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MARIAPOLI

Newsletter of the Focolare Movement

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Summer 2013
**A new
season**

**Mariapolis
gatherings
in the world**
The brother
at the center

**Bishops
in the Little
Town Gietta**
The gift of
communion

God is love and also light

God is love. But God is also light and Jesus «like light came to the world» (cf. Jn 12,46).

Thus, the more one loves the more one sees. If 1943 was the year the Movement was born, 1949 instead, marked a leap forward.

Unforeseen circumstances, but foreseen by Divine Providence, moved in such a way that the first group of members of the Movement retreated from the world and went up to the mountain to rest. We had to go away from people, but we could not move away from that way of life, which made up the reason for our existence. A small and rustic mountain cabin housed us in poverty.

We were alone: alone among ourselves with our great Ideal lived moment by moment, with Jesus in the Eucharist, the bond of unity, whom we drew from everyday; alone in our rest, in prayer and in meditation.

It was there that a period of particular grace started. We had the impression that the Lord opened the eyes of our soul to the Kingdom of God that was in our midst: the Trinity that lives in a cell of the Mystical Body: «Father, protect them by the power of your name - the name you gave me - so that they may be one as we are one.» (cf. Jn. 17,11); and we seemed to understand that the Opera that was coming to life would be nothing other than the presence of Mary in the Church.

From: Chiara Lubich, *Spiritual Writings/3*. All one, Rome 1979, pp. 41-42

Naturally, we would not have left that mountain ever again, a little Tabor of our soul, if the will of God for us had not been different. It was only the love for Jesus crucified and forsaken, living in humanity immersed in darkness, that gave us the courage to do so».

Chiara

New publications Aletta narrates...

**A book written from the heart,
a simple testimony narrated
by one of the first young people
who followed Chiara Lubich, in Trent**

The author and protagonist of these spontaneous and involving memories is Vittoria Salizzoni from Trent, who met Chiara Lubich on the 7th of January 1945 when she was twenty years old. From that moment on, thousands of people come to know her with the name that was given to her by Chiara on that precise day: «Ala» or «Aletta», which means: «little wing that takes flight and flies in God because all our life must be a flight».

In the terrible backdrop of the Second World War, Aletta witnessed the rise of a new spiritual current, with the consequent coming together of that which would later be called the Focolare

Going in depth

Transmit a Charism

**The contribution
of the linguistic sciences**

If we look at the Opera we can see it as being studded with many moments in which Chiara, using the most diverse means of communication, shared her experience of the summer of '49, the so-called «Paradise». She did this through stories, writings, audio and video recordings, all done out of love. She was pushed by the desire to give to everyone the Light that she felt was within her.

These texts now make up a real and true «spiritual patrimony» to be transmitted faithfully to the future generations. And the linguistic sciences are also called to assume a re-

sponsibility in this regard. Among these is philology, defined by E. Auerbach as «the gathering together of the activities that methodically take care of the language of man and of the works of art composed in this language»¹.

It is noteworthy to see how the role of this discipline has been fundamental not only in the Greek and Roman worlds, but also in the emerging Christian environment, when it

Movement. Her memories, taken from her talks and revised personally by her, are like a photograph of a life lived and is quite precise from the point of view of her personal memories.

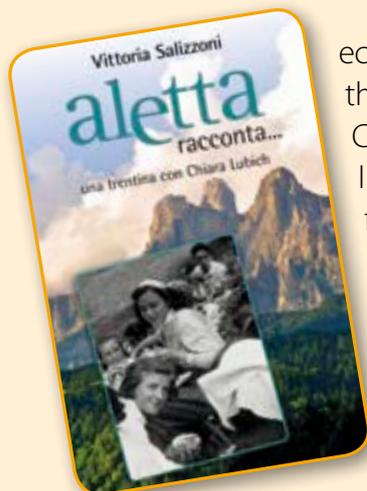
For twenty years – from '47 to '67, during the period of the first developments of the Focolare Movement – Aletta lived with Chiara who saw, expressed in Aletta, an aspect of charity that concerns the safeguarding of physical and spiritual health.

In the framework of the ecumenical conversations that the ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, Athenagoras I and Chiara Lubich had started from 1967, in Istanbul, Turkey, the memoirs of Aletta are quite inviting, as during that period when she became the unofficial ambassadress between the two of them.

For a quarter of a century, with vitality and courage, she undertook trips in the eastern and southern Mediterranean area, sharing episodes in which emerged that global vision which had enriched her life as she came into contact with a different world that she learned to love without prejudice, with clarity, serenity and rectitude.

A final appendix gathers a «concentrate» of the activities of Aletta from the '90s to 2008, when she once again found herself beside Chiara Lubich, at the heart of the Focolare Movement, to take charge of the aspect of physical life and nature, also known as the «Green». It is the «essence» of a long life and a concentrate of talks or friendly conversations on various themes inherent to this aspect, which Aletta has always felt as the principal task entrusted to her by Chiara for the entire Focolare Movement since 1954.

