

YEAR XXX N 12 DECEMBER 2013

MARIAPOLI

Newsletter of the Focolare Movement



70° of the Opera
**Bearers
of the light**

**Local
communities**
All in action

**Bishops of various
Churches**
Called to unity

7 december 1943 • 7 december 2013



In «that» YES

Chiara has often shared about her «yes». On the occasion of the 60° she invited us to start again «towards the world that awaits us, as living Gospels, so as to immerse it in its Light»

Today we find ourselves before a new Work of God which did not exist sixty years ago. A Work whose birth, growth and development throughout the world we witnessed.

Looking back today, we can understand what that 7th of December 1943, the year of the Movement's birth decades ago, can tell us. It tells us that a charism of the Holy Spirit, a new light came down on earth during those days, a light which, in the mind of God, was destined to quench the burning thirst of this world with

the water of Wisdom, to warm it with divine love and thus give life to a new people nourished by the Gospel.

This first and foremost.

And because God acts concretely, he immediately provided the first brick for the building, for this Movement, which would serve his purpose. He decided to call me, a girl like many others, and so my consecration to him, my «yes» to God,

soon followed by the «yes» of many other young women and men.

That day speaks of light, then, and of giving oneself to God as instruments in his hands for the achievement of his goals.

Light and giving oneself to God, two realities which were extremely useful at that time when there was general confusion, reciprocal hatred, war. It was a time of darkness, when God seemed to be absent from the world with his love, his peace, his joy, his guidance, and it seemed that no one was interested in him.

Light and giving oneself to God, two words which heaven wants to repeat to us today too when many wars continue to rage on our planet and, even more frightening, terrorism has appeared.

Light means the Word, the Gospel, still too little known and, above all, too little lived.

People who give themselves to God are more than ever necessary and opportune today considering that men and women who join the causes which trigger terrorism are ready to give their lives. What about us Christians, followers of a God who was crucified and forsaken in order to bring about a new world, for our salvation and for that Life which will never end?

Dearest ones, let us recall for a moment during this month what the 60° anniversary of



Chiara belongs to everyone

On the day of the 70° a surprise:
the announcement of a «new journey» for Chiara

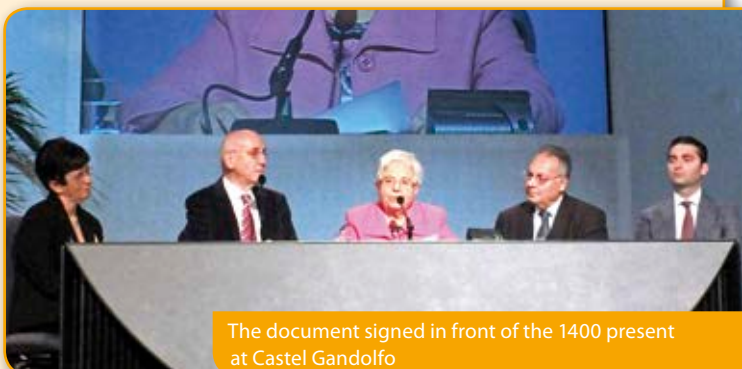
There were more than 1400 focolarinas and focolarinos from various parts of the world at the annual meeting in Castel Gandolfo. On the 7th of December Emmaus was among them. In the sacredness of that moment, she had an important announcement to make: the imminent presentation to the Bishop of Frascati, Mons. Raffaello Martinelli, of the formal request to start the process of canonization of Chiara Lubich.

It is the usual practice in the Catholic Church to present to the faithful, as a stimulus of Christian life, persons who have distinguished themselves by a particular witness of their faith and of their love for God. This happens after a canonical verification process that can begin at least five years after their death.

«In these years – Giancarlo affirmed – from all corners of the world, from all religious and non-religious environments, testimonies on

Chiara have arrived and continue to arrive. It can be said that this is the way the "vox populi" (the voice of the people) is expressed».

This act – continued Emmaus - invites all of us to a commitment to live «this sanctity day by day in our life so as to contribute to making collective sanctity emerge, the sanctity of the people, which Chiara always aimed for»..



The document signed in front of the 1400 present at Castel Gandolfo

A recognition that could encourage in many an added personal spiritual and moral commitment for the good of humanity.

our Movement means and let us go out again towards the world, who is waiting for us as living Gospels, so as to immerse it in its Light.

