

YEAR XXX N 10/11 OCTOBER NOVEMBER 2013

MARIAPOLI

Newsletter of the focolare movement

The Opera today
**Encounter of
humanity
towards God**

In Mexico City
With our Jewish friends

Doctors in dialogue
For a new healthcare

At the school of the «Desolate»



«Today is the feast day of Mary's birth, the celebration therefore of the Center of the Opera which is precisely dedicated to Mary the rising star.

Yesterday, the vigil of this day, as I was passing close to the hotel of Oberiberg where I wrote: "I have only one Mother on earth" (see box), recalling that passage, I was taken by a strong fear of God. I realized that during this last period, living the Desolate for me meant to live the present losing

everything, but it no longer signified as evidently, what those words meant when I wrote them, which is, the readiness to lose the Opera and, according to the measure of each one of us, the activities as well.

And I understood even more that it was not only a matter of readiness, but something more.

I meditated on how true it is that I have only one Spouse on earth, Jesus Forsaken, and I cannot "divorce" him and choose an-

I have only one mother on earth

I have only one mother on earth:
Mary Desolate.

I have no other mother but her.
In her is all of the Church from eternity,
and all the Opera in unity.

In her design is mine.
I will go throughout the world reliving her.

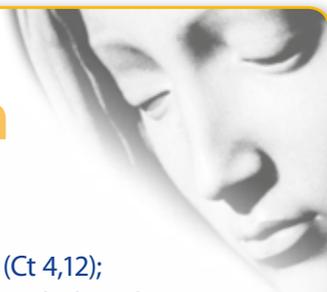
Every separation is mine.
Every detachment from the good I have
done is a contribution to building Mary.

In her Stabat is my «staying».
In her Stabat is my «going».

Hortus conclusus

and sealed fountain (Ct 4,12);
I will cultivate her most beloved virtues,
so that on my silent nothingness
her Wisdom will blaze.
And many, all, her favoured children,
those most in need of her mercy,
will find her maternal presence
everywhere
in another little Mary.

Da CHIARA LUBICH, *La dottrina spirituale*,
Roma, 2006, pag. 213



other who does not speak of suffering, darkness, torment, anguish, desperation, etc., and in the same way I cannot deny the only Mother I have: the Desolate that means precisely: Jesus dead on her lap as she offered Him up to the Father without a lament. I meditated on those words one by one and they appeared new to me. "I have only one Mother on earth, I have no other mother but her..."

In her is the whole Church from eternity and the whole Opera in unity..."

Certainly: only if we are ready and willing – so to speak – to leave the Opera that we have built and to pass it on to others so that they can continue it, or ready to see it die momentarily, just like a grain of wheat, so as to flourish once again multiplied, then *we are one* because to be such we must possess only God. And this implies real detachment, or at least spiritually, from all that is not Him.

And as a confirmation, other words came to my mind: "The detachment from the good that I have done is a contribution to building up Mary".

This phrase surprised me for its profundity. Maybe the Holy Spirit was not absent when I wrote it. In fact the Opera is a mystical Mary which means that it is a vase full of God alone. And it is not only the work of God alone but also ours, of us who must be the specialized workers of this Opera and therefore "detached", meaning lovers of the Desolate.

The great fear which I felt when I saw myself no longer concentrated in this way on the Desolate, my Mother, pushed me to re-consecrate myself to Her and to tell her: "Every separation is

mine... in your Stabat is where I will remain".

Then I thought that with this illumination Mary was preparing me and preparing us for the new reforms that must be made in the Opera, to make it conform more and more to the plans of God».

Chiara

(From *Diary of Chiara Lubich*,
8 September 1970)

Natalia

A new biography of one of the first witnesses of the beginning of the Focolare Movement.

We are talking about Natalia Dallapiccola who, since September 1944, went to live with Chiara in the "casetta" (little house) in Piazza Cappucini in Trent: which became the first focolare.

Natalia had, without a doubt, a particular role in the history of the Movement, so much so that Chiara even said that if she had not found a person like Natalia, who was prepared by God, maybe she would not have been able to start a life that was so revolutionary, a life based on the Gospel.

The preface of the book is given by Nichiko Niwano, president of the Buddhist Movement Risho-Kosei-kai. He concludes: «To know the past and to discover what is new. This means to examine history, to study the traditions attentively, and then you will obtain a new wisdom [...] my wish is that this biography of Natalia will become a precious guide in the journey towards the future».



The October Meeting

The courage to follow God

To open oneself to the requests of the Holy Spirit. At the meeting of the Delegates this year, important new things have emerged for the Opera which is called to give an answer to the needs of humanity

When one has a hand in something new, the introduction is fundamental, because it gives the green light for the work to start, it indicates the direction to be taken. This is what happened also at the meeting of the Delegates of the Zones which ended last October 19. Emmaus, at the beginning of the three days of retreat that preceded the operative phase, read a passage of Chiara on the Desolate, excerpts from her diary of September 8, 1970 (see pag. 2-3). The passage concludes: *«Then I thought that with this illumination Mary was preparing me and preparing us for the new reforms that must be made in the Opera, to make it always more according to the plans of God»*. Giancarlo underlined: *«I feel that it is God who is passing by, God who is calling each one and who is calling the whole Opera precisely through this. Undoubtedly (God) wants to do in me, in each one of us, in the Opera, something that we know very well but which is always renewed in the life of God, and that is: to put God at the centre,*



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and to look at everything from that vantage point. [...] We are also waiting to see what He wants to tell us».

The letter of July 12

It's impossible not to go back with our heart and mind to the letter of July 12 of this year wherein Emmaus confided to us the strong experience that brought her to write to all the members of the Opera. After recalling that *«It's true: we speak of a new organization, of merging zones, of moving Focolare centers, of focusing on "frontier countries"»*... and having explained how the *«existential peripheries»* that Pope Francis also speaks of *«is any place where people no longer find the center of their being because they cannot find God»*, she noted: *«During meditation these days, by chance I found the writing where Foco shares about the moment when he asked Chiara to leave Tonadico [Dolomite Mountains] to return to Trent, in September 1949»* with that exhortation, that is well-known to the members of the Opera: to abandon *«Paradise for the earth»*, so as to *«guide many souls to Heaven»*.



From this came the strong request, that she herself felt and which she directed to the whole Opera «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».

The new set-up

Once the retreat ended, the «work» of the Delegates revolved around the points that were touched on in this letter. There were many hours of communion dedicated to that which can be summarized in a phrase and which was defined as the «new set-up of the Opera», but Emmaus herself explained the reality in a more profound way which implied this expression: «I felt as if God was telling me: but what are you looking for in a new set-up? This is the new set-up: to go back to the set-up of that day when Chiara left Tonadico to go back to the world». This is why, she said, «we are not dealing with something structural because that would be something easy to do, after all, we can just sit down together around a table and write: “This one can merge with this one, let’s put these focolarinos here and that focolare there”. But that’s not it. It is precisely that overturning of a mentality that we were saying in these days. [...] Therefore, rather than going into the organizational details, we must enter instead into this reality... this opening up of the soul towards a wider involvement of everyone, for what reason? To bring ahead the Kingdom of God, for the New Evangelization, for a new injection of the Gospel in humanity». Giancarlo specified: «The grace of this moment also has the grace of a cultural and procedural change. Going back (to your zones) there will be an immensity of concrete questions, but it can’t be just these things, we must enter into a new vision of things, if not we will just be doing a simple shifting of tasks. It

is something more. And we have been accompanied by a grace, we are being accompanied by a grace and surely this grace will continue to accompany us in these coming months».

So that all people may encounter God

Emmaus refers to the conclusion of the theme of the year on reciprocal love presented to the Delegates, wherein she affirmed: «In this period it seems that God himself is pushing us ahead to extend the sowing in new and vaster fields [...] without being afraid of one’s diminishing strength or the loss of a position achieved, but joyfully witnessing the opening up of ever new horizons and the flourishing of numerous small living cells of Church scattered throughout the world». She underlines the power of these «small living cells» «wherever two or more are ready to love one another reciprocally, with the



love that we spoke of. And what do they do? They go towards people, therefore they go out, they leave their secure confines, they go out in twos or threes, that small existing group, to meet with people, but for what reason? So that people can meet God, so that people can meet Jesus in the midst, this is the reason. Not so that the people may meet the Focolare Movement. If we are able to bring Jesus in the midst to the people, even those who don’t belong to the Movement, then yes, it is worth it for us and for them. It is worthwhile for us because our march towards “Ut omnes” goes ahead, and for them because they will meet the center of their life, the only one who can give meaning to their life».

