, an architect, member of the Reformed Church? (ref. Mariapoli n. 7-8/2002).

He had met two focolarini in Milan and then participated in the Mariapoli held at Vigo di Fassa. He was fascinated by it and talked about it to his Catholic friends in Ramsen/Sciaffusa. In fact he was convinced that only Catholics could take part in that Movement.

On the day of Pentecost 1960 the latter were among the organizers of a meeting for members of different churches at the Bruderschaft vom gemeinsamen Leben a Nidelbad (Zurich).

During that meeting the premise of the historical meeting Chiara had in Darmstadt (Germany) in 1961 with some Lutheran nuns and with pastor Klaus Hess was laid.

In the period 1959 - 1964 various meetings with pastors and lay people of the Reformed church were held close to Zurich. These people then started participating in international, Ecumenical meetings in Rocca di Papa from 1965 onwards. Pastor Fritz Peier and his wife Anneli were among this group (ref. Mariapoli 3-4/2009 e n. 2/2010).



Thanks to these “pioneers” many people from the Reformed Church got to know the spirituality and welcomed the praxis of living the Gospel and exchanging experiences joyfully, such praxis being typically Evangelical and Reformed. Chiara urged them on: “We offer you the wealth of our faith, get us even yours!”

The “Reformed Focolare”

In 1983, the first ecumenical school made it possible for the Reformed to go deeper into their roots. Other schools follow where Reformed, Catholics and Orthodox considered some important themes together: Church, Baptism, Eucharist and Holy Supper, Authority, Trinity, Freedom and Responsibility.

In spite of all this many coming from the Reformed Church still found it difficult to feel “at home” in this Movement, it being so “Catholic”. In 1990 the time was ripe for a “Reformed focolare” to be set up. Chiara gave it a word as a guideline: “Whoever remains in me, with me in him, bears fruit in plenty” (Jn 15,5). It was made up of four focolarine, one of whom was a married focolarina. This experience is now more than twenty years old and it has made it possible for them to put into to practice and translate living the spirituality of unity in a praxis which is authentically “reformed”. Reading the “Losungen” (a daily watchword from the Gospel) is a never ending source of communion with the Word. And it is especially by living the Pact what has made it possible for them to grasp in a deeper manner the original intuitions Zwingli had about the Holy Supper as a place of communion in Christ who renews the community in the Spirit, so as to then transform social and political relations.

Chiara had told a Reformed married focolarina before she took her promises and who could not participate in the Eucharist, that if she loved Jesus forsaken in that emptiness, nothing would have been lacking. Jesus forsaken became, therefore, their “first sacrament” in whom they renew with



Significant Stages of the Timeline

There are many events we boldly consider as being historically and culturally outstanding for the Focolare Movement in Switzerland, and beyond.

1994. An international, Ecumenical congress in Zurich “Together” gathered more than 1000 members of the Reformed Churches coming from many countries, all over the world.

2001. During the meeting for Bishops of different Churches held at Baar, on the 31st October, Chiara talked about Jesus forsaken and mutual love as a way for reaching unity, at Grossmunster, the cathedral which is an icon of the Reform carried out by Zwingli. She said: “Our only uniform, our only distinctive mark should have been our mutual love. But we didn’t maintain unity and we haven’t reached it yet. (...) Let’s not give up (...) May God grant us the grace, if not that of seeing the Church as one, at least of contributing towards the preparation of it”. Together with Chiara and 14 leaders responsible for different Churches, all the crowd present at the Grossmunster, shook hands as a sign of the Pact of mutual love.

2002. At Geneve, inside the Cathedral of the Reformed Church, St Pierre (Ref. photo) and at the WCC, Chiara talked about the deep-seated meaning of the Reform, on the 27 and 28 October.

2007. A growing sense of trust was experienced during the national Ecumenical meeting held on 2 February at the Mariapolis Centre in Baar. Sitting between the two speakers – the Bishop of Basel, Kurt Koch and Gottfried Locher, delegate for Ecumenism of the Federation of Evangelical Churches in Switzerland – Clara Squarzon, the chairperson was delegate for the Opera in Switzerland at the time. It looked like a symbol of the contribution that the Focolare Movement has, openly and increasingly, been called to give in Switzerland over the years.

trust and fidelity the Pact of unity with everybody in the Opera. And the unmistakable presence of Jesus in the midst of two or more (Mt 18,20) is not wanting.

They discover that this presence was also particularly cherished by their founding father Zwingli, who defined it as a fundamental pillar of the ecclesial community.

Trinitarian life is put into practice as an answer and as a life style in all their relationships inside the Opera, in the Church and with society. Does all this sound like a prophecy?

One Vocation

How shall we live now – once it's been deemed fitting to have the Reformed in the focolari with Catholics to bear an ecumenical witness – an authentic praxis of respect and mutual love in daily life? And inside the Opera among people belonging to different Churches? Peter Dettwiler, a reformed pastor and also a married focolarino, asked Emmaus: "What are your expectations as far as the Reformed in the Opera are concerned?" In synthesis, this is the answer he got: "I don't expect anything special from the Reformed or more than that I expect from the Catholics. You are focolarine, focolarini.

Live the Ideal! Let's live it together! You belong to different Churches – this

is a particular richness in itself – here, in Switzerland! It doesn't matter if one is part of a minority or a majority".

And Peter remarked: "This gives me great freedom. I feel I'm inside Chiara's Ideal. Am I a Reformed focolarino? First of all I'm a focolarino. With Jesus in the midst we are one, we are united in the same body". And he added: "I had the great pleasure of presenting the history of the Reform to Emmaus and Giancarlo, by taking them round Zurich, to the places where it was born. I was struck by the great interest with which they made themselves one with me, with our history and our identity as Reformed. One could feel the love for the Church of their brother!"

"Emmaus – Peter continued – is also very clear when she states that the Focolare Movement is a Catholic movement, born in the Catholic church, inserted in it and approved by it.

But the Charism is universal! We can all be in it: Reformed, Catholics, Orthodox, Anglicans ... there is diversity but there is also unity. It means being faithful to one's own Church, but apart from that being called to love to be authentic focolarini and focolarine. This is the call Emmaus has enlightened for us once again".

What we went through with Emmaus and Giancarlo was really a new pilot project sort of experience. Their wide vision was really encouraging! To put all this into practice in daily life we wish each other lots of perseverance, patience and mercy.

Katrin Reusser

See also the Special about the trip of Emmaus and Giancarlo in Switzerland on: www.focolare.org/notiziariomariapoli





The Charism today A challenge for the Opera

Marco Tecilla and Palmira Frizzera comment one of the latest editions by Città Nuova.

me because of her vast culture and two gifts of the Holy Spirit, Wisdom and Knowledge, thanks to which she is capable of identifying the signs of the times. These gifts are not detached from the fear of God, to accomplish such a delicate task as hers.

I was enchanted by her personal relationship with Jesus and her faithfulness to Chiara and the charism, though with her own personality which distinguishes her from Chiara. She does not “repeat” Chiara, but she makes her up-to-date in the Opera today. We must be ever more grateful to the Holy Spirit for having chosen her as the first President after the Foundress”.