Maria Treu





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was necessary to face the problem of the definition and conservation of the sacred texts.

In a way that is more than ever relevant today, the same

Auerbach underlines how the role of philology has become indispensable «when a people with a highly developed culture becomes aware of this and wants to preserve the works that represent their spiritual patrimony from the ravages of time». To save them not only from oblivion, but also from changes, mutilations and additions.

In the language used by Chiara we also find deposited therein the profound memories of the inheritance that she has left us as Focolare Movement, and our own identity as «new men and women», as «popi» and «pope», who live the Ideal of unity and who make up a people all over the world.

If it is true that Chiara incarnated the Charism in a specific historical period, in a certain culture, in a geographic area, in a precise language, it is even more true that the Light of the Charism has forced open these same linguistic structures of her mother-tongue, which is Italian, and the meanings of the words, re-formulating or revitalizing them.

Her word demands to be freed from all that is vanity. The original definition that she herself gives it in one of her well-known writings is quite striking: «I will not love silence but

the word (expressed or unspoken), the communication so to speak of God in me with God in my neighbor». (6 November 1949). If, therefore, the word is «the communication of God in me with God in my neighbor», it becomes in itself a vehicle for a new and profound relationship among people.

The Ideal of unity has reached the most diverse points of the earth, and so the question of translation is of considerable cultural importance. But whoever regularly dedicates time for this knows very well how complex this operation can be. There is an infinite treasure in the texts of Chiara which cannot be translated literally in another language. The problem presents itself already in the Italian language and does not concern only the question of style and of literary expression.

«The mystic aspires to create a new language», observed M. Baldini², expert of mystical language. «Aspires» in the sense of: «he needs to do it». And, without a doubt, such an affirmation could very well be linked also with the expressive modality used by Chiara.

Will we be able to preserve this same expressive power in Italian and transfer it to every language in the world?

These are the questions or concerns that are particularly alive in a group of «externs» in the field of Linguistics, Philosophy and Literature (LPL) of the Abbà School: the need to start studying the texts of Chiara in her mother-tongue, which means that we enter into a profound relationship with her, our foundress, with her culture, her era, her identity, drawing directly from the source, according to the different perspectives that have come together in unity, according to the cultural riches of each one. And it is in this atmosphere that also the article *Like arrows of light*, was recently published by Città Nuova.

But other newly revealed challenges remain to be faced: first of all, the relationship between the languages, one (language) as a

1 Cf E. AUERBACH, *Introduzione alla filologia romanza* (traduzione a cura di M.R. MASSEI), Torino 1963, p. 13 ss.

2 M. BALDINI, *Il linguaggio dei mistici*, Brescia 1986, p. 37

gift of love for the other; the typical vocabulary of Chiara; the relationship author - text - translator; the urgent need for a critical edition of the texts ... And other topics.

All these as a service to the Opera, and in full unity with it..

Study and research group of the Abba School in the field of Linguistics-Philology-Literature (LFL dell'area Linguistico-Filologico-Letteraria (LFL))

At the University for Foreigners «Dante Alighieri» of Reggio Calabria

Like arrows of light

Linguistic and literary itineraries in the story of '49 of Chiara Lubich

No other venue could be as ideal as the University for foreigners «Dante Alighieri» for the presentation of the second volume of the Series «Studies of the Abba School»: *Like arrows of light*. In fact, the co-authors of the book are members of the Opera from various nations, all «externs» of the Abbà School in the fields of Linguistics-Philology-Literature (LPL), linked by their common vital adhesion to the Charism of unity.

According to the spirit that animates the Series, the unifying element of their interests is the story of Paradise '49, written by Chiara in 1961 and published posthumously in the magazine *Nuova*

Nella foto: Maria Intriери (Università degli Studi della Calabria); Vincenzo Crupi, al centro (Università per stranieri «Dante Alighieri» di Reggio Calabria); Antonino Zumbo (Università degli Studi di Messina)

Umanità. It concerns an important document for the history of the Opera because it is the only text ever published which contains a complete narration of the experience lived in '49. Based on this document, which was presented at the beginning of the book, the externs of the LPL reflected and wrote together, according to the typical methodology of the Abba School.

They were urged on by a common intuition: that the light of the Charism seems to have also inspired Chiara's choice of expressions so as to allow us to foresee in her texts an artistic and literary dimension that deserves to be studied. From here came the

desire to study the text so as to become aware of the riches that are hidden in it also under the linguistic-literary profile and to reveal its communicative potential.

The University of Reggio Calabria was the first testing ground, precisely where the volume was presented last May 31 to an attentive and warmly participative audience.

Among the pages of the book, we find the «literary Manifesto» of the externs of LPL, revealed in a letter written to Chiara in November 29, 2003, containing: a program for the work to be done in the future, but above all the seal of a relationship of unity built with her, who personally followed the development of the first ideas, welcoming Linguistics, Philology and Literature into the Classroom of the Abba School.