Run the risk

Leaving behind one's securities, maybe abandoning a positive experience to go towards something new. Emmaus doesn't hide the fact that this entails certain risks. *«Is it worth it to run this risk? – she asked herself -. It is worth it if we believe that God is at work, then it is worthwhile because we say: if God is at work, if it is God who is moving this process, if it is God who is pushing us to take these new steps, then we can trust in it, because we trust in God not because we trust in ourselves; because if we trust in ourselves then we begin to make our calculations. But instead, God is asking us to trust in him and to risk, with a big percentage of the possibility of success because we trust in Him».* *«We must all breathe as one Opera this strong tension for the Kingdom of God that directly involves all of us - Giancarlo exhorts -, and then we must be available for whatever God will make us understand».*



Usually we would like to at least see how things will turn out as they develop, and to have some sort of assurance. Emmaus invites everyone to go a step further in the trust in God and cites a part of an interview that Pope Francis gave to the director of The Catholic Civilization (La civiltà cattolica), Antonio Spadaro: *«Yes, in this quest to seek and find God in all things – affirmed the Pope - there is still an area of uncertainty. There must be. If a person says that he met God with total certainty and is not touched by a margin of uncertainty, then this is not good. For me, this is an important key. If one has the answers to all the questions—that is the proof that God is*

not with him. It means that he is a false prophet using religion for himself. The great leaders of the people of God, like Moses, have always left room for doubt. You must leave room for the Lord, not for our certainties; we must be humble».



The questions to ask ourselves

Some questions, and surely more than one, nevertheless remain open in the course of the work. Questions that regard the structure of the work, the zone centers of these new Zones which have in the meantime become even bigger, the role of the council, the concrete arrangements... Emmaus understands them all and welcomes them, trusting that Jesus in the midst among everyone present will give the necessary answers. But she calls the attention of the Delegates on what should be the principal questions: *«What can be done so that this sowing can be realized at large? So as to truly go out and meet with the people? What can we do to discover what are our real peripheries, the peripheries of our Zone? What can we do to give life to every group, to every local community so as to ensure that there is always Jesus in the midst? We must make the new set-up of the Opera in order to achieve all these, with this in view. And, if you will allow me, I would say: let us start from the local community. Take a local community of your Zone, and say: "but is it working? What is that local community?"».*

In a following intervention she would reaffirm what should



be the perspective from which to start: «Don't start from ourselves but start from the last, start from those who are waiting for this service. Therefore we don't need to say: "The Opera must be solid, if not we can't reach everyone." No. Instead we should say: "What is the world asking from us? What are the communities asking from us? What do the people want? How do they live? What are the problems that society is immersed in? What are the questions being asked?" Can the Opera today answer these question? I think it can, because of the Ideal and also because it has by now reached maturity because of the growth that it has undergone. And so now let us look at these answers together, let us try to give them. [...] With Jesus in the midst, we can find the answers which we have not looked for up to now; we were not yet mature enough to listen to what they were asking us».

The Opera the means, «Ut omnes» the end

Giancarlo underlines how after these seventy years in which we were committed to building the Opera, we must not forget to «repeat: the Opera is a means to reach an end which is "Ut omnes". The means is not the end. The end is humanity. We must not stop at the means». And if this is the perspective, we must keep in mind that «the persons are formed also in the field, there where they are, and not just within (the Movement). Only if we throw the hearts of the people and the Opera

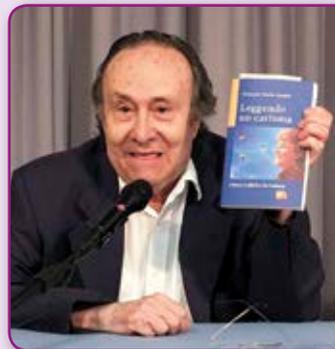
Giuseppe Zanghi «Reading a charism»

The new book presented to the Delegates

The constant reference in these pages – the Author explains – «is to the Charism of Chiara and, in a particular way, to the mystical experience of 1949 (that we in the Focolare Movement, call Paradise of '49).

[...] These are offered, with their colloquial and experiential style [...] to those who have followed, and continue to follow Chiara in the way that God opened through her in the Church and for the whole world».

«In these pages we are led with unsullied wonder and tested mastery to draw from the source – this is what Piero Coda says in the preface. Through this in fact, intellectual access has been granted to us, that is pertinent and essentially certified allowing us to read a charism of intense light, like that of unity. And together the experimentation also of thought is gained. These are the essential conditions so that the life generated by the Charism and informed by it can become what it should be: a cultural renewal in great style».



beyond all the fences, will we live, because a charism is a gift of God given to humanity, and it is preserved in this way». With an effective and eloquent image, that of a very beautiful butterfly that is placed under a glass and therefore destined to die soon, he demonstrated what could happen if we lived the Ideal only for ourselves: «I hope that we don't this also with the Charism: we just show it to others as something very great, because it is great, but it remains closed up, imprisoned».



The power of reciprocal love

Are all these things too daring? The history of the Opera comes to our aid. *«I think that Chiara has always had the courage to propose new things – Emmaus recalls -, to propose great things, everything that was born in the Opera was something new that would frighten us, surely, in the beginning, it alarmed us. And I think that even today she is proposing new things because to answer to the needs of the today is frightening, frightening because they are new things».* A turning point, then, that asks for a commitment to which no one can back out and it demands the guaranty of mutual love. *«To have the courage to look from the outside – Emmaus explained – we must have Jesus in the midst. It seems to me that this theme on reciprocal love has come precisely to help us in this moment, because otherwise if one did not have the strength of mutual love, the strength of communion, it could happen that when one enters into the dark night of humanity and loses oneself in it, because night is night, at a certain point one wouldn't know where to go and just bump into walls, if one did not have a light. The light that God gave to the Opera is this: reciprocal love, it is Jesus in the midst».*

Go back to the origins

To whoever thinks that after seventy years it is difficult, if not impossible, to carry out the change of viewpoint that was strongly affirmed during the meeting of the Delegates, Emmaus proposed a «resetting»: to think that we are dealing with a *«return to the origins, a return to the love of Chiara, when there was no focolare,*

there were no volunteers ... There was only this great Ideal, the live that was going ahead». And so instead of being frightened it will come spontaneously to say: *«How marvelous! It was like this when I met the Ideal, it was like this».*

During the early years of the Opera didn't Chiara already encourage – in a well-known text entitled «The Rule of '51» – the Movement that then was called the «Order of Maria» to live for the Church and for humanity? It was Giancarlo who shared to the Delegates that same passion of Chiara that has become the commitment for everyone today. *«The Order of Mary - Chiara wrote – does not live for itself. Like the most Holy Mary who lived only for her Jesus, the Order of Mary lives for the Mystical Body of Christ, the Church. It lives therefore for those who are not part of it and by loving them it finds its sanctity».* And in a writing of the 22nd of September of the same year she noted: *«The Order of Mary [...] will die if it thinks of itself. Thus in it lies the law of the Gospel: Whoever loses his life will find it" (Mt 16,25)».*

The meeting of the Delegates 2013 concluded with another passage of Chiara, taken from the diary of '71, which Emmaus gives to all who were present and to the whole Movement: *«...Only with charity can we give back to every focolare its true face and so too with the Opera. [...] we must thank God for this marvelous vocation. It is in charity lived that we will find, also in the future, the source of every reform which the Opera will need».*

Aurora Nicosia



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www.focolare.org/notiziariomariapoli

Middle East To be a «frontier Zone»?

**Cosa succede quando si lasciano le sicurezze raggiunte.
Ecco cosa ci ha raccontato Carmine Donnici, delegato per la Turchia**

***What happens when one leaves behind the securities one has achieved?
Here is what Carmine Donnici, Delegate for the Zone of Turkey shares with us***

«Zone of the Middle East includes a vast area from Morocco to Iran passing through Algeria, Libya, Egypt...

enthusiastic, generous, but in the end we concluded by writing a letter to Emmaus telling her all the valid reasons why we should not be merged into just one Zone.

The day after, we meditated on the *Fable that blossomed along Foco's Path* and that strong call to "die without a single lament" which made us understand that one "dies" for something much greater, which has its basis in the act of giving one's life for one another, and this is what makes everything more sacred».

What was the journey you took to arrive at developing a proposal for the new set-up of the Middle East?

«Last April, we Delegates of the Middle East met together in Istanbul for five days.

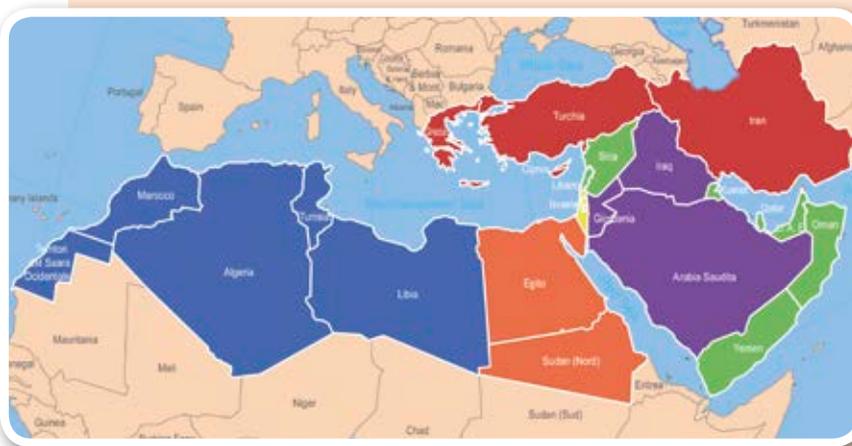
We started with the possibility of merging the Zone into three parts, then into two and finally as just one Zone. After the initial difficulties everything turned out so logical, so luminous, that it seemed like a miracle. The solution was agreeable to my expectations, so much so that I went to the chapel and I told Jesus: «It is too beautiful, but if I am "attached" to this reality, take it, I am giving it to you as is»... and in fact, He took it.