Marco emphasized some similar impressions and added: “I’d consider this book as a manual for the focolarini, for it opens horizons, it ranges (different fields). I liked the book and even the interview at Loppiano, where one could see a very intelligent person, who knows what she has in mind very well, gives right answers. It’s impossible not to acknowledge that Emmaus was chosen by God. She is a person who gives trust, hope, she doesn’t get discouraged, she instills optimism. She is not a person who imitates others, she is free: though faithful to Chiara, to the charism, she manages to adapt it to the rapidly changing times. Even we who were born with Chiara and who lived with her, are helped to open up ourselves to what is new, to adapt the spirituality to today, to be flexible. Chiara said that when a founder dies the ‘dark night’ would come: I can say that this hasn’t happened”.

The book entitled “La scommessa di Emmaus” (Emmaus’s bet) published by Città Nuova had its first national grand launching last September during LoppianoLab, when Lucetta Scaraffia of Osservatore Romano and Marco Politi of Il Fatto Quotidiano interviewed the President of the Focolari: an engaging and dynamic exchange of questions and answers. Other events to present the book have already been planned in other Italian cities and in the mean time, the French and Hungarian edition have been published, while editions in other languages are in the making.

Various types of comments about the book have been sent to the publishing house and the two authors of the interview, Michele Zanzucchi and Paolo Loriga.

We asked Marco Tecilla and Palmira Frizzera an evaluation of the book for our issue of Mariapoli and we thank them for obliging immediately.

“Emmaus is a beautiful gift of God that Chiara left us! – Palmira started off -.

I read the book all at one go, two months ago and it immediately struck

In Paris

The Gift of Reciprocity

The relationship between man and woman: the Focolare Movement's Contribution. Emmaus at the French Social Weeks

Three thousand people flocked to the venue to discuss the theme of the event: "Men and women: the new situation".

Catholics, most of them lay people and some figures from the Conference of Bishops, some leaders of ecclesial institutions in France but also some representatives from all over Europe met in Paris.

The 'Semaines sociales de France', the social weeks, which took place last November, is a place for reflection, which was set up very long ago. In fact it started in 1904 and has now reached its 87th edition. Many members of the Focolare Movement took part in the 300 workshops the programme offered and they led 11 of them dealing with various topics. Each one of them lived a strong experience of dialogue and of listening to the civil world where people who have no religious belief were able to express themselves freely in an atmosphere of mutual respect..

This year's reflection, which was based on the relationship between man and woman, studied the topics of parity, equality and inequality according to various perspectives: the philosophical, economic, political, sociological and religious one. The Focolare Movement

was asked to give its contribution about: "Man and woman in the Church" since its female presidency, acknowledged by its Statute, offers an element of absolute novelty in the ecclesial panorama. The originality of the talk given by Emmaus, one of the experts invited for the event, which emphasized the priority of a relationship based on love, in a context where equality between man and woman is often lived in suffering roused great interest in the participants.

The excerpts from her talk, cited below, can give an idea of what kind of reaction some statements which are familiar and shared inside the Focolare Movement but are less known outside of it aroused. Female presidency, Emmaus said during her speech, "is highly significant: it indicates a distinction between the power of government and the charism. This element clarifies that to govern an association it is essential to have a charism and rather than skills of authority and organization. This is a sign which is given to the Church to emphasize the priority of love, a priority which is not a female monopoly. Such a presidency, therefore, offers some innovative indications to the universal Church: so more than being capable of organizing what counts is loving, it



Hommes et femmes la nouvelle donne



is an intimate capability, a physical one, which makes it possible to feel inside what the other is going through, to be touched by what touches the other in such a way that only a mother can go through”.

After having explained that “the presidency of the Focolare Movement is not a question of power”, but rather of how much effort is made to “establish deep relationships of unity” at all levels, Emmaus stated she was aware that “this is not something to be taken for granted because amongst all the differences that exist, the difference between man and woman isn’t one of the minor ones. Therefore, the fact that in the leadership of the Opera parity between man and woman prevails is not something simple. However, when something is carried out on the basis of this unity, a transformation of the man and woman themselves takes place”.

Another point expressed by the President was that of being aware that we are “only at the beginning of this course. Unity between man and woman will always be an equilibrium of a delica-

te nature. One needs to rediscover the value of the other, and both mustn’t forget that diversity is (a kind of) richness ; and they must not tire of starting afresh every time and walking along the regal path of dialogue”.

Some other useful hints: “It’s necessary not to place oneself at a level of power but of service, a service of communion. At the same time, paradoxically, one must be able to maintain one’s own identity and move ahead without expecting any acknowledgements and approvals”..

Therefore there is something new that the Opera can instill in the fabric of relations between man and woman inside the Church and society, “an enormous potential, which has not yet been completely developed”, Emmaus stated while updating the General Council about her stay in France “But even the fact – Emmaus continued – that we try and live this experience day by day and that we always start afresh and live this dimension of reciprocity between man and woman, brings about a change that will start to show little by little and it will do so more and more”.

Aurora Nilcosia



11/12 2012
MARIAPOLI

Full-fledged Citizens

In Genoa an occasion to reflect on
fraternity and the city.

“What would Italy look like without its cities?”»

In addition to the most popular meanings attributed to the name Genoa, for example “doorway”, there is another one which is more recent and maybe not so well known, which dates back to Etruscan times: “new city”. If we consider what happened in the capital city of Liguria between the end of November and the beginning of December, we can say that no other name could express better wishes.

While the celebration of the 4th edition of the Chiara Lubich Award for Fraternity was getting started, the roads of the city were flocked with workers from the ILVA enterprise, who were there to defend their jobs, their present and future. The apparent contrast between fraternity and the suffering which the protests got to the squares really stood out.

Nonetheless, even that was a sign, because by putting fraternity into practice some solutions could be found. This is one of the elements which emerged during the three-day Genoese meeting which was followed by the annual meeting of the Cities for Fraternity Association, on the 30th November and the conference, titling “What would Italy look like without its cities?”, on the 1st and 2nd December, promoted by the New Humanity Movement and the Political Movement for Unity. These events involved administrators, people holding managerial posts in the public sector, citizens, academics and experts in the topics dealt with. An effective colla-

laboration with the Genoese community who generously and willingly offered its practical help.

On the 30th November afternoon, the Town Council Hall of the marvellous Palazzo Tursi hosted the conference: “Fraternity and Governing the City”. The greetings of the president of the Town Council, Giorgio Guerello, and the messages sent by various important figures marked the opening of the event. Card. Bagnasco, in his message, said: “May the important theme of fraternity call for the assumption of our responsibility towards the others ... Each one of us is bound not to forget that whatever action he accomplishes it has to be aimed at the common good so that all people may feel part of the Community in which they live”.

Marta Vincenzi, past Mayor of the city, and other councilors dealt with: “the Municipality of Genoa and fraternity- the motivations which determined the choice”, a very interesting process which produced a document called the “Genoa Paper”.

The Mayor of Rocca di Papa, Pasquale Boccia, president of “Cities for Fraternity” and the Mayor of Genoa Marco Doria, in spite of the hard and full day he had, managed to be present for the event, took part in the elaborate and enriching discussion about “Fraternity and governing the city”.

It is now a matter of fact that fraternity has been assuming an increasingly

important role as a lay value, and so regaining its place, especially in this time of crises, next to the other two principles of modern times, freedom and equality.

The conclusion of the event: the conferment of the International Award "Chiara Lubich for Fraternity", which this year was given to the Municipality of Medolla - struck by earthquake last May. The motivation read: "To the Municipality of Medolla, in the name of all the municipalities struck by earthquake last May in Emilia Romagna, for the strong example given to the nation for not having closed itself up in its emergency and in seeking aid, though the latter were necessary and due, but for having offered cooperation, mutual help,



Il sindaco di Medolla ritira il Premio

for having shared professional competence and lived with the others and thanks to the others, by embracing a fraternal attitude, and

having the urge to rebuild not only the necessary material things, but also a sense of community and cohabitation".