Alba Sgariglia



School of the Councilors of the Zone Centers

To be a beating heart



From the 4th to the 12th of August the Mariapolis Foco of Montet welcomed 116 focolarinos and focolarinas coming from 22 zones from every part of the world

A special School to understand together the role of the Councilor of the Zone Center in the Opera today. There were no «lessons», but workshops in which they worked in small groups, reporting in the afternoon at the plenary sessions what they had understood together, for a very enriching communion among everyone.

There were various topics studied in depth as the starting point of the work that was carried out: the «Zone Center as a community of life – a community of work», «relationships», «delegating» the «tasks of the councilors». The groups were an interesting combination of zones quite different from one another [Austria and Mariapolis Ginetta (Brazil), Korea and Northwest Germany, etc.]: a big reciprocal gift.

An integral part of the program was the trips to the places that witnessed the birth of the charism: for example in Einsiedeln-Oberiberg and in Mollens, in Chiara's house, a journey to the roots, to the source, with moments of light and of a real relaxation.

Emmaus and Giancarlo intensely followed the School intervening four times with hours of profound dialogue and communion, with the spontaneity of a focolare extended to all the world. With them, a «new» figure of the

councilor took shape, understood as the «link», a link of love, at the service of the whole Opera, in an interweaving of Trinitarian relationships, with a transversal communion that reaches the branches, movements, dialogues, the little zones, the focolares and up to the local communities.

They studied in depth the letter of Emmaus written for the 16th of July: an appeal to bring only God to humanity today, a new turning point in the Opera (see column beside).

The true meaning of the word "to delegate" came to light, which means «to generate», to give importance to the other, to trust everyone. A new vision of the Opera opened up with bigger zones and smaller zone centers like a beating heart that transmits life and offers support.

The blog which was updated everyday and the dialogue with Emmaus and Giancarlo in streaming on the 9th of August, opened the doors of the School, allowing many »



From the letter of Emmaus for the 16th of July

July 16th is approaching, the anniversary of the Pact between Chiara and Foco that marked the beginning of that extraordinary period when the Work of Mary was born, as Chiara always told us. It seems to me that renewing the Pact this year takes on a special meaning - perhaps a unique opportunity for the Focolare Movement to be born once more according to its design.

It's true: we speak of a new organization, of merging zones, of moving Focolare centers, of focusing on «frontier countries»... Pope Francis speaks of «existential peripheries» and I think this broadens our concept of «frontier countries» quite a bit. An «existential periphery» is any place where people no longer find the center of their being because they cannot find God. All of us, through God's grace alone, have met Him. We are called to remain there, immersing ourselves in this disorientated humanity to bring it back to its center.

During meditation these days, I found by chance the writing where Foco shares the moment when he asked Chiara to leave Tonadico [Dolomite Mountains] to return to Trent, in September 1949: «Chiara, forgive me for speaking to you as one who is unable to detach himself from earthly things. You have a family, a family that has work to do here on earth, to suffer and struggle for the glory of God. You can't abandon this family. Didn't you teach us that the highest expression of love is Jesus Forsaken? Now, for Him and with Him, you need to abandon God for God, Paradise for the world, where you can guide many souls to heaven. Leave the angels and return to us human beings; out of love for Jesus Forsaken».¹

It was a very strong moment for me. It seemed to me that Foco (= humanity: his design) was asking Chiara (= the Work of Mary: her body on earth) to take this step now also. We are urged to do this by the appeals of Pope Francis as well as by the changing situation which our Movement is going through.



I asked myself if the entire Work of Mary (not only the men and women focolarini, who need to do this – I would say – to be in the front lines) will be able to go out into the world and meet people where they are and bring the life of the Trinity, the Kingdom of God, to all of them, overcoming every fear and anxiety. Chiara, too, felt this (Foco mentions that she «cried»!). We can do this with an unconditional love for Jesus Forsaken and the strength of the unity we obtain by renewing that Pact.

It seems to me that, with new graces, a new era could begin. We could be who we truly are: authentic disciples of Jesus and, therefore, Gospel revolutionaries. We can bear witness to this all together as the Work of Mary. We will necessarily be «a sign of contradiction» (Luke 2:34) and «a stumbling block for the Jews and folly to Gentiles» (1 Cor 1:23), in order to bring back to God those neighbors who are already our brothers and sisters because all are included in the vision of «May they all be one,» that Chiara opened up for us. We will do this wherever a small or large cell of this body (the Work of Mary) is present today or will be present in the future.

I believe that Chiara herself wants nothing less since she always felt «the great attraction...to lose oneself in the crowd, in order to fill it with the divine (and)...made sharers in God's plans for humanity, to embroider patterns of light on the crowd».²

Emmaus

1 Giordani, I. *Erano i tempi di guerra*. pp. 154-155 (own translation).

2 Lubich, Chiara. *Essential Writings*. New York: New City Press, 2007, p. 169.

» zones to participate: the first echo came from New Zealand!