A short while after, in fact, perplexities and second thoughts arose which we shared with one another, but we did all this through email, and so you can understand that aside from being very demanding, it was also difficult to

"The Middle East will not be touched, but must be helped, the presence of the Opera increased". The things that we heard in some occasions regarding the new set-up of the Opera left us 'peaceful', while we waited for the arrival of the focolarinas and focolarinos, or so we thought.

But during the meeting of October 2012, some of us were filled with scruples... If the Zones of Italy, that have a sizeable number of persons belonging to the Opera much greater than ours, has to undergo a merging, should we still remain six distinct Zones? This was what we asked ourselves.

And together so we decided to renounce – as if it were a privilege given to us! – being considered a "frontier zone". We remained





L'aggiornamento sull'incontro della Grande Zona del Medio Oriente con Emmaus al raduno Delegati

more with each other, therefore the unity among us grew, and so we asked ourselves why do we have to endanger a positive experience and change it? And then we understood that the new set-up of the Opera concerned everyone, and therefore also us and that God was asking us to make a new step».

explain ourselves just through this means of communication. Seeing how difficult it was to reach an agreement we thought of meeting again in Amman at the end of August, a day before Emmaus was to arrive in Jordan. So everything was once again up for discussion. There was the temptation to just give up. But «precisely because we were faced with these challenges, we had to give a witness of unity», we said to one another. And this made us all the more enthusiastic».

You also had understandable reasons ... such as a positive experience, with many fruits...

«Yes, in fact the experience we had up to now was more positive than when we were all together in the beginning, because it was always difficult: the link-ups, the communication... When the Zones were divided there were many positive developments and also we learned to collaborate

What helped you the most to give space to the action of God in this process?

«It was a very beautiful collective and also personal experience. A thought or an idea was developed not because of the inspiration of someone or the cleverness of somebody else. It was a thought that Jesus formed within us, in the unity among us, in unity with the Center. You sent a title and the Center sent back an echo: for example through the updating of the councils of the Center of the Opera, or from the experience of another zone. And thus you formed an idea which was no longer yours. It was truly Jesus who was bringing it ahead. And this is how we arrived at the idea of just one Zone, which we shared with Emmaus including the second thoughts that we had. At the meeting of the Delegates it seems that this was confirmed, even if it has not yet been finalized».

prepared by the editorial board



La Grande Zona del Medio Oriente al raduno Delegati

In Spain What can I do?

How can we «go out, to all be protagonists». Here is Marga Gomez del Valle and José Luis Romero, Delegates of the Zone of Madrid to tell us about this

How were you able to concretize the push that Emmaus gave to the Opera?

«There was a very positive response in the community. The prospect of uniting the zones of Spain made us look at the reality around us with greater responsibility and we felt personally called to do this. In June we met the Council to prepare the calendar of activities for the coming year that presented itself as a highly complex *puzzle*. We asked a small group to study all the various proposals».

Was it simple or did you meet difficulties? How did you overcome them?

«During the year we tried to live: “what belongs to the other is mine”: not to be in the Council as volunteers, in-charge of the dialogues, gen, etc., but to be there as Opera. In spite of this we still couldn't find a solution for the calendar of the year when the day of the Council meeting arrived, also because all of us were committed to the same things, and it became clear that applying a structural criteria was inadequate, such as – “let's remove more dates, etc...”.

In the communion of soul that followed, each one expressed the difficulties they encountered, what they wanted to 'save' ... The contribution of the gen was important: “Even if we had your support, we were not able to do everything as planned”, they told us. We realized that, even if each community lived for the young people, maybe they did it hoping



to get a response from them, without that absolute disinterested love: which meant loving one another and being “equals”, as builders.

At the same time we tried to be sincere with one another, not to keep silent about the things that were not going well, to have the courage to break an apparent harmony at the right moment, so as to go in depth with love and so as to build a true unity.

We needed a new interpretation: to ask ourselves “What can I do? What can I do for you?”.

In the end we only left a few fixed dates in our calendar, allowing the local communities to make their own calendar, giving ourselves the time to lend our support wherever it was needed. This changed the way we related to one another resulting in a great joy among us all».

In what way were you able to communicate this new reality from the Zone Council to the all the others in the Opera?

«First of all by living them personally. This is the most convincing way!

Then, through dialogue, helping each other to unify life. A woman volunteer said: “I can't do anything for the Opera – I have my husband, my children – but for the parish yes, because it is just beside my house”. “But in the parish you are Opera! You are working for *ut omnes*”.

We saw the tendency of trying to resolve things by having meetings instead of carrying out a project. For example: "We have to start something in the world of Health, so let's organize a meeting". "No. Let's help one another to understand that in the hospital where one works, one is already opening up this world".

And then it is not so much we who will pass on the new realities, but rather, it is the whole Opera going in this direction. There was the letter of Emmaus, then the last Link-up: it was so forceful that it was able to pass on everything in just one go.

We can see the importance of the violet, our means of communication».

Don't miss the occasion

«I heard about a fieldtrip of the gen 3. I had already introduced this way of life to my students; but this year I was no longer their teacher in the subjects that would allow me to talk about these topics. But ... I couldn't deny them this chance. I wrote a personal letter to each family. It was too late: everyone was already committed to other things! After a few days I discovered that a group had postponed their activities just to be able to join. Thirteen of us came together with a couple who were parents. In the end everyone was very happy. So how do we go ahead? Often I thought that we had to "organize" ourselves to enter into the world of Education. But now I understand that I had to direct the question to myself: "What can I do?" By working on my relationships I realized that Maria Carmen, an intern member of New Families who is also a teacher, shares my same passion. I think that now we have found which path to take».

Mariluz García, focolarina

«I was invited to the Nueva Murcia Forum, an important venue of dialogue among entrepreneurs and politicians of our province. It was difficult to adapt myself to the environment, but with the certainty of unity, I started to love just as Chiara had taught us. I found an adherent



What were the fruits?

«realized how many experiences our intern members were already doing. Before, they seemed to be just small, scattered actions, now they have become part of a single journey. Now we understand where we are going and how to help ourselves.

The adherents are also happy to give their personal contribution. It is impressive to see how much resources there are in the people of Chiara, in each person!» (see box)

prepared by Gianna Sibelli

who was also participating as a representative of a company. He suggested to me: "Here we can keep Jesus among us!". At the end of the day I was able to build many relationships, even with Card. Antonio Cañizares, who was happy to know that we too were present in this environment».

Antonio Zaragoza, volunteer

«I have an economical telephone plan, and so I can take advantage of using the telephone. I know how to read the Word of God and to share stories. I know how to sing quite well. I am able to dance not too badly and to make others laugh especially children. I have good common sense and a good organizational ability. I know how to clean, to iron and to cook. I can write letters using the computer (but my accounting is quite bad). I am experienced with the elderly. I am a bit constrained by my family situation but I offer all my available time. I pray and I live for this very important moment in the Opera, so that everything will be done according to the plan and the Will of God»

Mercedes Herreros, newly retired teacher

José C. Paz

On a journey with the community

How to involve the adults and the young people who do and don't belong to the Movement

While Emmaus invited everyone of the Opera spread all over the world to «sow the Ideal», to bring God there where he wasn't present, we were with the community of Jose C. Paz on our way to the Mariapolis Lia. It was a long-awaited trip after a year of Word of Life meetings and of activities to raise funds necessary to hire a bus. We were able to gather 94 persons, of which 22 were children, 33 youth some of whom belonged to the Movement of the Word (an ecclesial Movement born in Argentina), and 39 adults. Among these last were 3 religious women. Half of the participants were coming for the first time.

Since we started to organize the trip we already made an experience of communion. Those who participated in the Word of Life meetings and the adherents committed themselves to inviting «someone»: from among their relatives, neighbours, people who have expressed the desire to get to know the Mariapolis... And so each one brought some new people. Seeing that the majority of our families had many children, we needed to find the money to cover the expenses of this trip for everyone. So we organized an «empanadazo» (large-scale sale of «empanadas») and thus we were able to cover half of the cost of the trip.

Arriving at the Mariapolis, the welcome of the inhabitants, with their experiences on living the Gospel touched the hearts of everyone. It came spontaneously to share our lunch together, play games with the children, listen to one another and to share the strong moments that were lived. «I liked it a lot when the young girl shared how she learned to put all of herself into loving especially there where it cost the most»; «I liked listening to the experiences of many young people who are striving to live fraternity. They spread love from the simplest things and this is something positive»; «Understanding the true meaning of life according to the Gospel, giving 100 percent of oneself”: these are just some of the impressions that we were able to gather.

Going back home, everyone expressed the desire to remain in contact with one another and to help each other to live just like in the Mariapolis, wherever we are. It was the first experience of «apostolate» lived together as a community and everyone was very happy. Now we will try to listen to the Holy Spirit together who undoubtedly will suggest to us how to remain linked to one another and how to bring ahead the life that continues to grow, doing everything so that we will always have full communion among us.

The community of José C. Paz



Temporary focolares

Many places, the same family



Encounters at the «peripheries»

(Ideal) seems to be made precisely for these brothers of ours, I experienced firsthand a very strong and new fraternity. Also with the focolarinas of that place I feel that our unity is alive, and that together we will continue to build the Opera there where God asks us, even now that I have come back to the Mariapolis Center of Castelgandolfo».