The message of Emmaus, read by Donatella Donato Di Paola, delegate of the Opera for North-West Italy fitted really well in the discussion about putting good praxis into practice so as to support fraternity. "I hope that the paradigm of fraternity, as the knowledge of it and its application in civil community, in the relations between local and regional administrators, among different cities grows, may become a "praxis" for politicians and citizens when tackling together crucial issues of the urban centres, so as to transform them into small examples of renewed hu-

manity".

On the 1st and 2nd December another conference was held in the same hall, entitled: "What would Italy look like without its cities?" The participants coming from all over Italy were joined by some students of Sophia University, hailing from different continents, which made it possible to broaden the perspective worldwide.

The two-day meeting offered clear signs of encouragement, especially thanks to the young people present, who proved to be capable of looking beyond the crises to build a better future. The comparison of theory and practice made the two elements stand out as being both indispensable elements to have full-fledged politicians and citizens. The conference delved into the practical meaning of participation and the significance of the city in its various forms, which are determined by different types of relationships.

The role of political formation especially for young people but not only them also proved to be highly significant.

What kind of final results were attained? The will to study and themes such as the city and fraternity as being privileged loci for politics and to go deeper into the writings of some of the major supporters of these issues, such as Giorgio La Pira and Chiara Lubich.

Lina Ciampi de Maina

Lina Ciampi de Maina

(Ref. www.focolare.org & www.cittanuova.)



Adherents

Witnesses in society

Protagonists in the diverse environments in which they live and work

"The joy we felt during those beautiful and intense days was such that one could almost have it 'in scoops'" one of the adherents present at the Congress held in Castel Gandolfo from the 16th to the 18th November.

Happiness, spontaneity, atmosphere of freedom and fraternity, but also depth and openness.

These are some of the features which are common to all the annual meetings for adherents held at Castel Gandolfo. All these elements can be felt because they are the life of the adherents themselves. Their characteristic personality has emerged even more clearly.



arly.

Once Chiara talked about the whole Focolare Movement as a tree and compared its members to its roots and branches and the adherents to its foliage.

The adherents, thanks to their spontaneity, freedom and joy spread the lived spirituality of unity everywhere: they show the beauty of our Movement.

Today the local communities emerge in a particular manner: they acquire their real significance thanks to the presence of the adherents who make them richer and complete.

Through their life based on the Gospel, they become witnesses in va-

Rocca di Papa, 16 November 2012

Dear adherents,

welcome to your Congress,
welcome home!

We have waited for your arrival with joy to live these days with you in the light of Jesus in the midst.

This year we will go deeper into another point of our spirituality: "Love of neighbour"

Chiara, since the very beginning of the Movement, revealed to us that in each neighbour there's Jesus to be loved and it's by loving our neighbour, "one at a time" that our Ideal of unity has reached the farthest places on Earth. It is and has been the spark that has enkindled many hearts, which gives hope, freedom, courage, joy and light to many.

It's evangelical love which is capable

of changing relationships, of healing divisions, of transforming society. The experiences, the talks and the relationships you build among you during the coming days will help you penetrate into the marvellous reality of meeting Jesus who lives in every neighbor.

My wishes are that when you return to your families and your work places, once you have been renewed by this experience, you may make love multiply in many hearts and so become ever-growing instruments in spreading universal brotherhood.

With immense gratitude for the gift you are and the precious contribution you give to our Movement, to the Church and the world, I send you my heartfelt greetings.

Feel that I am with each and everyone of you.

Emmaus

One of the experiences related at the Congress

Esterina. Some years ago I made friends with a gipsy who used to come to our house from time to time and to whom I had always given something. One evening, towards the end of September, when I was eight months pregnant, she came with her husband and two small children: they were dragging a small cart with some things in it; we greeted each other and then they told me that they were going to camp in the Church Square. That evening the weather was quite bad, it was windy and about to rain. After I left them I immediately thought they were my brothers and that I could not let them spend the whole night in the open. So I talked about it to Luigino who immediately agreed with me and we invited them to spend the night at our place. We had supper together, then they had a bath, I gave some of my children's clothes to their children, while the father let Luigino give him a shave; after having prepared the room for them our children played and jumped on the mattresses with their children.

The day after we bade each other farewell as real friends, our children re-

lated everything about the night before at school as if it were the most beautiful thing that had happened to them and we felt the joy of having loved Jesus in these people.

We also got to know Dino, an old tramp who used to wander in many towns; he usually slept in stables or hosted in somebody's house. Even we felt ready to welcome him and to help him in his necessities: to have a bath when it was necessary, to give him clothes to change and to let him sleep in our house.

One day – it was Easter morning – he waited for us to get back home from Church and he asked Luigino if he could give him a foot bath and cut his toe nails.

Luigino. So I changed, I rolled up my sleeves and I did what he wanted. Then we had lunch together.

I felt a great joy within for having loved Jesus in Dino!



Luigino and Esterina

rious environments in society: schools, factories, offices, families, and they transmit the life of the Movement to many, with their love and their word.

During this congress some of their experiences were particularly strong and so was the presentation of the community in Marino, which is a town close to Castel Gandolfo, where the adherents are real protagonists in the endeavour

to solve situations of poverty and want. The message of Emmaus, which was read at the beginning of the meeting, made them feel "at home" (ref box next to article).

Strong experiences, artistic contributions, sharing communion about their lives in groups made up the programme. Two talks about "Love you neighbour" given by Chiara and two given by Emmaus helped them discover and rediscover this point as a great possibility to be authentic Christians, makers of peace and be able to spark off life everywhere.

Costanza Tan and Jorge Lionello Esteban



A New Passion for the Church

The secretariates of the Parish Movement of Central Europe meet in Ottamring

"Jesus asks for few things: two or three". This is the experience lived by the 33 people representing the secretariates of the Parish Movement of all the zones of Central Europe: Chiara's passion – as she had launched it to the citizens of Loppiano in 1975 – to build thousands and thousands, millions of Churches, not made of bricks, but of two or three gathered in the name of Jesus and spread all over the world.

This meeting had been desired for many years and took place at the end of November in Ottamring. Its aim was to understand together what God wants, what the Church expects, how we can be the presence of the Opera in the local Church. In the last years, because of the situation of the Church and the Opera in Austria, Switzerland and Germany, some common issues and challenges which needed to be tackled by the Parish Movement have emerged.

During the meeting it was possible to consider the situation of the church



with sincerity but also to tune up on a new perception and realize that God is already carrying out something "new". Every zone shared its situations and its worries, but also the steps ahead and the initiatives undertaken by the Parish Movement.

"I had never participated in such a sincere exchange". "My horizons have got broader: different experiences but they were all expression of the Ideal". And another one: "I feel greatly relieved for not having to hammer on the structure but on living".



The conclusion of the meeting was Chiara's meditation: "One city is not enough", and one almost was led to say: "One Parish is not enough". Fr. Klaus Hofstetter from the international secretariate and Renata Simon and Herbert Lauenroth – the two delegates for the Opera in Ottamring – who acted as representatives of the delegates of the Opera of the Big zone, expressed the feelings which emerged during the meeting and with regard to the future: with all the Opera we can give the Church this soul, the presence of Jesus in the community. Or – as the recent synod about the New Evangelization said: "it's necessary to build welcoming communities, to have practical experiences of communion, which attract the disillusioned gaze of contemporary humanity".