Everyone left full of joy because of the experience lived and built together, fully aware that everything that emerged does not concern only the role of the councilors, but has a universal value and that God, also by using the circumstances, is guiding us as we write a new page in the history of the Opera.

Here are some impressions chosen among many: «The most beautiful thing was when Emmaus underlined the importance of having the presence of God among us in the Zone Center so as to transmit this [...] it is not so much about being good in fulfilling our tasks, but to be this true family with each of the focolarinas and focolarinos». «For me, as a married focolarino, it was a big grace. What has remained in my heart is that which Chiara said: that the Opera is charity, that the focolarini have this task of being charity». «Chiara was very much present among us and nourished us with the charism everyday, but we



felt her presence especially in Emmaus in this new turning point of the Opera, confirmed by the experiences of Palmira that filled us with joy!». «It seems to me that what Emmaus and Giancarlo said was very much in harmony with what the Church is living today: to be what we must be so as to bring God to the world».

*Marilù Rossi (Mumbai),
Ekke Schneider (Belém)*

August in Montet

The power of a Little Town

The Mariapolis Foco in August lived through important moments with Emmaus and Giancarlo



Having made the specific task of the permanent Mariapolis stand out, the first ten days were lived at the service of the School for the Councilors of the Zone Centers, contributing to create that atmosphere of mutual love in which Wisdom was able to express herself.

On August 11 the feast was extended to around 300 «citizens» (permanent and temporary). Emmaus, after a recital based on the poems written by Tony Daga¹, recalled what Chiara said in a similar moment in 2003: «"Here art is at home" an art – she continued

¹ Focolarino partito per la Mariapoli celeste nel 1983 mentre era alla Scuola di formazione a Loppiano

See the special report
«Montet 2013» on
[www.focolare.org/
notiziariomariapoli](http://www.focolare.org/notiziariomariapoli)



– that must be shared to the world, because «we must always have this far-reaching vision, this gaze that is turned outwards».

In this atmosphere, the meetings followed one after another with the various realities of the Mariapolis. To the 26 focolarinas and 17 focolarinos who will be concluding their formation in a few months Emmaus underlined that: «The peripheries are not only geographical [...], they are in the houses where you go to work, but they may also be in the focolares, because if one day one of you is down, that is the periphery. [...] You have made a true and profound experience of joy, of family built here: now it is worth it to continue to try for the rest of your life».

On the 17th of August, a big gift, which by now, has become almost «traditional»: Emmaus shared in advance the theme of the year, transmitting her passion to everyone: «Chiara told us that mutual love is a fundamental pillar of our life. This year the Movement celebrates its 70th year: it seems to me that the best way to celebrate this is to go back to this fundamental pillar and to make it more solid among us». Then she encouraged: «It is the project of the permanent Mariapolises, including the Mariapolis Foco, where the only entrance ticket, the necessary visa to enter and become a part of it is mutual love, today just as it was yesterday».

In the meeting with the gen boys, to Johnny who had just arrived from Egypt, the proposal of Emmaus was totalitarian: «Jesus had the courage to tell us: “Love your enemies”... To whoever wants to follow him He indicates a road that is not only that of forgiveness, acceptance, endurance because we cannot do anything else but to be active in loving, just as He was».

On August 18 with the entire Little Town, a glimpse into the life of this year: experiences on the relationship between generations, collaboration between the permanent Mariapolis and the zone of Switzerland, testimonies in the area, an ecumenical vocation, the departure for Heaven of Fr. Stefano Vagovič. Emmaus launched a stronger invitation: to let the power concentrated in the Little Town explode «so as to bear witness and to distribute to the world the joy that God gives us».

*Prepared by Monica Giuliani
and Michel Vandeleene*



Meeting of Bishops in Brazil

The gift of communion

At the Mariapolis Ginetta in Brazil fifty Bishops friends of the Movement from different nations met for a fraternal gathering with many pastoral implications

Fifty Bishops from Congo, Kenya and Madagascar, Korea, Thailand and Pakistan, the United States, Europe, Lebanon and Iraq, Argentina, and from various parts of Brazil, met together this year for their annual meeting at the Mariapolis Ginetta from July 31 to August 9. «Reciprocal Love: in the school of the Trinity» was the theme of their reflections. Surrounded by a Little Town of witness with around one hundred lay people, they felt themselves among the people of God, among brothers and sisters. For each one it was an experience of full communion, of the trinitarian life.

They started with the first reciprocal gift, the communion of experiences on love of neighbor:



I Vescovi al Santuario di Aparecida

from the commitment of His Excellency Armando Bertolaso (Lebanon) to spread the «password» as a guiding light to «live the love of neighbor in all its infinite shades» among the more than 60 Bishops of the Middle East and also the same number of priests, to the experience of Msgr. Anuar Battisti of Maringá (Brazil),



© Foto Caris Mendes x3

who shared how he doesn't allow himself to be carried away by his many commitments so as to give space for personal relationships with his priests, especially with those in difficulty.