In Manfe, in **Camerun**, the focolare was housed in the Bishop's residence and Mons. Francis Lysinge participated every morning at the meditation the the focolarinos and focolarinas were doing, telling them that he felt himself to be truly a «focolarino».

From the focolare of Genoa Simone and Christopher (Birmanian) arrived in **Myanmar**: «first we spent a few days with the gen, then a meeting with the community. One of the most beautiful moments was the meeting with the seminarians both in Yangon and in



Mandalay. We also took a trip to Kanazogone, where Fr. Carolus was staying, to visit many young people of the parish. Other important mo-

From Sri Lanka to the islands of the Azores, from Vietnam to Santo Domingo, from Brazil to Tanzania. These are some of the Countries that have experienced the presence of a temporary focolare during the year: focolarinas, focolarinos, gen, volunteers... the family of Chiara moved to go towards the «peripheries» and to meet those communities and people who live the Ideal and who are quite far from the focolare centers.

There were those who played with the gen4, some organized a Mariapolis, someone met with the local Bishop, someone had a traveling stay with various stopovers within the same Country, others shared about the early times of the Ideal, still others had many private and personal talks. Every temporary focolare is a unique experience, what instead is repeated in the various circumstances is the mutual gratitude of those who come and those who welcome the visit of the focolarinos and focolarinas.

«God made me make such a beautiful experience – writes Stefano who was in **Zambia** –, just by giving me the days to take my vacation!». «Aside from the beauty of the people, of the rich nature in all senses, the thing that I will carry in my heart – Dilu who was in **Tanzania** shared – is the thirst for the Ideal and how this



ments were the personal talks that we made and the many visits to the families and relatives of our people».

In **Vietnam** Nicolas from Tagaytay, Darwin from Bangkok and Hau and Hieu from South Vietnam arrived. Three weeks with stop-overs also in the north of the Country to meet the gen boys and girls and their families. Upon the request of the Rector, the focolarinos also spent a period of time in the seminary to «give lessons on the life of unity». Finally they were also invited to present their vocation to around a thousand youth of the diocese.

The most profound experience in any «periphery», will always remain that experience of God, of being able to have Jesus in the midst 24/7, and then ... to share everything: «food, an incessant rain – the four temporary focolarinos wrote to us from the zone of **Fontem** –, sometimes the lack of electricity and light. It was like going back to living the reality of the early times "in the cellar with the candles"; all this was the fuel that was indispensable in order to experience concrete mutual love among us, to welcome the love of the persons of the various communities who had our dinner ready for us as we returned from a day full of meetings... or those people who, being unable to participate, sent us money to pay for the gasoline for the car, or even someone who committed herself to pay for the rent of the house where we were staying».

And naturally, every trip is not taken for granted, in fact the suspense was never lacking:



Vietnam

«Up to the last moment – Jerome, who was in **Congo**, wrote – we thought that we would not be able to leave because we did not receive our visa. We only received our passports and visas on the day before our departure after waiting for seven hours at the embassy... This fact made us put everything in the hands of God.

We departed fully aware that everything was a gift from God, his gift for us. And it was really so! With the focolarinos there was an atmosphere of a permanent supernatural celebration (cooking, washing the dishes, preparing the meetings...) and this is what the most fascinating. A gen boy who stayed with us in the last two days never stopped repeating: "what a beautiful family, what a beautiful family"».

prepared by Tiziana Nicastro

To go back among the bombs

A period of stay in Syria in spite of the ongoing war. The push from within to answer generously to the call of God

After the school of the focolarinos in Loppiano (in 1978), I went back to the focolare in my Country, Lebanon, and immediately I was asked to take care of the community of the Movement in Syria, where there was no focolare center yet but just as few people who knew us in some cities. I tried to go there every month – even during the war in Lebanon – up to '94 when I went to open the focolare center



Stati Uniti

in Aleppo with another focolarina and I stayed there for nine years.

It was therefore a community that I saw being born, growing, and whose people had stolen my heart.

Last summer, I was passing through Lebanon, and talking with the person responsible for the Zone about the worsening situation in Syria and about the focolarinas who needed



to take a break and have some rest, I told her quite decisively: «I am willing to go back to Syria, but not now since there is the war!». In fact, I lived through fifteen years of war in Lebanon and all the painful events that followed.

At the following annual retreat of the focolarinas, while meditating on the theme of Chiara, I loudly heard the voice of Jesus scolding me: «What's this! Are you putting conditions on Syria? But didn't you give your life for me and for the Opera? And what about those two foreign focolarinas who are now in Damascus, who can hardly speak the language and are facing great risks?».

And so I felt that I had to say «yes» to Jesus and I shared my willingness to leave for Syria in the midst of the war, whenever and for whatever duration, so as to allow the focolarinas there to take turns to go out of the Country, without closing the focolare center.

I didn't feel that I was doing something heroic, but I was just doing the right thing, as an answer to a call. And Jesus, when he calls, also gives the necessary grace. This grace has accompanied

throughout the eight weeks I spent in Damascus. It was a strong and beautiful experience because there was only Jesus Forsaken whom I met in thousands of faces and all the superfluous things fell away, and left me in front of God alone.

I felt powerless to do anything to alleviate the suffering of the people, but I was able to love them, to listen to them: to serve each one, to cook, go to market, share my story to the gen boys and girls, to translate in Arabic the meditation for the women volunteers, to go to the Word of Life meetings, of the local communities or of the youth. To offer all that I was living through for those in dangerous areas, to encourage those in other cities through a telephone call... But above all to keep Jesus in the midst with another focolarina.

For our people of the Opera who were far from the focolare, they told me that my presence among them was a very strong sign of the love of God and also provided moral support, even if many were not able to meet me nor was I able to do anything concrete for them.

It was beautiful to see how the community had grown especially in Damascus, a city that is five hours by car from Aleppo. The seeds that were sown years ago had borne fruit above all among the youth.

I always felt the bombardment that was going on around us, but we would go to Mass or to the meetings - just like all the other people who would go out to work or to study or to buy food - putting ourselves in the hands of God and living the present moment, in His Will.

During my stay in Syria I didn't see the destruction, nor the bombs up close, I jumped at the loud sounds of the bombings just a few times. I was always accompanied by an inner peace and I consider this a grace, in the midst of all the limitations that the situation imposed on us.

To live with that part of the suffering humanity was truly a gift and I would willingly go through the same experience because it is a way, among many, to live fully «*go out and go to the peripheries of the world*» of Pope Francis, just as Emmaus told us in her letter of July 12

Ghada Karioty



Sophia University Institute

Six years of life

The academic year starts with the official approval of the Statutes

The *ad experimentum* phase has ended. The VI academic year of the Sophia University Institute, inaugurated on October 14, 2013, also celebrates the official approval of the Statutes on the part of the Vatican Congregation for Catholic Education. «Sophia you are a home for everyone...»: these are the first words of the hymn of the Institute and one has the impression that this is truly so today: a home for the world.

Emmaus, the vice grand-chancellor, came to open the day's events, but above all she came as a friend of this laboratory of fraternity: «Sophia is characterized ever more as a privileged place to gather the questions and challenges posed to us in our times at a planetary level— she affirmed – and to which we cannot but give a choral answer: an answer that can arise, authentic and convincing, only from the true and daily sharing of life and thought. I am very aware of how demanding this feat is: it means overcoming different visions, acquired knowledge, and consolidated experiences. And yet,— she explained – it is by so doing that we can weave, in the bosom of humanity, the plot of universal fraternity; it is by so doing that we become protagonists of a story that translates into reality a dream of God: that dream transmitted to us by Chiara and which can be entrusted only to great souls.»



The long applause of the 600 and more present at the Auditorium of Loppiano is not just for show but comes from the heart. The responsibility of Sophia passes through a journey that desires not only to form the students but also aims at the formation of the whole person; it does not promise the world fruits that are already known but it promises the sowing of «great souls».

Annamária Fejes, Hungarian, on behalf of about one hundred students who are frequenting the different courses, expressed their common motivation in choosing this challenge: student representative, underlined the richness that the experience at Sophia is, for each and every one of them, and the desire they feel to return it, and to bring it to fruition also within the present realities of the surrounding territory of Loppiano, where the institute is located, with these words: «To find, through reflection and dialogue, alternative ways to the war and conflicts that cover our planet in bloody. We want, and desire, to meet young people, adults, organizations, and associations, to offer, with due discretion, our testimony of life lived, and to build with them a more fraternal world.»



Also present was the grand chancellor, the Archbishop of Florence, Cardinal Giuseppe Betori, who underlined, in citing the Statutes, how Sophia «is inspired by the vital synthesis of divine wisdom and human knowledge that is expressed by the mind of Jesus. The Institute – asserted the Cardinal – wants to be an existential place of encounter, of the incarnation of “Sophia” and of human knowledge, the inspiration that is brought about by the Holy Spirit through the exercise of love. It can be a place where human research can become a single thing and wisdom can thus dwell in the heart of man.»