Christmas and the Gen 4

«We love Jesus»



Like little apostles, they overcome their shyness with the strength of Jesus in the midst and go towards everybody to offer their “Baby Jesus”. These are the gen 4 boys and girls. All over the world they’ve invented new initiatives because “we love Jesus” a gen 4 from Mantova said “and we wish that He may be able to enter in many houses for Christmas”.

Their activity is not a business concern but in spite of all this they carry out everything with a great sense of responsibility and their “work meetings” are a great opportunity to build new relationships with friends and relatives.

In Rumania, for example, they acted as a stimulus for the local communities in the preparation of the Christmas celebrations, by working together – people belonging to different Christian Churches – in such a way that everybody could feel at home. Marta, Maria and Chiara asked Federico, a gen 4, if he was pleased to keep the accounts, and so he looks after the till box with the first earnings.

Last year the contributions gathered in this activity were given to needy children in

Africa, where there are many gen 4 who come from poor families.

“We gen 4 – they wrote from Fontem – want to thank you for the money you sent us. We are happy to have received it and we are going to help the poor gen 4. We are doing many acts of love and we keep listening to the voice of the new man. We also want to set up a kitchen garden to grow vegetables which we could then sell to earn money”.

Some gen 4 were also able to go to their congress, thanks to the contribution they received. Lilka, who is 7, from Burundi, realized her parents didn’t want to send her to the Congress in Nairobi. At one point she told her parents: “You have said no but I haven’t said no yet”; she got a copybook and wrote down a list of names of people she could ask for help. In that way she managed to find half the amount of money she needed for the Congress, the rest was covered by Providence. The astonished parents could not refuse giving her their permission to go.



This year, the money collected in this activity will be sent to children in Cuba, Syria and Nigeria.

*Christiane Heinsdorff,
Matthias Bolkart*





Christmas the Promise

In 1976, Chiara in a message to the Gen, suggested their getting engaged in "the task of aiding as many Jesuses as possible throughout the year". This promise is still valid today.

Dear gen 2,

It is really a great joy that, every year, the Church reoffers us the salient facts of the life of Jesus to be re-considered.

And therefore every year we celebrate Christmas and we can immerge ourselves in this sweet mystery of God made child.

It's enchanting, isn't it, gen? Jesus, our young, beautiful, strong leader who gives the world the highest, most mysterious and divine message, that has ever been heard or ever will be. Jesus who dies to pay personally for his cause, which is really mine, yours, everyone's, makes us think about him, admire him, so small, fragile and poor, next to a Mother who was then unknown and still so young and a father who stood instead of His Heavenly Father.

The scene of the crib gives a sense of tenderness, it is so real, so full of meaning, it's the incarnation of the beatitudes and touches some strings of our heart which are usually silent, because the din of many and serious, very serious problems of the day make





it impossible to hear them.

But, at least on Christmas day, gen, let's make space for this most delicate harmony which is echoed by the great and boundless silence of the poor in the world, of those who are very often struck by disasters which leave you breathless, of the sick, of the children who belong to no one, of the dying on the roads of India, of the underprivileged, of the sluggish because they are unemployed, of all those who suffer misery and who Jesus loves because they are similar to Him in the moment in which he was born. Even we have to love them and may our hearts, gen, on this Christmas Day, choose them, once again, as our favourite ones amongst everybody.

They are waiting for us in the suburbs of our city, they are waiting in Africa, in Asia, in South America, in the Middle East ... With the generation that precedes you, the gen 1, share the task of aiding as many Jesuses as possible throughout the year.

This promise, in front of the Baby, is the best way to spend Christmas, gen.

All my wishes.

Chiara

Published in Gen, December 1976 – January 1977: leading article



Photos:
Gen and Youth for a United world "in action" in different countries all over the world..

Friends of “Together for Europe” meet in Munich

«Another Europe is possible»

Not all those present were familiar with the warm welcome of the YMCA/ CVJM Community in Munich.

Giving welcome is one of the strong points of the charism of this Movement and it is witnessed by the hundred or so “Friends of together for Europe” who went there last November.

Three days of evaluation and prospects (8-10 November). Together, they try to have some insight – just as Chiara had wished in 1999 – on “the score composed in Heaven”.

The opening of the meeting was the viewing of the dvd ‘A current of hope’ about the 12th May 2012 event in Brussels and the 152 cities linked to it: the third continental event of “Together for Europe”.

“What was the most beautiful thing? The unity among us!” the Belgians said; “The presence of God in our being ‘Together’”: those hailing from Moscow confirmed. And a couple from Austria said: “On the 12th May a



light entered amongst us: we saw that unity is the strongest thing”. “What we can see is the development of a Pan-European soul endowed with a spirit – the local and the continental prevail: it’s the right direction”, a participant from Holland added.

The question that arose was: “How shall we proceed?” Three possible courses emerged: strengthening the communion among Movements and Communities in the different cities by going deeper into the culture of communion, paying visits to each other and promoting an annual meeting locally on a significant day for Europe. It doesn’t have to be a big meeting, but an occasion to exchange experiences, help, enlighten and encourage each



other.

Even collaboration in one of the series of "Yes", launched in Stuttgart in 2007 is also on the agenda.

A second course of action is at a national level: in those places where national committees have not yet been formed, a co-ordination group of "Together" could be set up there.

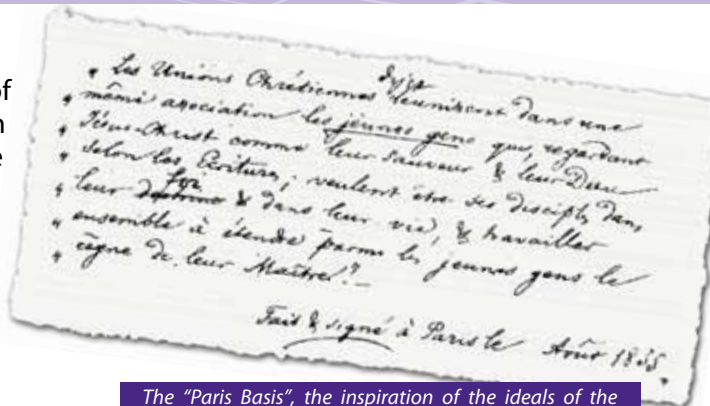
The third possibility is at a continental level. The desire to offer the experience of the Movements and the Communities of various Churches united in this path "Together" for the preparation of the 500th anniversary of the posting of Luther's theses in 2017: "People look forward to finding new ways of ecumenical encounter. The brotherhood lived in "Together" for Europe plays an important role."

A special part of the programme dealt with the "Yes" to a fair economy presented by two experts: Christoph Raedel of the YMCA University in Kassel



(Germany) and Luigino Bruni (university professor at Sophia University and at LUMSA) about the Economy of communion of the Focolari. A round table followed with three experiences: the way in which the economic aspect is lived in the different Movements and Communities shows that the charisms offer a "vision" even in this field.

Some of the experts want to con-



The "Paris Basis", the inspiration of the ideals of the YMCA, drawn up by the founder, George Williams and other 99 young people coming from Europe, during the first world conference in 1855.