Love of neighbor also pushes us to open up towards non-believers. Msgr. Jorge Ortega of Braga (Portugal) shared how he and Card. Gianfranco Ravasi, president of the Pontifical Council of Culture, gave life to a «Courtyard of the Gentiles». Protagonists of the event were artists, men and women involved in the fields of culture, politics, music. With some of them a sincere friendship was born. There were two thousand people involved in the event.

To go out, to go towards the periphery - the guideline that Emmaus gave to the Movement at the beginning of the year, fully in harmony with what Pope Francis underlined - was the starting point of our reflections. As usual, we went in depth on the theme of the year shared by Emmaus through a video-conference and chosen as the title of the meeting: «Reciprocal Love: in the school of the Trinity». After the theme there was a lively dialogue, a real communion of soul. Mutual love, lived in the school of the Trinity, appeared to us as indispensable to be able to bring God to the geographical and existential peripheries, to be able to open a dialogue - not only intellectual - with the great religions, to be able

To start from the experience of God

Excerpt from an interview of Brendan Leahy, bishop of Limerick (Ireland)

In this moment people often speak of reform, of giving a «new form» to the Church. And Pope Francis has already shown signs of this reform. What is the place of the Bishops in this wave of the Holy Spirit that pushes towards this reform?

«Certainly the Council itself had started the reform. Now Pope Francis is showing us a new style. In these meetings that we hold, we place ourselves in the School of a charism, a gift of the Holy Spirit - it is the Holy Spirit that reforms and makes the Church always young, just as Ireneo said in the second century -, we allow ourselves to be formed, so as to be above all reformed in our being, not only on an individual level, but also in the communal life among us. And so when we go back to our dioceses we bring within us the vital experience of the Gospel which we then try to live with the others. The reform always starts from an experience of God one makes. By living together this charism, we make an experience of God that is then communicated, which goes beyond ourselves, and to all our relationships».

Carla Cotignoli

Entire text of the interview can be found in www.focolare.org/notiziariomariapoli

to have a more effective evangelization, to be able to live, bear witness and share our faith in a tangible way; and still more, to be able to realize fully our identity, and therefore our happiness, having been created in the image and likeness of God Trinity. «We must be aware – Emmaus said – that we are debtors of a grace and of a responsibility». She concluded: «I hope that this year

will be the year of trinitarian relationships. Let us go ahead in this reciprocity».

Ours was a «travelling» meeting: from the visit to the Fazenda da Esperança of Guaratinguetá, a center for the rehabilitation of drug addicts, to the show Streetlight by the Gen Rosso, to the Mass at the national shrine of Aparecida presided by Card. Raymundo Damasceno Assis, archbishop of that diocese and president of the Brazilian Bishops' Conference who, to the twenty thousand people who were there, presented us as Bishops friends of the Movement who live the spirituality of Chiara Lubich, a spirituality which helps us to realize an effective and personal collegiality.

The ecumenical aspect was not lacking thanks to the presence of Bishops of the region coming from various Churches: two Methodists and one Anglican. Among the ecumenical experiences, Mons. Armando Bortolaso, a Catholic, defined our commitment as an «ecumenism of the heart» because of «the strong human-divine friendship that starts between brother Bishops of various Churches» and he also shared some facts of reciprocal love with the Patriarchs and Bishops of the Oriental Churches in Syria, like when they lent some money for the construction of a Syro-Orthodox Church, or when they divided between the Catholic Church and the Greek-Orthodox Church in Syria, a considerable amount of money which they received to help the Syrian people.

«The crosses of the Church». This video recording of Chiara of 1971 resounded quite powerfully in everyone's heart. This was understood during the communion of soul:

Con i giovani alla Fazenda da Esperança

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«I want to renew my choice of Jesus Forsaken. This is our way», «Chiara is a woman of fire, fire, fire of the Holy Spirit», «I no longer feel worried about solving problems, but rather about loving. I understood that to complain means to criticize Jesus Forsaken. It takes just one small thing to find peace, the meaning of everything».

A glimpse at the social dimension through the sharing of experiences was given by Luisa Erundina, mayor of the megalopolis of San Paolo and a party member of President Lula, who together with Sergio Previdi, who is also profoundly committed in politics, shared with us their choice of a limpid coherence in an environment which is very sensitive and often corrupted by interests and power, ready to give their life, ready for martyrdom.

Following a letter of Giancarlo Faletti to all the priests of the Opera, in which he invites each one to find «in the school of Jesus in the midst», «the ways and means that will allow us to incarnate always better the Ideal of Chiara in the life and mission of the dioceses and of the parishes» (See Mariapolis 2/2013 pag. 20), we saw the need for a cultural and pastoral elaboration of the spirituality, which is the reason why a «study laboratory» at the Priests School of Loppiano, in collaboration with the Sophia University, is being set-up, starting with the existing experiences.

What is coming to light always more is the need for a greater communion among Bishops, priests, and religious of the Opera, a privileged way to enrich the local Churches with the charism of unity.