SUI Dean, Piero Coda, after renewing the Pact of Reciprocal Love which is what must animate all the activities, addresses the students in this way: «With you, we professors and *staff* members also feel ourselves as protagonists of the new world that is coming to life. With you - he reaffirms, citing Chiara - it is possible to find new world-level mental structures ». Precisely along the line of this new world that is dawning, the talk of Benedetto Gui, ordinary professor of the University of Padua, lecturer of Economic Politics and this year coordinator of the Department of Economics and Management of the SUI, inserts itself: an in-depth and involving presentation that ferries the audience into the open sea of the Economic sciences.

Aside from the greetings of Davide Penna, vice-president of the newly-born Association «Friends of Sophia» that was created by the ex-students and which is open to all those who in one way or another live in synergy with the Institute, and of Paolo Crepez, the current president of the «Foundation for Sophia», an essential organism that accompanies and sustains the life of the young University Institute, there were also creative ideas by students, distinct from poetic, musical and experiential testimonials. And finally, the celebratory luncheon couldn't end without the traditional cake-cutting on the part of Emmaus and Giancarlo, to toast the road that has been travelled and to renew the commitment and the challenge of the journey towards an evermore incisive culture of unity.

Andrea Cardinali

(enrolled in the II year SUI/Trinitarian ontology)

Read more about this on "Mariapoli online"



On the 22nd of October, at the official re-opening of the Priests' School «Vinea mea» Emmaus and Giancarlo, representatives of Loppiano and of the Centers of the Work of Mary, local civil authorities, the Bishop Mario Meini and other representatives of the Diocese were present. You may see a more complete presentation of the program, with photos and videos of the event in the website of the Cittadella www.loppiano.it and in that of the Opera www.focolare.org. We would like to highlight here a particular aspect: the experience of unity lived.

It has been for some time that the challenge was felt to adapt the antique Franciscan Convent, which has housed our School since 1984, to a style that is more suitable to the demands of a communitarian spirituality. To tell you the truth, we rather thought of of mak-



In Loppiano «Vinea mea», renovated

After two years
of renovation work
the Centre of spirituality
for priests, deacons
and seminarians re-opens



ing just a few adjustments, but in unity with those responsible for the aspect of harmony in the Cittadella, we understood that we had to study it more in depth. And so we started our collaboration with the focolarinas of the Centro Ave Architecture. An Idea was born, with Jesus in the midst, that convinced both the Council of Incisa and the Superintendent of Fine Arts: that allowed this Center of Spirituality of the 16^o century to flourish once again for our times.

The work started in December 2011, respecting the structure of this historical building, they were able to take the individual cells of the Franciscans and to recompose them into habitable units, for the «focolares», with corners for the kitchen and living room. Behind the house they built a completely new basement for the hall, the refectory, the kitchen. Fortunately, providence, together with a generous extra communion of goods, arrived promptly. The focolarinas

of the Centro Ave shared: «Since the beginning we worked together with a special “team”: the priests in-charge of both the School and the international Centers who expressed the ideas of the priests from various Countries. Every corner of the building speaks of comparison, a common search, of listening to one another and of enhancing the value of all the needs expressed».

Thus there is a renewed flourishing of the structures and also of the School, which now proposes a new organization and new programs in line with the development of the Opera today; it focuses on an interactive method as much as possible, and has in its program a series of theological-pastoral lessons, according to the original inspiration of Chiara Lubich for this School which is to transmit the spirituality of unity and the theology of the Council to the priests. Everything was born from the unity with those responsible for the Little City. It was inspired by the work that was done for the Schools of the focolarinas and focolarinos and emphasizes Loppiano as a City-School.

*Fr. Alexander Duno, Fr. Hubertus Blaumeiser,
Fr. Tonino Gandolfo*



Città Nuova day Sixty cities, one voice

The first national day for the Città Nuova Publishing Group has created a network of numerous communities of the Movement in Italy

Punctual. How can you doubt it? Many? This was the unknown factor. A sunny Saturday afternoon in fact, was quite inviting to leave Milan or to take a stroll in the city center. Instead there were almost 400 people who decided to fill up the San Fedele auditorium. It was an assorted crowd who were quite interested in the themes that were not really light such as the theme on the battle against corruption and the mafia.

Nando dalla Chiesa, professor of Sociology of Organized Crime at the State University, Municipal Councilor for Security and Social Cohesion Marco Granelli and the representative of «Libera», Lorenzo Frigerio, probed the Ambrosian reality with its lights and shadows, taking inspiration from the book "La legalità del noi" (The legality of the "we"). The two authors of the book were present, the substitute procurator of the Antimafia District Headquarters of Bari, Giuseppe Gatti, and the Rai journalist, Gianni Bianco.

It was not the presentation of a book or the clumsy disguise for a commercial transaction. It was an afternoon of courageous public reflection, a step in the journey that has already started with the Milanese readers of Città Nuova and the occasion to go ahead in their commitment to legality, involving new people and opening up collaboration with institutions and associations.

The Milanese afternoon is emblematic of what took place that Saturday, the 5th of October all over Italy. This first edition of Città Nuova Day was considered as a trial run, due to the limited time available to prepare it. Instead, the network of readers of the Publishing Group were able to surprise us, thanks also to the support of the young people, organizing 59 events throughout the national territory and tackling themes of great topicality, from legality to economics, from politics to communication,



At times they were just small gatherings, but as a whole there were around 3,500 participants. Often, the initiative involved the collaboration of groups who did not belong to the Focolare Movement. Almost everywhere qualified persons who didn't know the Movement of Chiara Lubich or the Publishing Group but were interested in the themes presented, participated in the events. They were often the ones who expressed their lively appreciation and their willingness to continue to work together.

«Città Nuova Day links Italy» this was the ambitious title of the Day and the direct streaming via Internet made us experience a national exhilaration with the live broadcasts from Turin, Rome and Naples. The children spoke about their soon to be published magazine, Big. Not to be outdone were the adolescents, who are committed to their bi-monthly magazine Teens, directed by their peers. These are two new editorial initiatives to combat the print media crisis and the declining readership. Maria Voce sent a video message wherein she underlined the special characteristics of Città Nuova: «All publications are at the service of an idea, that of universal brotherhood, and they help to discover that a world already exists of people who are working for this and of which not much is being said». In one day we had the program of the year. Not bad for a trial run.

Paolo Loriga

Medicine in dialogue To «turn the page»

An international Congress with professionals
in the field of biomedicine and healthcare



Last October 18 and 19, the international Congress entitled «Where to Medicine? In the midst of globalization, sustainability and personalization of treatments», was held in Padua, at the Great Hall of Medicine and Surgery of the University.

There were around 250 people present coming from 19 nations, who represented the diverse professions in the field of Biomedicine and Health, but also jurists, sociologists and economists, to confirm the interdisciplinarity of the Congress. Since the preparatory stages there was the opportunity of involvement – thanks to the personal relationships that were built through time – also of professionals and professors who did not belong to the Movement.

Aside from the reports presented which were of great competence and cultural significance, and which were never disconnected from the aspect of human values that should be inseparable from Medicine, a series of themes of great urgency in the field of Medicine on a world-wide scale were proposed, interspersed with convincing and credible experiences that were made in diverse contexts and in various Countries.

The conclusions – that saw a unanimous contribution in the final dialogue among all

the participants – all converged in affirming a reality, spread and consolidated through the years on an international level around Medicine Dialogue and Communion, that has matured and is now fully capable of directly interacting with the academic and scientific fields also in contexts of high university levels.

It seemed to us that the lively and constructive dialogue can also be attributed to the relevance today of the themes discussed and to the fact of the need to «turn the page» in the field of health which is strongly felt, just as the need to codify principles and methods that bring back to the center of our actions and healthcare programming, the culture of relationships on all levels, among doctors, health workers, with institutions, with patients, with citizens.

This request was explicitly manifested by the participants with the desire to start immediately post-Congress, by committing themselves to following-up the work that has been done, instilling a real hope in one's own environment.

According to public opinion, we felt as if we were brought out of the «marsh (swamp)» of difficulties that seemed apparently insurmountable day by day, so as to enjoy a regenerating, new, universal, open and winning «bath».

It was also said that one can speak of a watershed, a real and true turning point and point of departure for the Inundation in the field of Medicine.

Flavia Caretta



With our Jewish friends The ties that bind

An invitation to the «Adat Israel» Synagogue
of Mexico City to remember Chiara Lubich



Some of our Jewish friends – with whom we have been united by a profound relationship of respect for many years now – wished to celebrate the 5° anniversary of the «departure» of Chiara, by inviting us to the «Adat Israel» Synagogue, last October 20.

We were in 120, belonging to the Focolare Movement and different Jewish communities in the City of Mexico.

The welcome was affectionate and fraternal which immediately created an atmosphere of the family. The first to greet us was the present President of the B'nai B'rith of Mexico, Manuel Taifeld, responsible of the synagogue that welcomed us. The program, prepared together, foresaw various interventions. Among them, Abraham Tobal, rabbi of the Jewish community «Monte Sinai» of Mexico City, who spoke of the importance of tolerance, citing Chiara as an exceptional woman.

The lively participation of everyone helped to realize a very touching and high-profile encounter, a step ahead in dialogue.

The message of Emmaus, sent for the occasion and read by a focolarina, was profoundly welcomed. Enrique Movshovich, a Jewish friend of the Movement commented: «These words are marvelous, we must continue and

go ahead together, intensely holding close the ties that unite us».