The YMCA won the Nobel Prize for Peace in 1946 and its motto is: *Ut omnes unum sint.*

tinue to collaborate with each other to be able to present a study about finance which is born from the charisms for Europe.

A new song

Someone called these three days "a new song". An hour of prayer in the Matthäus Kirche – where on the 8th December 2001 the pact of mutual love had been proposed to the leaders of the Movements and Communities for the first time – was one of the culminating points of the meeting. Eli Folonari made everybody relive those moments with Chiara; Fr. Heinrich Walter, who is responsible for the Schönstatt Movement followed suit. Each and every one of them renewed the commitment to live Jn 13,34: "love one another as I have loved you".

Though aware that the challenges are many, everybody left with the will to fulfill our being Christians today for Europe, together.

Gabri Fallacara

Brescia

Treading Common Paths

A new step in the relationship among Christians and Muslims, part of the "Progetto Italia" agenda.

What emerges spontaneously after the event which took place on the 25th November in Brescia, titled "Treading Common Paths for the

Muslim Communities and members of the Focolare Movement, the project was enriched by some new development. Setting up the Italian

Macro zones also helped – North, Centre, South – and made it possible to have meetings between Muslim families and families coming from the Focolari everywhere, even

in which it was prepared, which made it necessary to have a mixed commission made up of Muslims and the people responsible for the third Dialogue in the Opera, in every zone in the North of Italy. It was a long, intense and demanding task (even because it involved travelling from one place to another) in which each member of the commission, endowed with his own and diverse experience, ventured in a practical sort of "gymnasium" where he could "lose himself" and in the "whole" made up by everybody, find himself again.

On the eve of the event, when the programme had been agreed upon, during a meeting to check the last details, with Luisa Gennaro, Mario Ciabattini, the Centre for Interreligious Dialogue and the Muslim Imams of the commission, we perceived a tangible presence of God, thanks to our having lived the experience of being a "family", in which, before feeling ourselves as being Christians or



Family – Muslims and Christians dialogue" as part of the "Progetto Italia" (Project for Italy), is a reflection which is full of content and it necessarily makes us ask ourselves how should we move ahead after this step in which we witnessed the opening of a horizon which offers multiple developments for the future.

In fact, after the meeting in 2010 in Loppiano and the following set up of the national mixed commission, made up of leaders of the Italian

by keeping in contact and updating each other and also by travelling to various cities (Catania, Naples, Rome, Florence and many cities in the North). All these occasions were fruitful and encouraging and augured new openings.

The Brescia meeting, where more than 1300, Muslims and Christians coming from the Northern Macro-Zone (Triveneto, Emilia, Lombardia, Piemonte and Liguria), was quite impacting. First of all because of the way

Muslims, we acknowledged each other as brothers: a practical example of the fulfillment of universal brotherhood.

The title, the proportions and the features of the event met wide approval, interest and arose even wonder in the social, political and ecclesial environments, besides a vast coverage by the media. The most beautiful outcome was realizing that the relationships with our Muslim brothers were now much deeper and more authentic. And this is not only because now we know each other better, but because we have practically walked along

unique, incredible. A meeting where reciprocity was tangible, and in our hearts we could feel the certainty that a united world is possible, that the "Ut Omnes" can be fulfilled.

We have experienced that relationships with leaders of various Islamic communities all over the Italian territory have got wider and deeper and thanks to them a substantial and practical development of the "dialogue of life" has emerged, which has involved growing numbers of various Muslim communities and members of the Movement, but also people having different (non-

and, in the light of the experience we have gone through up to now, which varied according to the territories, understand how to maintain our being united in our objectives and help each other to cultivate the shoot of life which has sprung up in every zone.

In view of the next "Progetto Italia" appointment in May 2013 in Rome, we urgently feel it's necessary to find an adequate space where we can exchange ideas and find the right way how to go about this new stage while moving, in an ever more practical manner towards the "Ut Omnes".



part of the way together, where it was necessary to welcome each other, to "make space" for one another and trust each other in an ample manner. According to us, this is what made the event – just as many Muslims and Christians called it – new,

religious)beliefs (attracted by an atmosphere of great openness). We now feel it's necessary to meet with the people responsible for the third Dialogue in the Italian Macro-zones



In Vojvodina. One of Chiara's books in Cyrillic Language 'Being Your Word' at Matica srpska

Novi Sad, the capital of Vojvodina, a multiethnic region in Serbia. Chiara's book 'Being Your Word' translated in Serbian Cyrillic Language was presented at the "Matica srpska" (the Serbian Motherhouse). The most important and oldest cultural and scientific institution of the nation opened its doors on the 30th October to welcome a varied crowd. The two front rows in the hall were occupied mainly by Orthodox, Catholic and Evangelical priests, comprising the Evangelical Bishop and the



Apostolic Nuncio who had come from Belgrade.

After the presentation of the book in the Serbian capital last May, Fr. Branko Curcin, an Orthodox priest from Novi Sad, had expressed his desire to have it also in his diocese. He is committed in the social field, well-known and esteemed in the region and he considered this as an occasion to make many people get to know the spirituality of unity.

"We didn't know how to start going about it because we have no community in Novi Sad" this was the first thought the focolarini had. Fr. Branko, with the blessing of the Orthodox Bishop Irinej Bulovic, shouldered the organization of the event himself. Thanks to "Beseda", the radio of the Orthodox diocese, the invitations for the event reached many,

even through a live internet. Chiara's book and the Movement from Chicago, who wrote the book, was very happy with the invitation and participated in the presentation.

The presentation went beyond our expectations: in a sphere the Movement, Chiara's story with her intuition to live the Gospel and our experiences were offered to the public. Fr. Milos Vesin also commented some excerpts from the book, emphasizing the call to be living Gospels in all the circumstances of life. The Nuncio underlined Chiara's call to return to the Gospel by hammering on the strength of the word that unites Christians belonging to different Churches, and if put into practice, can offer solutions for the problematic situations which prevail in the Balkans and the world.

It was moving to see Chiara's photo in a place where we would have never imagined to be! During the agape which followed, many asked to keep in contact with us. The owner of a bookshop in Novi Sad offered to sell our books, which up to this day had never been put on show in a public place.

God has opened new and unexpected roads towards the "Ut Omnes". They go beyond our possibilities and our numbers!



Nina Vjazovetskaja, don Vladislav Varga





In Cuba after the Hurricane

Getting to work after destruction.
A female volunteer relates the
devastating effects of Hurricane Sandy

"It was war time and everything fell to ruin ..." Chiara's phrase accompanied me persistently since the dawn of the 25th October. We had spent the night amidst doubts and fear, in the dark: wind, rain, the sound of the buildings collapsing; the roof of my house didn't collapse but we weren't aware of the tragedy that at that same moment thousands, tens of thousands of families were going through in the city of Santiago de Cuba and the nearby towns.

It was only at dawn, when the rain and the wind started diminishing that we were able to face reality, first by visiting the places close by, in our district and then in the city. We had to face the rage of the winds which had robbed us of human lives, roofs, houses, public buildings, churches, of the greenery and the shade of the trees.

How much work and effort, how much trust placed in material things

that Sandy had taken away! It's impossible to express in any way what unfolded in front of my very eyes.

Some were weeping, others had started working; some were helping, others, took the opportunity to take hold of things that weren't theirs; some were lending a helping hand cleaning, gathering things or fixing them, others were blocked in useless moaning and waiting for others to do what they should have been doing.