We can do this by continuing to live the «Word of Life» taken from Scripture which is presented to us every month. To forget it would be like slowly removing the Gospel that enwraps our people.

And, almost as if we were to be born once more, let us give ourselves again completely to God according to the way that He has chosen for each one of us. In this way both the pre-

sent and the future that God will give us will become pleasing to Him, just as the 60 years of our Movement have been in the past.

Let us go ahead then, and Merry Christmas to all, keeping in our heart the treasure received on the 7th of December.

Chiara

Taken from the Collegamento CH - Castel Gandolfo, December 11, 2003 - published in *In unità verso il Padre*, Città Nuova, Rome, August 2004 – and broadcast during the Collegamento CH of November 30, 2013

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The paradox of history

Abbiamo creduto all'amore, (We believed in love),
the new publication of Città Nuova
for the 70th anniversary of the Opera



December 7, 1943. The Opera is 70 years old. An anniversary that Città Nuova chose to commemorate with *Abbiamo creduto all'amore (We believed in love)* of Tanino Minuta. A publication that looks at the beginnings of the Movement with the intention of bringing to light the revolutionary novelty that the Charism represents in the Church and in society of today. We spoke about it with the Author.

It is not the first time the the story of the early times has been shared. What is the novelty of this book?

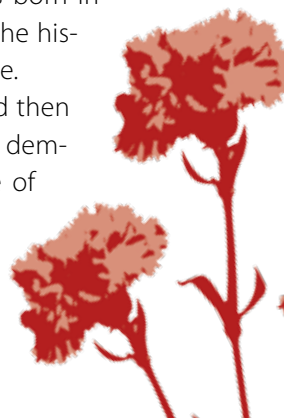
«The book is a mosaic, a polyphonic chorus of the first focolarinos and focolarinos (not

all of them) who recall, through their experiences, the first six-seven years of the life of the Movement. Chiara Lubich is the undisputed protagonist, who is reflected in the story if each narrator.

From the colourful gestures that animate the happenings of those early times, one can grasp the varicoloured beauty that is composed and articulated according to a harmony that gives meaning to life: it is a faith that has been rekindled. The book is captivating because of the assortment of the characters and in its entirety shows how the action of God in history is manifested also through the actions of man. The journey of each protagonist reveals a strong charge of freedom and courage. In the end what remains is a sense of gratitude towards each one of them.

The book can be read on various levels because each story in its combination with the others defines a chronology and makes one catch a glimpse of a work of God that is born in a particular moment in the history of Italy and of Europe.

The experiences and then also an explanation and demonstration of the nature of a Charism in an important season of the Church. The way of



life of the group is the true novelty: people who are so different but who start to move according to an invisible «Presence», the Risen One among men.

There is also a didactic level. The story of each protagonist explains how to put into practice the Word, by showing its encouraging fruits. Observing the life of that first group of focolarinas who were committed in living the Gospel in every situation, one can understand the affirmation of St. Gregory the Great who, speaking about the relationship of the reader with the Scriptures, asserted that «The divine words grow together with the one who reads them».

The birth of the Opera is shared in the first person by the protagonists... Are there passages that have never been published before?

«The first focolarinas and focolarinos have shared so much that it would be a real undertaking to gather all that they have said. I made use mainly of their biographies. But I also used parts of their talks which were particularly incisive. What is unpublished is a fable of Chiara which, in its simplicity, is a powerful metaphor of the Focolare Movement as seen from an eschatological perspective».

What can this book give to the young people who have met the Opera today and who have not experienced the «early times»?

«This book hides a paradox: talking about the past reveals the x-ray of the future, it is a prophetic sign. Up to now much has been written above all about Chiara and the extraordinary fecundity of her life. But there is an experience incited

by her person, and this is the message of the book, which is the life of the group of first focolarinas. Chiara was able to awaken in her first companions an enlightened vision of life up to the point of radically changing the lives of these girls and making them act and live according to a lifestyle based on charity, in perfect harmony with every neighbour and with all of creation. This book, just as the title says, is a declaration of faith, and would like to be a timid suggestion to listen to a choir. It is a polyphony that has the overflowing power of the truth that, albeit in different tones, pronounces just one word: Love.