It was also an unforgettable experience for our members. At the culmination of the event, to seal our mutual friendship, we exchanged two parchments with the image of the olive tree that was planted together in 2006 in the Little City "El Diamante", as a symbol of peace and brotherhood.

The Rinah (Joy) choir offered a concert of songs in hebrew, concluding with a musical piece of Giuseppe Verdi in honor of Chiara. They were very touching moments for all of us, and in fact we recalled how Chiara used to sing it: «Va Sapienza...» which confirmed her presence among us in this celebration for her.

The final greetings were that of reciprocal gratitude. Someone told us: «I want to thank you for the privilege and the honor of having shared this unforgettable day with you».

The gen boys and girls expressed with emotion, and some even with tears in their eyes, the rediscovery of the greatness of the charism of Chiara. In the video that we showed «Remembering Chiara», they saw how the light illuminates the world and, seeing the expressions of esteem and of love of our Jewish friends, they grasped even more what Chiara is for humanity.

Vibel Lopez



Communion and Law

A project with universal goals

The initiatives of a group of researchers from the Faculty of Law in Malaga

As researchers in the field of Law we have always felt the need for justice, and so, ever since Chiara gave life to the Economy of Communion we tried to get to know it thoroughly and to share this also with our colleagues and students.

After Luigino Bruni, focolarino belonging to the international Commission of the Economy of Communion came for the first time to hold a conference at our University in 2000, many academic activities followed dedicated primarily to the EdC, and after this to the principle of fraternity and relational justice (with the contribution of Antonio Maria Baggio, married focolarino, political analyst, professor at the S.U.I.). One of the first important results was the creation of the Gurvitch Forum, in 2004, with the awarding to Chiara Lubich of the Gurvitch Prize for Social Law. Gradually a group of professors was formed with whom – also in contact with lecturers from other Countries – we elaborated research initiatives, par-

ticipated in Seminars and Congresses organized by Communion and Law or by the Sophia University Institute. At the same time we participated with our students in similar initiatives for the youth. We also strived to form ourselves personally, as much as possible, with visits and periods of stay at the Sophia University Institute, always together with other colleagues.

At present at the Gurvitch Forum, which now has its own small website, there are more than 15 researchers belonging to different disciplines and faculties, who are members and who are starting to produce research works that we put in common with professors of other Universities: Seminars, publications and other new initiatives arise from these. These are projects that are brought ahead not just by us but by this group: our colleagues, in fact, feel that these initiatives are theirs too and at the same time belong to a universal aim.

Antonio Marquez and Rocio Caro



New publication

A love letter to Mary

«Silvano Cola, whom I asked to read the manuscript before it was to be published for the first time, wrote me a few lines, which I have conserved as precious and which, infinitely, have illuminated the meaning and the style: «It is a long love letter to Mary». I didn't think that I would be able to do such a thing! But I am very happy that this small book could be read in this way.

And for this, without a doubt, with intimate emotion, I would like to express my gratitude first of all to Chiara Lubich, who revealed to me that beauty and that divine design of Mary, who like a golden dawn makes our eyes more luminous and bright the more the Sun of life rises and shines in us and among us».

These are the words which Piero Coda used, in the preface of his book: *Magnificat*, where he, moving from the opening lines of the Marian hymn par excellence, «sings» Mary.

A personal dialogue, delicate and poetic, and, at the same time, dense and rich with wisdom, in which declares the extraordinary greatness and the unfathomable mystery of Mary in her profound humility: mother of God, daughter of her Son and a new creature; «full of grace», who shares with her Son the abyss of the abandonment and the splendour of the resurrection; heart and mother of the Church and of humanity in the fire of the Holy Spirit.

prepared by Elena Cardinali



Telegrams of Emmaus for the last five focolarini who left for the heavenly Mariapolis
The testimony on Fons is the profile read at his funeral and can be found in *Mariapoli* online
www.focolare.org/notiziariomariapoli

Aldo Fons Stedile

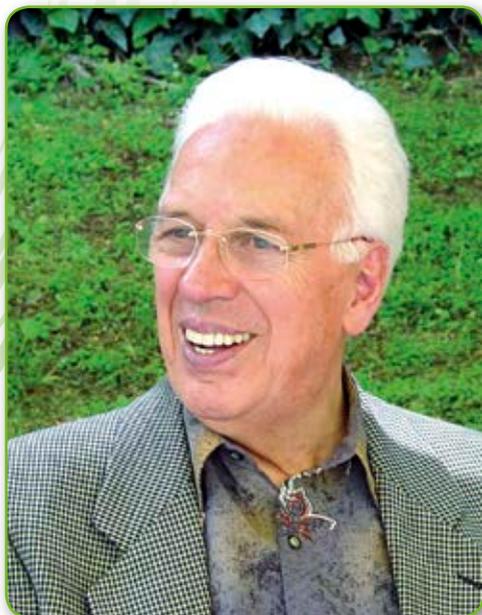
A fountain of light for all of us

On September 30, Romoaldo (Aldo) Stedile, our Fons who, together with Marco Tecilla, Livio and Carlo, began the first men's focolare in Trent in the famous «chicken coop», reached the house of the Father.

I think that all those who knew him can still see his smile, his overflowing vitality, his passion for the Ideal, his optimism ... Fons, the second in a family of ten children was born in the valley of the Terragnolo in Trentino, on the 3rd of July, 1925. «Papa and mama – Fons shared – had a deep religious piety and, almost every evening, before we went to bed we usually read aloud a passage of the sacred Scripture, or the writings of a saint or another spiritual reading with my mother».

He had a considerable artistic talent as a painter, and if the Second World War did not erupt, he would have gone on to study Fine Arts in Florence.

In '48 he meets the Ideal through Vale. He himself relates: «Meeting her was for me a revelation, a true encounter with God. Everything changed from that moment on». And successively, after Vale spoke to him about Jesus Forsaken: «Now I understand everything, this is the solution. This is what was lacking in my life!... I understood that there would be difficulties, trials, doubts, misunderstandings, failures, but nothing would ever frighten me anymore. I felt a new and serene strength within me». In the Spring of '49 during a private talk, Chiara confirms the authenticity of his vocation as a focolarino and at the end of June, he officially begins his adventure, when he goes to live in the focolare of Trento. Relating his story regarding that period, Fons writes: «I remember that in '49 Chiara, once in a while, would come down to Trent to update those of us who couldn't go because of our job. Once she spoke to us in a park near the house of Silvana, telling us of what was happening up there ... At a certain



point, as if in ecstasy, I tried to check if there was still the grass beneath us, because I began to doubt if we were still on this earth ...” And this was the reality that accompanied and sustained him always, he offered this with intelligence and generosity to all those he met during his life.

Trent, Rome, Belgium, Ottmaring, Roman Mariapolis, these were the stages that marked his life, and which mark some of the stages of the development of the Movement.

On June 13, 1963 Fons was ordained a priest, together with Antonio Petrilli.

The 20 years he spent in Germany were very important, where together with Bruna Tomasi, he spent the best of his strength to spread the Ideal and to give rise to the ecumenical little city of Ottmaring, in close unity with Chiara. During those times he wrote to Chiara: «Yesterday evening it seemed that I understood for the first time, what it means to build on nothing, on darkness. When I didn't have the light often I would stop. But instead yesterday evening I understood, that this is precisely our vocation: to draw out the light (God) from the darkness (J.F.). I recalled what I had heard before, maybe you were the one who

said it: “as long as there is the earth beneath one's feet then you can walk, when it is lacking then you must fly».

From 1984 he is at the Centre of the Movement, where for several years Chiara entrusted to him the branch of the men volunteers, the branch that Fons brought ahead with his usual enthusiasm.

He wrote in a letter to Chiara: «Whenever I talk about the vocation of the volunteer I feel two strong emotions: on one hand the words would die in my mouth just thinking how every explanation of the life of the Opera is inadequate to its “divine foundation”. On the other hand I had to stop myself from shouting out that under every detail, whether of each particular vocation, as with the structures, there is Paradise, the Trinity, Mary, in the truest and most real way that man can ever imagine ...».

In the final years an illness presented itself which gradually weakened him but without touching the deepest chords of his soul. In February 2010 when he took a test to evaluate his cognitive abilities, and the doctor asked him to write straight off a complete sentence, he immediately wrote: love always, everywhere, everyone!

His Word of Life: “From the depths of those who believe in me, torrents of living water shall burst forth”. (Jn. 7, 38), and his new name Fons, give us the clearest and most luminous image of that “fountain” of light and wisdom that Fons has been for all of us.



Augustine Nett Legarda

He sowed Love

On the 30th of September Nett, Augustine Legarda, from the Focolare in New Zealand, peacefully left for Paradise surrounded by the love of the focolarini of Wellington and Melbourne.

Born in Manila in 1950, he was among the first gen of the Philippines to know the Movement in 1970 when he was attending the school where Silvio Daneo taught. Having been deeply struck by the Ideal soon afterward he went to Loppiano to deepen his gen experience and our spirituality. During this period he felt the call to give his life to God as a focolarino.

After concluding the School of Formation at Loppiano, he returned to Manila; and in 1974, with Aloizio dos Santos, Pippo Poidimani and Brian Linard, the Men's Focolare began in Melbourne. In 2002 Nett left Australia to go to New Zealand to start up the Focolare of Wellington.