Phone calls from all over Cuba arrived in the few houses where a telephone line was still available or messages on mobiles which proved to be bridges of salvation for families and neighbors. Everybody kept asking how we were, wishing to help, in some way, mitigate the suffering which they saw through the terrible scenes transmitted by television.

Changing the face of a wounded city has been

the task of many people who got here from the remotest places on the island and beyond, such as many laborers who came to put the electricity service back in operation, those who cleared the debris, the rubbish, which weighed up to millions of tons; those who, as soon as it was possible for them, started making bread.

Changing the face of the city was the result of everybody's work, nobody asked anything about your way of thinking, your ideology, neither in whom you believed, who was your God ... the only thing you knew was the prevailing necessity and so you aided that brother in need.

There were young people clearing debris in their own houses and in their districts, in churches, that, just like the rest of the city, were damaged or had been completely destroyed by the winds; there were some young people, and some children among them, who filled the refectories for the old and the needy of the parish community with joy, by serving food or washing dishes. Young and not so young, all intent on sowing seeds of hope.

Maria Caridad Lòpez
Campistrous



In Chicago

Living the Gospel Bears Fruit

Some appointments after the Mariapolis to continue living the experience in daily life.

Reliving the experience of the Mariapolis, and opening it up for those who hadn't been able to participate in it. This was the aim of the get together held in various communities of the Chicago zone, in the United States of America. The meetings had a distinguishing beautiful family atmosphere, were people of all ages took part, and almost in all of them some of our Muslim friends were present.

For the first time it was possible to have these meetings even in the most distant places from the focolare, where there isn't a stable local community yet. In Tennessee some people travelled for

many ours to be able to spend an afternoon together. A Lutheran lady, who had just got to know the Movement, said how she liked the idea of living the Gospel together. And another lady coming from the Parish were the meeting was being held said: "the experiences that were shared really struck me. Even I feel I want to live in this way and together with all of you I feel that I can make it".

In Appleton, in the state of Wisconsin, among the participants also an over-90, Norbertine father and past Professor of Economics was present. He said he enthusiastic about the Ideal. He got to know us only three or



four years ago, when he started receiving our magazine, Living City, which he shares with others. Recently, he has also spoken about the Focolare at the University where he lives. He had been waiting for an event of the Movement in that region for quite some time.

A focolarina and a married focolarina went to Kentucky, where besides the family-focolare there are now three young families who had got to know the Ideal in different places and they had been to the Mariapolis, and a gen. We discovered the enthusiasm and the life of these people who now want to keep meeting monthly.

Paloma Cabetas,
Gary Brandl



Kenya | Piero Mariapolis

Back from the Genfest

The Gen make spread the Ideal among many young people

"We want to go deeper and understand better, we can't afford to go backwards..." these were the words of Eva Maria when she got back in Kenya after the Genfest. And facts followed these words: various occasions were planned in the Piero Mariapolis and the towns close-by to spread the message which was launched during their stay in Budapest, among young people. The gen do not want to miss such an important occasion and



they are available to go around schools and universities to give the Ideal.

On the 30th September, 800 young people in Mururia Catholic School, in Gatundu, met a group of Youth for a United World during a meeting entitled: "Young People on the Move with Christ".

The gen shared their experiences about living the Word. At the end of the meeting both teachers and students thanked them and said: "Come again, again, and again ... Your message is a treasure and we want to go deeper in it, we want to get to know you better". The head of school said: "In you I've found smart young people who can help the schools in our region" and then she promised that she would have spoken about Youth for a United World to the secretariats of the schools in the district so as to be able to continue giving the experiences of living the Gospel to other young people.

On the 14th October it was the Makuyu High School's turn where a nun had invited the gen to present the Ideal to 100 young people. Even in this place there was great joy and the desire to move ahead together.



And then "Let's Bridge and Chiara Luce": on the 7th October at the Piero Mariapolis about 70 young people celebrated the second anniversary of her beatification. Some updates about the Genfest, with the experience of Christine and Eva Maria who were in Budapest and the launching of the "United World Project" made it possible for all those present to relive the intense moments experienced in Hungary.

The video of the story of Chiara Luce followed: silence, a serious atmosphere and intense listening prevailed. The impressions of the young people expressed their commitment in living that way, there.

In all the people we've met you can feel a growing need, a desire to reach as many young people as possible to share the discovery of God Love with them and this desire has become increasingly contagious.

*Marina (Else) Castellitto,
Joseph Kinini Theuri*



Published below are the telegrams Emmaus sent on the departure of two focolarini who left for the Heavenly Mariapolis

Angiola Mori Bellocchio

Beating heart of the first community in Brescia

Angiola, the first married focolarina from Brescia left for the Heavenly Mariapolis on the 23rd November, aged 88. In the last six months of her illness, in which she had completely lost her independence, she was accompanied by the love of all the focolare and especially by the constant presence of a married focolarina.

She had got to know the Ideal with her husband Antonio in 1953, during a trip to Rome. The MP from Brescia, Enrico Roselli, a dear friend of theirs, had accompanied them for lunch at the focolare. The first focolarine sat around that table. "A young blonde lady came to open the door for us (Gis Calliari). The house was very poor but harmonious and spotless, everything had been prepared with great care. The young lady related the story about wartime, in Italian and in the dialect of Trent: they wanted to live the Gospel".

Angiola had a great sense of justice and she had always been in search of truth; she wanted to make God known even through study. In that meeting with the first focolarine she had found Jesus in a new way. She related that: "These creatures who lived in that way, rebuilt inside me the certainty that through us, Jesus could return and walk along the streets ... With Antonio we left the focolare and we walked along the avenues in silence so as not to shatter the light that had dazzled us and that shrouded us ...".

From the very beginning Angiola's feature was that of practical love towards everybody. Her first steps in the new life of the Ideal meant overcoming the difficulties with her mother-in-law, she used to do all she

could for her relatives and colleagues in the schools where she taught.

She took part in the first Mariapolis on the Dolomites with Antonio and later their home in Brescia became like the beating



heart of the first community which welcomed all the first members of the Opera in that city. She, who dearly loved studying, used to put aside her plans, to offer hospitality and share the wisdom derived from ha-

ving lived the Ideal.

The meeting with Jesus Forsaken appeared in the serious illness of her only son, Luigi, who died very young; Angiola was deeply struck by it. In 2001 even her husband Antonio reached the abode of the Father. Her loyalty to her Only Spouse was always firm.

In 2008 she wrote to Chiara: I want to say thank you once again in a measure that knows no bounds for that which my life owes you. You have taught us to love Jesus Forsaken, not in a weeping manner, but with our hearts open towards everyone transforming suffering in love. In this way you have transformed our life in Life". And in another letter: "... in you, with you, with the Ideal I have found Everything: Jesus God-man, Jesus in my brothers and in the midst of them, Jesus the way, the life, the truth".

In her last years Angiola could not go to the focolare and only when her health permitted the meeting used to be held at her place. She never stopped loving: "Thank you" was her leitmotiv when welcoming whoever went to visit her. Her house continued to be a point of reference. Even the day before leaving for Heaven she welcomed a group of adherents who were able to greet her and tell her thank you on behalf of the community.

Lenny Szczesniak

One of the pioneers of the Ideal in the USA

On 10th December, in the morning, Lenny a married focolarino from the United States, left for the Heavenly Mariapolis, serene, with dignity and love in the way he had always lived, surrounded by the affection of his wife Mary and their children. He was 76.