The meeting ended with the renewal, during the Mass, of our consecration to Jesus Crucified and Forsaken, the measure of love that embraces and transforms all the sufferings of the Church and of humanity.

One of us, who lives in a region marked by a great crisis, said before leaving: «I bring with me the peace of Jesus in the midst, I will bring this fire where I live because peace is so much needed there».

Francis-Xavier Kriengsak



The miracle of Rio A great joy

The WYD was an extraordinary event for those who attended and for the country that hosted it. Much has already been said and written about it. Here is the work behind the scenes of some gen



Pope Francis wrote a letter to the archbishop of Rio to express his profound gratitude to all those who gave their time and efforts in the two years of intense preparation. There were two gen who were part of the central commission which organized the event in Rio: Maria Luna Azeredo and Leandro Machado. Here is what they wrote to us:

Maria: «When Pope Benedict announced in Madrid that the WYD of 2013 would be in Rio, I cried for joy.

All of us in the Opera immediately got to work to put together a proposal for the program and to organize our collaboration. And it happened precisely to me, together with other gen, to be part of the Central Commission, at the heart of the WYD. And so the adventure began. It was a really intense work, a strong exercise in living the "art of loving", with many occasions of losing and also of receiving great gifts from God. I found myself working side by side with priests, religious, laity and from each one I learned a little bit from their charism,

from their way of being Church. There were weekly meetings which were very demanding, but what gave me much joy was seeing how God guided the choices made, showing us the road that we had to follow.

Then during the days of the WYD I found myself below the stage: I was running here and there, there were so many chances to love Jesus. Forsaken, He was present in every moment. I was also asked to read a prayer on the day of the welcome feast for Pope Francis and so I was able to be very close to him. The strongest moment for me, the greatest gift I received was during the adoration on Saturday: I experienced that God loves me, He loves us immensely and that it is worth it to give my life for that which He is asking».



Leandro: «"The joy is greater than the tiredness". These words of Pope Francis as he boarded the plane to return, were also our words. These days have allowed us to "touch" the sky, to

open wide our hearts and to feel that we are one family with all the young people present.

Pope Francis calls us to live like Jesus and he himself gave us the first example. His words were clear and strong, words that do not ask "permission" but which strongly break through and give us courage to go out from ourselves everyday so as to go towards the other. We felt the nearness of God who worked the miracle of attracting three million people onto a beach. I loved the Church even more in that moment, I felt her as a "mother", and I feel that I must be always more open to the action of the Holy Spirit. The WYD belongs to the youth, all of us gen feel that it is "ours" and we have given our contribution.

Aside from the work in the central commission, we collaborated in an interreligious meeting with Jews, Christians and Muslims. At the Vocations Fair we also had a stand where



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we tried to build personal relationships with the visitors. Then there was the show on Chiara Luce Badano, with three showings, and a total of 2,600 participants. And then: the adoration in one of the churches of Copacabana with 1,300 persons present and the animation of one of the catechism sessions. Aside from these there was also the interview for Canção Nova and the presence of the parents of Chiara Luce, the Gen Rosso at the Favela Varginha...

The WYD gave us a very big push to live our faith even more. The experiences are already coming, like this one of Camila from San Paolo: "I work in a law firm (an environment which is rather harsh). After the WYD, all of my colleagues came to ask me how it went. In the beginning I just answered with a few words, then I remembered that the Pope said not to be afraid of being Christian, and so I spoke without fear, taking in also five of my colleagues. There were many positive comments, an officemate who despised the Church said that she was won over by Pope Francis».



gen3 School in Fontem

A training ground for the «world man»

«Love your neighbours»: this was the title and the theme of the gen3 international School, that this year was held at Fontem in Cameroon

The Little Town of the African continent welcomed the 140 protagonists coming from all over Cameroon, and among them were also 11 Italian teenagers. «I hope to go back home with something more – Paolo shared in his first experience outside Europe – maybe I will open up and widen my vision of things». «An appointment that is so important – this is Dominick from Cameroon who speaks – for some of us it is the only chance to experience the life of unity with other gen3. The distance, the transportation and also financial difficul-



ties, don't allow us to make a similar experience during the year».

For some gen3 it meant walking for eight hours in the forest, leaving at night so as to arrive before it rained.

But even the torrential rains and the mud couldn't stop the great desire to participate in this experience.



There were those who gathered their small savings throughout the year so as to be present in the school. There were others who offered to do heavy tasks just to be able to come up with the money necessary not only for themselves but for those who also had difficulty in finding the funds, and also to buy some small gifts for the Italian gen3.

Silvanus: «When Chiara spoke to us about the "little flame" that God had put in our soul since we were born I understood that if I want to keep this flame alive, which is the love of God, I must give it to others, by loving the person who passes near me ».

The life in groups was the occasion to go in depth regarding various topics and also to increase the unity among all; engaging in sports also helped us in this. «The School has taught me many things, one of these is the ability to experience unity. To be able to live in unity, that which is truly essential, means to have a heart and a mind open to everyone». (Victor)



A special moment was when the gen3, who this year would pass on to gen2, shared with us what the gen life meant for them: «The encounter with God gives you true happiness»; «To aim at unity without fear of putting everything in common»; «To experience a friendship that knows how to sacrifice for a greater good».