For all these years he taught in a Secondary School, conquering the students and colleagues. His "inculturation" came from deep within, as he himself said in a letter to Chiara in December 1982. "Now I see my future in the hope of living at the service of all the people who pass my way, without wanting anything, only so that 'all may be one.'"

His correspondence reveals the intense relationship he had with Chiara right from the beginning. Already in 1972 he wrote her: "I have a great thirst for unity with you, I feel that this is the only important thing. I realised that this is only possible through Jesus Forsaken. Therefore, this unity is in God, because Jesus was most united to the Father when on the cross." And in another letter of the same year: "I want to tell you that today my soul is full of God. Jesus is everything and I want to repeat with you, but in my own measure, the love that you have for Him and take the same road that you have taken towards the Father".



In February 1975 he confided to Chiara: "I have understood that I need to draw from the life of the Most Holy Trinity to bring about the Kingdom of God here. I feel that I must renew the 'Pact' until this reality lives in me as I live through the daily

circumstances. I seem to understand the greatness of your Charism to which Mary has called me, to live and fulfil it with you here on earth."

While attending the school of the Counsellors of the Orange, in August 2001, Nett wrote to Chiara: "In contemplating the Work of Mary as it spreads throughout the Church and everywhere in the world, I put my faith only in the Holy Spirit, to be in 'the Soul' with you. I think that only in this way can I radically live the New Evangelization."

When the news of Nett's illness spread, many wrote moving impressions - fruit of the love that Nett sowed in the hearts of many people since the very beginning of the Movement in Australia, and on until his last days in Wellington. He was a spiritual father and mother to many, believing in each one and encouraging them in all that they were doing. Each one found a friend in him, who loved with his heart. During his period of illness, Nett was incredibly gentle and kind. He never complained, he was always serene and dignified.

Before I left for Amman, in response to a message that I had sent him, he wrote: "I am so grateful for your immense love. Despite everything I believe in the love of God. I offer all my sufferings for your trip to Jordan, for Interreligious Dialogue and for the development of the Work of Mary in the Middle East. I say my unconditional "Yes" to all that God asks of me in these moments of grace."

Chiara had given him the Word of Life: "I go to prepare a place for you" (Jn 14:2), a place that Nett has won by fully living the Ideal and that now he can occupy in Paradise.

Maria Rosa Bardi

«Jesus Forsaken, come and take me»

Maria Rosa Bardi, a married focolarina from Loppiano, left for Heaven yesterday following a sudden illness. She and her husband Renzo, also a focolarino, had been the centers of unity for the New Families in the zone of Milan for many years and then, in 2003, they moved to Mariapolis Renata to follow the formation of the families at the Loreto School.

Maria Rosa was born in Liguria in 1942 and in 1962 she got married to Renzo. Following the birth of their first child, Liuba, they encountered great difficulties in their marriage that led them to a separation. Through various contacts they both met the Ideal and separately went to Loppiano for a few months. This experience matured them with a profound, personal choice of God. They then reunited and went to live in Milan. In a few years they had other children: triplets named Chiara, Natalia and Silvana and then Mario and Giovanni.

Her relationship with Chiara was immediate and she received this Word of Life: 'Let the little ones come to me' from the book of Proverbs which reminded her of the nothingness of Jesus Forsaken.

Years of generous donation to God in the Movement began for both Maria Rosa and Renzo working from its onset for the New Families Movement. So many people in Milan and other parts of the world could bear witness to the love they have received. Their complete availability to serve as a family-focolare led them to the Holy Land, India, and 3 consecutive trips to Pakistan besides the USA at Mariapolis Luminosa and London.

When about to leave Milan the couple wrote Chiara: «It is effortless to follow you and experience the fullness of joy following in your wake to edify, even with our small hearts, new heavens

and a new earth. We have but one desire: to live so as to bring you where God wants us and we now offer our detachment from everything so as to continue following Jesus who once again exclaims to us with infinite love, 'Come, follow me'». Chiara answered them saying: «Mary will compensate your love for Her Movement! May she fill you with Her graces for as long as you make a gift of your precious experience in Mariapolis Renata and to all the families in the world who pass through there».

When she completed her task at the Loreto School, Maria Rosa wrote: «For both Renzo and I the season of harvest has arrived: who knows if the Divine farmer can gather some good crop! But even if the fruit were not good, the gifts He bestowed are infinitely overabundant and therefore our soul can only sing to him that in His mercy knows how to turn all into good».

However, they continued their 'service' in the little town, especially collaborating with the New Families Center with the «Courses to strengthen the unity of couples»

and they were truly reference points for many families in difficult situations.

During these years both trials and struggles were not lacking but Maria Rosa remained faithful to the charism and this period proved to be a time to perfect her charity. In 2005 she wrote: "When I first met the Movement, I felt the way to enter into the life of the Ideal was only through the open door of Jesus Forsaken. This thought and the ardent touch of the Redemption never left my soul. I am fully aware now that I could no longer be another person before Him, in two, but that Jesus Forsaken wanted to completely take my place, to fully live in me".

Many things characterized her love: delicacy, determination, humility, privacy, faithfulness, transparency, aware - as she herself said - "of the miracle of this vocation" to re-live the design of Foco.

On the day before she departed she lived a full day of loving others with Renzo and a deep



communion between the two of them, with the 'Pact of unity' renewed at Mass. When speaking of their future, among other things she said, "I am ready. I feel detached from everything." A few hours later she fell ill and immediately affirmed: "I offer everything for my children so that they

may love one another and be at peace. I offer for the men and women focolarini, for the Work of Mary and the meeting of the delegates, for the Little town of Loppiano, for peace, for all the poor and the desperate". She then exclaimed: «Jesus Forsaken come! Take me, Jesus Forsaken».

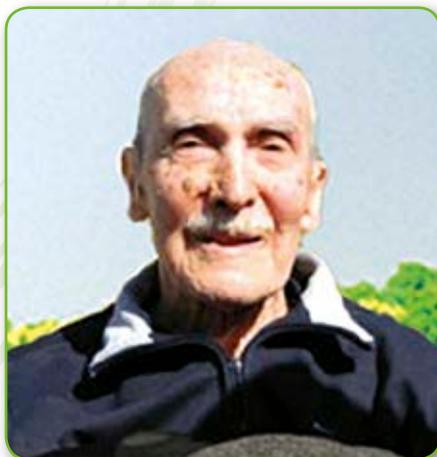
Remigio Magnani

At the start of the focolare in Parma

Remigio Magnani, a married focolarino from Parma (Italy) left for heaven on September 14th the feast of the Exultation of the Cross; the next day he would have turned 91. He was surrounded by the love of the focolarini and married focolarini who were at his side, above all following the death of his wife Ilde in 2011.

What follows is Remigio's story in his own words: "I was a dreamer and an idealist. I had studied medicine and had the chance to work in a military hospital. The war abruptly ended my studies. I joined the partisans knowing I would meet up with many from my town. I felt at home in that fraternal atmosphere where we went to risk our lives one for the other. In fact, I too was wounded when I went in the place of my commanding officer. When in 1945 the war ended, I was in a spiritual crisis for nearly 10 years. Once, during a train ride I overheard a young woman say: 'they live like the early Christians and put everything in common. It's called the Focolare Movement of unity! That's how my wonderful adventure began'.

Since 1952 Remigio and his wife became important pieces of the mosaic in the story of the Movement in their zone. At first in the women's focolare in Parma with Lia Brunet and in 1953 in the men's focolare (in Fr. Gino Rocco's rectory) with Oreste Basso and then with Lionello Bonfanti. In 1959 some problems for the Movement surfaced but the focolarini had received permission from the Bishop to stay in Parma and the Magnani's so generously offered their home for the focolarini while they themselves rented a small apartment. This



couple always gave of their time and energy to the work that Mary, and her Work was bringing about in their area, building a real community with Jesus in the midst.

Remigio continues his story: "Notwithstanding the many difficulties with my health Ilde and I did all we could to participate in the first Mariapolises at Fiera di Primiero in the Dolomite mountains. Many other Mariapolises followed those ones, ... and I was welcomed among the married focolarini. Chiara gave me the word of life: "I have the strength to face all conditions by the power that Christ gives me" (Phil 4:13) which had always been the beacon of my life. Our home became the center of attraction, the port of entry for everyone."

In 1980 he wrote Chiara: "Thank you for your diary which carved into my soul and brought into focus again the predilection of Mary towards us, the right place for us in the Little House of Loreto and in the reality of the Movement as One. Or we are humble and serving or no other virtue can make popi of us." He continued: "I feel that my place in the Focolare is to defend the vocation of the focolarini vir-

gins just as St. Joseph defended Mary who adored the Mystery." In one of his letters he confided: "When I returned home from Rome, after listening to a talk given by Chiara I desired to lift the many crosses from the popi in focolare. Instead, I am unable to do anything ... Then Jesus Forsaken fills everyemptiness, justifies every absurdity even the darkness of certain moments because He is the One without light."

His ongoing commitment, beyond his poor health, was to be a 'bearer of the charism'. Jesus Forsaken was for Remigio a 'Faithful Companion', a 'Secure Guide' and a 'Uiversal Teacher'.