Lenny, one of the pioneers of the Ideal in the USA,, was born in Chicago where, in September 1957, he had heard a priest in his parish, Fr. Joe Scopa, a scalabrinian (ref. Mariapolis 7-8/2011) relate the story of Chiara and the first focolarine. He was fascinated by it and together with about thirty young people he had started to live the spirituality of unity.

In 1964, after having heard about the small town which was getting started in Loppiano, he left for Italy. When in Loppiano he understood that God called him for marriage and he moved to Rome where he worked for three years with Fr. Pasquale Foresi and Nuzzo Maria Grimaldi in the publication of New City, the first magazine of the Opera in the English language.

When he went back to the USA, he stopped in New York and in 1972 he married Mary, formed a beautiful family which welcomed 9 children over the years, two of whom adopted, and up to now 7 grandchildren.

Love was Lenny's most evident characteristic. In 1977, he wrote to Chiara: "... leaving the focolare and going along Manhattan towards the station, it seemed to me that all the things around me weren't there anymore ... I want to go along the world re-giving, through the simplest and greatest actions, the love Jesus has showed and shows me with His call for this vocation".

In June 1995: "I have just finished the

school for the fifth year for the married focolarini and I'm returning to the United States as another person, better still, a non-person, lost in the love for Jesus Forsaken. I want to be always an emptiness filled with this Love, to see everything and everyone through the eyes of Jesus".

Lenny had high level positions in one of the most important publishing houses of the United States and always enjoyed the esteem of his bosses and his competitors. Even in the Opera he carried out with great humility and wisdom the responsibilities entrusted to him, as delegate for New Humanity and head of the community. He lived his vocation as a married focolarino in an exemplary manner, contributing towards the generation of Jesus in the midst in the focolare and helping the other focolarini in various ways.



Ten months ago, when he realized that his illness was little by little diminishing his abilities, even his memory, he lived a moment of "night". He confided it to the focolarino responsible for his focolare,

who talked to him about the love of God and advised him not to worry about anything except loving Jesus Forsaken. He accepted this advice with simplicity and trust in Jesus in the midst, the darkness immediately left him and happiness returned.

During his last hours Lenny frequently repeated his desire "to go back home". We like thinking that Maria, on the day of the feast of Our Lady of Loreto, welcomed him in her House with all Chiara's family who is already in Heaven.

In 1975, Chiara had given him this Word of Life: "Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am" (Jn 17,24) and a new name: Fedel (= Faithful).

... we are sure that, from There, he will continue to support his dear ones and the Opera, especially in the USA.

fr. Angelo Lari

«I do what pleases Him»

Fr. Angelo was born in Camaiore (Zone of Florence) and he left for Heaven on the 14th January just before turning 85.

He himself will narrate some important moments of his life through his writings: "The person who is writing is a focolarino priest who has lived as a parish priest at "Our Lady of Good Council" in Lucca since 1951.

I had the parish built, comprising the Church, the rectory and the parish amenities with the help of everyone, even of the State. I celebrated my 50th anniversary of the priesthood with great enthusiasm of the parishioners and with them I try and live the demanding Word of Life Chiara gave me: "I always do what pleases Him" (Jn 8,29). I also live with a medullary infarct which was diagnosed in this way: "Dear priest, thank God because in Italy there are only two such cases, and one of them is yours".

I have to own that the news was not accepted really well and the fact that my legs get blocked is not always accepted serenely. But Mary, who loves me ... has given me the gift of serenity and in my wheelchair I met Pope John Paul II".

Fr. Angelo led a secluded life but a spiritually intense one which struck those who happened to meet him. Some priests wrote about him: "Fr. Angelo is getting weaker and weaker but increasingly in God, we found him full of light. He insisted: "I'm very well because I have Jesus". In the last meeting with the focolarini priests, almost as if he had predicted his departure, he shared his spiritual will with them. An excerpt from one of the last letters – which he jealously conserved along the years – that Chiara had written to him reads: "Jesus Forsaken is the faithful companion of your life, the precious instrument which God uses to lead you to sanctity". It seems to us that that is what came to pass.

Marcello Catalucci

fr. Harie Driesen

Great trust in the Father

Fr. Harie was born in Belgium. He had always had great trust in God since he was young and this trust accompanied him throughout his life. In the youth Catholic movement where he was an enthusiastic animator his desire to give up his life matured. After eight years working in a carbon mine as an electrician, he understood his vocation clearly: priesthood.



He related his experience to groups of young people on many occasions, transmitting his trust in the love of God. The basis of the choice of his life was: "I am telling you not to worry about your life. Your heavenly Father knows what you need ..." (ref Mt 6,25-32). His faithfulness in living the Gospel and in being a credible witness of it, was his feature during the ten years of study at the seminary and then as a priest and as a teacher. The Mariapolis of 1975, which was held in his school, made him discover what he had been yearning for, for a long time: the communion of life with other priests, fruit of a deep relationship with Jesus and His Word. When he was asked the reason why the volunteer priests, (he was one of them) met, Fr. Harie replied: "To put Jesus in the midst". During his life he had to undergo various operations because of motor problems and during his last years it was hard for him to celebrate Mass. He knew how to face difficulties as challenges; since he was a skilful animator and loved music, he made use of the periods of time he spent in hospital to learn to play a new musical instrument or to invent programmes of entertainment for his parish or which were useful for old people's homes, for meetings and congresses.

In the last part of his life – a real rise towards Jesus – Fr. Harie, helped by the love

of the priests and of his family, was able to overcome every test. When he had another heart attack and the doctors gave up, he told them with great simplicity: "Up there it's so beautiful that I ask you not to do anything else to keep me down here". While talking to one of the priests of his nucleus he joked about the instruments that he would have taken for the choir of ... Heaven. On the 9th November Jesus received him in Paradise. He was 80.

Bernard Keutgens

fr. Mariano Medina Rosique

«I sanctify myself for them»

Fr. Mariano, a Marist, got to know the Ideal in 1971 during a Mariapolis in Spain and fascinated by the discovery he had made, he wrote to Chiara: "You have made me find God, Mary, the saints, my Founder, my vocation ... I had never loved my congregation the way I do now. I can see that my vocation is following God by living Mary, living Trinitarian life with my brothers, by being my living founder".

He took part in the school for priests in Frascati and the end of that experience – in February 1974 – was rather the "beginning". "I'm at the beginning of a school that will not end till the day of my death". Since he desired to give the spirit of unity to his congregation, he asked Chiara to give him a Word of Life: and he soon got a reply: "I sanctify myself for them". Only Jesus in you will be able to attract your congregation and any other person towards unity. But to do so it's necessary to be Him, by being living love in every present moment".

Fr. Mariano's life was a real "race". After having been in many different communities, in 1998 he left Madrid and moved to Rome, where, together with his superior general he was responsible for the administration. He then went back to Spain and he was transferred to Salamanca, then to Cordova. In 2010 he was diagnosed malignant cancer. Fr. Mariano received the news in silence: the chemothe-



rapy took away all his strength and caused him many "dark" days. Quite weak, he suffered in silence. Mary eased his suffering and he frequently repeated: "Everything for Jesus, through Mary".

Some days before his death Emmaus had written to him: "I pray that the presence of Jesus in the midst (...) may continue to be your light and your strength. Thanks for every offer you make so that the plans of God on the Work of Mary may be fulfilled (...) Even I renew the pact everyday with each one of you and I'm sure that Jesus, who unites us in the Eucharist, walks with you especially in the most difficult moments".