«What has helped me during difficult moments was my personal relationship with God»; «This is my wish for all of you: that you may discover the beauty of being able to be beside Jesus».

Through dances and theatrical skits, the situations in which we may find ourselves living in were presented: the school environment, the life of unity, with our friends... we shared in this way our experiences and the difficulties we meet.

Concrete commitments were also asked of us: to wake up early in the morning to serve breakfast and to prepare the lunch, to wash the dishes, to clean the dining hall...

«They were days in which I experienced a special happiness, that joy that only Jesus can give you, and I realized that the only thing one is searching for - often I think about my future - is true happiness». (Francesco)

«The most beautiful gift that I found within me after this experience was that of feeling free. Not because all my problems disappeared but because in these days I gave myself for the others. My wish is to bring, or better still, to make many others discover this special gift». (Jovany)

«Your way of living changes. You understand that you must aim for something else, or better yet aim for Someone greater». (Michael)

Aside from the School in Fontem we also went to Fonjumetaw where we met a group of Teens for Unity of that place and with whom we shared the project «Let us Color the City». The teens there shared with

us about their trips to the villages where they went once a month during the weekend to share the Ideal and the Christian faith to many of their peers. Through the Word of Life and short skits they shared with them experiences in the family, in school, with friends, making use also of the mathematical symbols of «Let's Color the City». The central point of these meetings is the Holy Mass, prepared with songs and experiences. «Sometimes we feel tired – they told us –, but thanks to these moments lived with our peers we go home enriched, and we feel that we too can do our part for the good of the Community».

Certainly this experience has not left us indifferent. To feel the joy of having placed ourselves at the service of others leaves in our hearts a great desire to live. The biggest message is that unity can be experienced not only with the people near us but also with those far away who think like you and who also strive to live the Ideal like you and try to change the world into a better place.

The words of Chiara at the 1997 Supercongress seemed all the more true, because we have experienced them!

«I think that the model of the person for the future generations is the person of unity [...] whom we have called world-man, a person who is able to bring in his or her heart all the treasures that the others from the various continents give and who is able to share these treasures with others».

Agostino Spolti



Mariapolis gatherings in the world

Brother beside brother

Over a hundred meetings held this year

From Celiabinsk in Russia to Pozzallo in Sicily. From Yogyakarta in Indonesia to Cochabamba in Bolivia. From Montréal in Canada to Melbourne in Australia.

There were countless Mariapolis gatherings held in the first half of 2013 in all the five continents. All of them confirmed that spending some days together – young people, adults and children – in a spirit of reciprocal love, is a worthwhile experience to live and relive.

Two or more days spent in the mountains or immersed in nature or in a Little Town; there is no specific place designated for a Mariapolis gathering, nor is there a cliché to follow. And maybe it is precisely because of this that whoever comes for the first time is impressed, touched by the atmosphere that one breathes and perceives and remains conquered by the presence of Jesus among everyone, a presence that is translated into smiles, joy, lightheartedness, trust in others.

What distinguish the around 100 Mariapolis gatherings held this year are the relationships, all geared towards making the experience of loving the neighbor, up to the point of realizing unity and the commitment to build it together, going beyond the inevi-



table difficulties that come up from the period of preparation.

In **Mendoza**, in Argentina, the youth and the teens – more than 200, among the 500 participants – made use of the days in Mariapolis to make an act of solidarity: to paint a school in a poor area of the city.

From **Lentini**, near Syracuse in Sicily, the community wrote to Emmaus: «The experiences that we shared made us get to know one another more profoundly, we discovered ourselves "new". We experienced "Jesus among us" who passed by and converted and we felt a little bit like the first disciples who, conquered by him, followed Jesus. A sense of profound gratitude for these days of "Paradise" and the responsibility not to ruin all that has been given to us and to those around us».

In **Bulgaria** there were 88 people who participated in the Mariapolis – Orthodox, Catholics, Muslims and people who are searching for something – of which around 20 came for the first time. The first evening was dedicated to «forgiveness»: each one wrote on a small piece of paper that which he or she forgave in the others and that which he or she wanted to be forgiven for, and then these were

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burned together in a small bonfire. Amidst songs, prayers and concrete gestures of mutual forgiveness a solemn atmosphere was created.

In **Tagaytay**, in the Philippines, the various expressions of love of neighbor were pre-



Stati Uniti



Siberia



Canada

which they wanted to seal their commitment to live «On earth as it is in Heaven».