Let's think of Remigio with everyone who preceded him in the Heavenly Mariapolis in particular, his wife Ilde and his sister Sandra Peduzzi, also a married focolarina».

wrote to Chiara: "My daily experience, which has its roots in the love to our Spouse, Jesus Forsaken is always new yet has the same root: love of neighbor." This love filled her life and was expressed very concretely: caring for her aging family members, helping some families coming from Morocco and maintaining a fruitful dialogue with them. She transmitted the Ideal passionately on the job too as a teacher with a glance of predilection towards the less fortunate and weak.

She was a beacon of light for the focolare. In all circumstances, even the difficult ones which are never lacking, she exemplified the certainty of God-Love where all difficulties can be overcome because we can live in Him, loving.

Following a world-wide conference call she wrote Chiara: "I have said another Yes to Jesus Forsaken, a complete Yes in the present moment. I pray to the Eternal Father asking that I remain

faithful to the charism because only in this way can you offer me to God, as one of your installments." On December 7, 1993 during a retreat held at the Center, she wrote: "The greatest fortune ever for me is having gotten to know and love Jesus Forsaken ... More than ever I have understood that only on our nothingness can we generate unity always and every-

where and that this is also always a gift of God."

She remained in the supernatural during her husband's aggressive illness which emerged a year ago. She was always by his side, guaranteeing a stable presence of Jesus in the midst up until his encounter with the Father.

Upon hearing of Mario's illness I wrote them: "Jesus Forsaken trusts both of you if He is asking such offerings." Angela answered: "We are living this experience fully aware that it is Him ... I feel that the greatest grace we have been given is not to ask 'why?'" When she informed me that Mario had passed away, she wrote: "My heart is

Angela Paoletta Mannillo

Immediate acceptance

On October 8th, Angela Paoletta Mannillo, a married focolarina from the zone of Naples, joined her husband Mario – he too a focolarino – who left for the Heavenly Mariapolis just 4 months ago. Angela was open and simple yet direct in her relationships and she had been active in Parish life from a young age. That is where she had met Mario. Shortly before their marriage she met the Ideal during the Family Fest of 1981.

Her adhesion to the Ideal was immediate. The Word of God became her compass and the basis of her life especially the Word of Life she received from Chiara: "If you say so, I will let down the nets" (Luke 5:5). "Wherever I am," she wrote Chiara, "I feel alive only when I am faithful to living the Word."

A few months later she felt called to give herself totally to God. She adhered with joy and also with the radicalism and Marian touch which always characterized her. In another letter she



broken in two. I find rest only in Mary Desolate and in the exclusive love for my Spouse who now has another name 'separation' ... I am offering all this suffering for the Movement. I now feel like a special family focolare since it seems to me that it is without a home, but it is between heaven and earth."

One month ago, at age 60, Angela suffered an unexpected cerebral hemorrhage; she never woke from the coma.

The entire community is so grateful for this special family focolare who generated the authentic life of the Ideal and mutual love through their pure and discreet love.

p. Hans Wittmer

«Let us love one another»

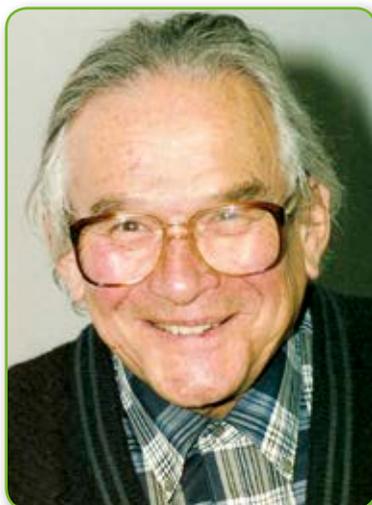
Last December 27, on his feast day, Fr. Hans, Swiss priest volunteer, concluded his «holy journey» at 84 years old, after years of living giving his life and faithfulness to the Church and to the Opera. Open to ecumenism and to the new Movements, he had a profound relationship with Bro. Roger Schütz and the community of Taizé.

Ordained in 1954, he met the Movement in December 1959 and the next year he went to the Priests' School in Grottaferrata, then, in the summer he went to the Mariapolis in Friburgo. From '65 to '68 he taught Liturgy and Ecumenism at Loppiano.

With concrete love and a hospitality that many focolarinos experienced, Fr. Hans supported projects that helped in building the Work of Mary. After having meditated on Jesus Forsaken, he wrote: «I found a deeper relationship with Him. I must not love Him just to be happy but to be one with Him and to be "love" for everyone else. Living this mystery gives me a profound joy».

He left a profound mark in the Diocese of Basilea, both in the seminary at Lucerne, and as a parish priest in various places. Different priests are grateful to him for the gift of the Ideal.

Since '94 he was the parish priest in a mountain village, the destination of many who wanted



to spend their holidays with him for their «spiritual regeneration». With his profundity and the richness of his relationships he gave a precious contribution to the life of his nucleo.

After he was diagnosed with cancer, Fr. Hans lived this last portion of his journey here on earth with courage and patience.

The echoes received after his «departure» bear witness to his having realized his Word of Life: «Let us love one another, because love is from God: whoever loves is generated by God» (1 Jn,7).

Franco Galli

José Francisco Fernández Long

«A great man for us»

In Buenos Aires, last July 28, José Francisco left us, he was one of the first Argentinian men volunteers. Born 81 years ago in Bahía Blanca, he spent his infancy and adolescence linked to the evangelical message transmitted to him by his mother. A committed Christian, during his engineering studies at La Plata, he meets (Chispa); with her they form a family based on profound evangelical ideals. With their five children they participate in the Christian Family Movement and in other catholic associations.

They lived in Bernal, a city close to the federal Capital; and towards 1973 they were invited to the «recital» of a gen band. José Francisco thought that he would only be listening to music, but he realized that there was the message of the Gospel in those young people. He and

Chispa commit themselves with enthusiasm to the life of the Opera. Vittorio Sabbione helped him to understand what God was asking from him. He became a volunteer of God and had the opportunity of coming to the Centre of the Movement for the men volunteers. José Francisco kept alive in his heart a moment lived with some of them in '98, when Chiara was in Argentina and came to visit him in the house where they lived in the Cittadella Lia. Upon his request, Chiara gave him a Word of Life «Whatever you want others to do to you, you do it also to them» (Mt 7,12).

Some volunteers recall: «When we started, we often held the meetings of families in his house that was practically the first focolare of the southern zone of Buenos Aires». Another: «José Francisco never missed a retreat or day meeting. His faithfulness to the nucleo meetings was well-known and when he shared his soul, it was concrete and this helped to have the presence of Jesus among us».

His relationship with his wife was an example for all, which did not end even when she

died: «he often explained to us that, Jesus in the midst can be kept even "from a distance", just as Chiara taught us, and so he could keep it even with Chispa». He was a highly respected engineer and he was even offered work after he retired. «He considered the diverse functions of

the enterprise where he worked starting from the "aspects". It was a new discovery for me, which allowed me to share with him my work experiences». In one of his last meetings with the volunteers – he knew that he had to face a difficult operation – he said that, in the final analysis, he had two roads: or he would wake

up to see his children, or he would wake up and see Chispa. It seems that we can say that a truly great man left for Paradise, and that now from Heaven he will help us all in our "holy journey"».

Francisco Canzani and the men volunteers

Our relatives

They passed on to the Next Life: **Marie-Agnès, sister of Henri-Louis Roche**, focolarino in France; **Lucia, sister of Christine Naluyange** and **Rosinha, mother of Dori Antunes**, focolarinas at the Roman Mariapolis; **the mother of Donato Chiampi**, focolarino in Trento; **the mother of Susanne and Christine Stehli**, focolarinas in Switzerland; **Philippe, father of Pascal Bedros**, focolarino in Aleppo (Syria); **M. Carmen, mother of Antonio García**, focolarino in Sevilla (Spain); **Angelita, mother of Aurelio Romero**, focolarino in Granada (Spain); **Mamoru Takishita, father of Mayumi Satokawa**, married focolarina of Nagasaki (Japan); **Silvano, brother of Lidia del Medico**, focolarina in Loppiano; **Dardo, father of Feli Silva**, focolarina in Mexico City; **Fernanda, mother of Luis Sanchez de Soto**, married focolarino in Puerto Rico; **the father of Geralda Amelia (Gemma) Resende**, focolarina at the Mariapolis Gloria (Belem – Brazil); **the mother of Aileen Tang Suk Yee**, focolarina in Yogyakarta (Indonesia); **Filomena, mother of Imma Buono**, focolarina at the Mariapolis Centre of Castel Gandolfo; **Pina, wife of Jorge Affanni**, married focolarino, and **mother of Flavia and Patricia** volunteers in Buenos Aires; **Marinalda, mother of Janaina do Soccorro Figueira da Costa**, focolarina in Palermo; **Ernesto, father of Nicolas Iturralde**, focolarino at the Mariapolis Peace (Philippines); **a brother of Pascal Pontien Ntawuyankira**, focolarino in Douala; **Petronella, mother of Elsje de Groot**, focolarina in Copenhagen; **Isolina, mother of Edson Galego**, and **Valère, brother of Bertin Kufunda**, focolarinos in Loppiano; **Leonardo, brother of Juan Esteban Belderrain**, focolarino at the Mariapolis Ginetta (Brazil).



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