Fr. Mariano accepted that "hour" when and how God wanted it to be. His offer ended on the 16th August, aged 67, while his Marist brothers and his sister, Isabel were saying the rosary together.

Toni Torres

Luigi Reggi

Love which is stronger than anything else

Hailing from Lugo di Romagna (Zone of Bologna), he got to know the Movement with all his family in 1967. After some months, his son Carlo left, with his blessing, for the focolare in Parma. Luigi started taking the first steps towards the vocation of the volunteer. As soon as he retired from work, he moved to Loppiano with Maria, his wife who was also a volunteer, where he spent 28 years giving up himself for others, and lived in the house next to the S.Vito Church. His unity with Chiara was personal and every time she went there, she visited the old parish priest, Fr. Angelo Dragoni. Luigi and Maria looked after him for five years with delicate expertise. In one of her visits, Chiara gave them a Word of Life to live as a family: "As God's dear children, then, take him as your pattern, and follow Christ by loving" (Ef 5, 1-2a). They

had the possibility of living a profound unity with the inhabitants of Loppiano and while waiting for their house to be finished they lived in the rectory of S. Vito. The same type of relationship followed in the years spent with Fr. Annibale Ferrari, with Fr. Mario Strada, even with focolarine and focolarini of the school, since parents who were doubtful of the choice of life made by their children, were encouraged and comforted by Luigi and Maria.

After celebrating their 50th anniversary Maria's health started failing and Luigi, who was already 80 managed to learn to cook and look after her and the house. He had to leave Loppiano after almost thirty years to move to his daughter Clelia's house, where Maria could be better looked after and Luigi, who was nearly ninety, then joined the nucleus of volunteers of Faenza in a very natural manner.

After Maria's departure for Heaven, Luigi im-

mersed himself in an atmosphere of unity and spent his holidays in Montet with his son Carlo who had returned from the Ivory Coast. Luigi spent the last three years in a rest house where he became a "centre of unity" and where the volunteers used to go for the meeting of their nucleus. Every month Luigi distributed 40 copies of the Word of Life to people his age, their relatives, to the staff of the home where he was. It was an occasion to establish lively relationships which roused comments, resolutions and a strong relationship with everyone. Luigi left us on the 16th August, aged 97, while asleep he entered in Eternity, with his son who was keeping vigil by his bedside..



Franco Monaco



Annie Bourgenot

First from the Reformed Church in France

Annie got to the Heavenly Mariapolis on the 14th August, the eve of the feast of the Assumption, as a sign of the privileged love of Mary for this volunteer, the first one of the Reformed Church in France (ERF) and who was deeply attached to Chiara. Annie got to know the Ideal thanks to Suzanne and André Martinet, who were at the time responsible for the volunteers of France; her life was a strong witness of her faith in the charism. She followed Chiara with all her strength and spread the Ideal as a "pioneer" of the ecumenical dialogue of the Opera in France and frequently in contact with Christians of different Churches. In her 'journey' she managed to love Mary because she lived with full trust in the Ideal.

Due to her illness, for quite a number of weeks she was without any strength and almost couldn't speak, and she frequently could communicate only through her gaze

or by pressing a hand. When her daughter, Isaline, who is also a volunteer, gave her a small icon of Mary and Jesus, saying: "I entrust you to Mary, because we need a mother at all ages", Annie answered with her eyes sparkling: "Absolutely". A volunteer of her nucleus said: "We used to leave her room in peace and with light in our heart".

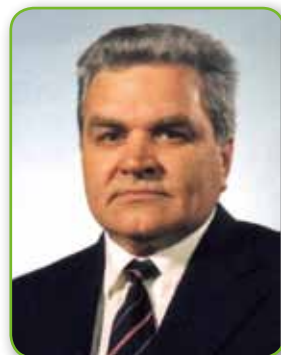
One of Annie's sisters who hadn't wanted to talk to her for years, went to visit her and in her last days her relatives gathered around her.

Thérèse Clayette

Angelo Redaelli

A Great Faith

He was a volunteer of the province of Bergamo and he had got to know the Ideal at the end of the sixties, during a trip to Loppiano. He had returned dazzled by the discovery of God Love, he was attracted by a group of volunteers of his zone and he became part of the nucleus which he participated in with loyalty.



Maria Teresa Mentella

Devotion and loyalty

M.Teresa was a volunteer from Rome and she had an atheist background. She had suffered motor ailments since she was young but her attitude helped her overcome the numerous difficulties, even to enter the work environment. When she met



the Ideal she was transformed, and was totally available for the Opera as a volunteer. The community of the Prenestine district in Rome was born thanks to her devotion and loyalty. In New Humanity, she was one of the first people to start the Commission for the Work Environment, witnessing her going against the current in the Ministry where she worked. Such delicate health had obliged her to use a wheelchair for many years, and even in her darkest moments she never lost her great love for the charism of Chiara. Each word of hers was in her heart like a treasure which, during the nucleus she used to share. Jesus in the midst was her strength and her light till the very end, on the 26th July 2011. She was 77.

Bonaria Gessa

He had a great faith and he was silent as a person but his was a living silence and he used to transmit the supernatural with his life. He was active in the distribution of the Word of Life and in collecting Città Nuova subscriptions, he had understood the importance of doing what God wanted from him. He started suffering from physical ailments and even serious family problems at an early age, he kept living the Ideal, by nourishing himself with writings of Chiara, Foco, Città Nuova magazine and the newsletter Mariapoli. What helped him was reading first of all the short biographies of the witnesses who gave him the strength to live his illness well till the moment of his encounter with Jesus. He frequently refused morphine to be able to remain conscious.

His relatives said: "During the last period Angelo amazed us all". He wanted to meet all the relatives, even his grandchildren and he recommended they loved and forgave everyone, were merciful, asked the Holy spirit for His help.

He, who usually uttered few words, showed the richness of his soul at the end of his life. His wife, Franca, who assisted him with their children, said: "An Angel has left, as he was called and as he really was". He died on the 24th April, aged 72. During the sermon, the parish priest was moved because he had never met such faith.

This is what he wrote to Emmaus: "Now I pray for him, so that after having lived as a real son of Chiara, he may enjoy the complete joy of Paradise. And together we ask him to help us be loyal to our Ideal till the very end."

Silvano Giant

for other profiles of witnesses, go to
www.focolare.org/notiziariomariapoli

Our relatives who left for eternal life

Vita: father of Max Stebler, delegate of the zone in Poland; the sister of Anita Hasler, foc.na in Zurich; Gino, brother of Anna (Ico) Favella, foc.na at the Mariapolis Centre in Castelgandolfo; Maria, sister of Damiana (Maripaz) Souza, foc.na in Chile; the father of Dágina Souza Oliveira, foc.na in Belfast (Ireland); Agatha (vol.ia), mother of Nancy and Yvonne O'Donnel, foc.ne at the Luminosa zone (USA); Luigina, mother of Mario de Siati, foc.no in Milan; Luigi, father of Giuseppina (Donata) Paris, foc.na at the Roman Mariapolis; Aurelia, mother of Lilian (Mabel) Vera, foc.na in Uruguay; Ernesto, father of Roberta Pomarè, married foc.na in Padova; Mariuccia, mother of Graziana Zerbi, foc.na at the Mariapolis Centre in Cadine; Basilio, father of Giovanna Roggio, married foc.na in Trent..