Just a few flashes of many Mariapolis gatherings. Different programs, number of participants, ways of carrying them out. But with common characteristics,

sented in an artistic way. A young man, through an interpretative dance together with others, shared his personal story: he shared how the Bukas Palad Social Center helped his family; from the time his mother was pregnant with him, to the time his father left their family and then as time went on and their house burned down and still Bukas Palad helped them. Last March this young man graduated in Information Technology and would like to repay God for all the graces he has received by participating actively in the projects promoted by Bukas Palad.

those which Chiara herself had indicated as typical of the City of Mary, a means to bear witness to God where «*the inhabitants who come together every year to compose it, have just one desire: that of Mary, for whom God was everything; to show to the world the value of the spirit, to make the greatest value, the spirit, triumph in a specific point of the earth*»¹.

Tiziana Nicastro

See Special Report Mariapoli 2013 on: www.focolare.org/notiziariomariapoli

In **Heredia**, in Costa Rica, the 217 participants at the conclusion of the Mariapolis formed a flashmob in the shape of a star, with

1 C. Lubich, *Like a Rainbow*, Rome, 1999, pag. 455

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Among the latest inserts the **Special Reports on "Montet – August 2013"** and on the **"Mariapolis gatherings in the world"** and other interesting news you can follow regarding the life of the Movement



Gen4 congress

An avalanche of acts of love is coming!

A «laboratory» in preparation for the theme of next year on reciprocal love

From June 20 to 23 the Mariapolis Center of Castel Gandolfo welcomed 130 little girls, from four to nine years of age, coming from Italy, Portugal, France, Belgium and Malta.

The Congress, prepared for the rainbow units, was a big laboratory to prepare the theme of the coming year on reciprocal love.

In these four days the gen4 girls became sisters among them, living the pact of mutual love. Just as the title of the Congress suggested *«Love one another! ...just like in Heaven»* they promised one another to love each other with the measure of Jesus (*«Just as I have loved you»* [Jn 15, 9-17]) and, to seal this, each one received a ring, as a symbol of the pact. The human and supernatural bond became so profound that they didn't want to leave each other anymore.



The message of Emmaus – *«I am with you so that you may always and everywhere be shining little flames»* – made everything even more sacred and was accompanied by a very special gift: shining wands, which made the gen4 enthusiastic. Every occasion was good to light it up and to transform the hall into a sea of stars! One of them wrote: *«Ciao, Emmaus! Thank you for the lights and for what you told us, that we must be shiny little flames. I will try my best and I know that I can do it because I have love in my heart and Jesus is near».*

A special moment was when Emanuele (a young scientist) talked about the birth and the evolution of the universe in relation to Genesis; the gen4 discovered that we are inserted in the design (of 14 billion years!) of the love of God and that the end result of the death of a star, as it explodes, is light and life. At the end of the talk one of them said: *«And so it means that the star sacrificed itself for us».* And another: *«This is the meaning of the pact: to be a star that dies out of love».*

This measure of love was understood even more during the dialogue with Eli who, in answering to a question of a gen4: *«How big was the love of Chiara in focolare?»*, replied: *«Limitless».*

Mutual love had filled their hearts with a great light.

When Michel Vandeleene spoke about the Pact of '49 and the Abba



School in a very simple and spontaneous way, they discovered that it is possible to experience Paradise already in this life and they savoured what they had written in their letters to Jesus: «Dear Jesus, I love you very much - Paradise is beautiful! Bring me to Paradise. I want to see you as God in Heaven, I like it», «I ask you to remain always in my heart», «Your father created many beautiful things in the world and the most beautiful thing is that You are here».

A family without borders

There were four skype telephone calls with Pakistan, Brazil, Africa and Japan so that the family grew even bigger. During the celebration with the first focolarinos and focolarinas, the gen4 were able to express their talents and their interests: «world

tour», the dances of other countries and a news program created and presented by them.

A big box shaped like a book received all the questions that they had in their hearts during the Congress, and they themselves then found the answers during the communion of souls.

To the question: «How come, even if Jesus has given us love, some people



Chiara in 1988 to the intern members of Germany

The gen4 are really fabulous!

And I asked myself why... It's because they are innocent, they have the Baptism, and with the Ideal their Baptism is reawakened with all its potentiality, it comes out and it is not hindered by sin - they still do not know evil - and so it comes out in all its beauty and they all want to follow Jesus. [...]

In the gen4 we have an enormous potentiality for our Ideal. They hear many things about the Ideal, but they center precisely on the most important thing. For example a child said to a gen4: «How can I become a gen4?».

And she answered: «Love!». Therefore they understand that love is at the center of our Ideal...

still do bad things?» a gen4 answered: «Because Jesus enters in all hearts but sometimes we put ourselves in the way of temptation». And another: «How can I get along with someone who hates me?» Several experiences followed: «Even if I have an enemy who hurts me, I love him just the same because I always forgive», «One must always love, whether you like it or not. You have to love always, because in this way at least you can make one more person smile», «By helping the enemy we smile even more and then the enemy becomes a friend», «Because when I love I drive away the old man».

The adults present remained speechless at the depth and maturity of these little girls who, as Chiara mentioned in 1988, seem to have their Baptism just skin deep and, with it, the Holy Spirit.

Christiane Heinsdorff