I also think that its timeliness is not only in inviting us to recall the «yes» di Chiara to God, but also in the Opera today, that was started by her. Maria Voce, the new President, encourages the entire Movement to «go back to the origins». Having worked on this book has prepared me to understand the direction of this «going back». The experience of the first focolarinas will remain as a model, the goal which, in order to be reached, needs to be continually illuminated by the radicalness of the early times».

prepared by Elena Cardinali

vedi anche La Novità di un sì antico, Città Nuova rivista n° 22/2013, pag. 8



Born from that «yes»

**In this year of the 70° we recall other «beginnings»,
all fruits of that first «yes» of Chiara**

Around Chiara, the first focolarinas and focolarinos life began to beat in a community and to spread. Already in the '50s the Movement experiences a considerable expansion, going beyond the borders of Italy, Western Europe and entering the Countries of East Europe. In 1958 it reaches Latin America, in 1960 also North America. Much later it is Africa's turn (1963), Asia (1966), Australia (1967). Every year can mark the anniversary of «a new beginning». In 2013, the 60° was celebrated in France, in Africa it was the 50°, and so too in Great Britain, in Liverpool. But there are also the 15 years of the focolare in Cuba, and the 20° of the Mariapolis Center of Chile...

At the Hope University of Liverpool

**In 400 to bring ahead the «inspiration
that comes to us from the vision of
Chiara»**

We could not but share the joy of this anniversary with Professor Gerald John Pillay, vice chancellor of the Liverpool Hope University. It was him in fact who, on January 5, 2008, conferred to Chiara her last Doctorate H.C. in Theology. Happy to meet us he immediately recalled: «Chiara told us to collaborate and this must continue even when we will no longer be around». With great generosity he offered us a hall at the University and the grand celebratory dinner.

The people of the community started working immediately so as not to forget any-

body. On October 26, 400 people came, from various Churches, religious faiths and none, from Liverpool, Leeds, Newcastle and Galles, of all ages.

In 1965, when Chiara spoke at the Anglican Cathedral of Liverpool, the Ecumenical context was very much different from today. «Hope street» was the name of the road that linked the Anglican Cathedral with the Catholic Cathedral and on that day, November 17, Chiara wrote a prayer in her diary as she noted the significance of the name: «May the "mountains" of misunderstanding among the Churches be moved by faith».

And hope is also the word of today. In his talk, Professor Pillay, tracing the strong ties between Hope University and the charism of the Focolare, singled out our commitment to Ecumenism: «It is a characteristic of the University for which we are all grateful... Chiara

Lubich believed that dialogue is the preferred way to promote unity among the Churches, among religions and people without any religious affiliation, without falling into syncretism. [...] It is an opening up to all





«Celebration» in Paris

For this anniversary there are many events planned that will conclude at the beginning of June 2014 at the Catholic Institute of Paris

The opening of the celebrations was held from November 9 to 11 at Athis-Mons, in the Essonne region. There were around a thousand intern members and sympathizers of the Focolare who celebrated the 60 years of the presence of the Movement in France. They came from all the zonette, adults and children, happy to meet one another or to discover that they belonged to the same family even if they were meeting each other for the first time.

Some of the pioneers and protagonists of the development of the Opera in this nation came on purpose from abroad.

The various stages of these 60 years were relived: from the first trips beyond the alps of some Italian focolarinos and focolarinas, up to the

people while remaining faithful to one's identity. This is the profound wisdom of her vision».

The presence of Jesus in the midst in a living community touched the hearts, and was also expressed visibly by the choir whose members ages ranged from 8 to 83 years. The testimony of two focolarinas, Mari Ponticaccia and Maria Egger brought much joy because of their faithfulness, their freshness and enthusiasm for the Ideal today just as it was when they started 50 years ago.

*Corre Ruse and Mark D'Arcy
with the community of Liverpool*

recent developments of specific realities of the Movement, such as the Economy of Communion, interreligious dialogue, commitments in the fields of politics and society...

Recalling the visits of Chiara was a powerful moment: from January '59, when she gave Paris the name of «city of celebration» because of the experience made in those days with Jesus Forsaken: «Your coming will be for me a celebration, it will be my celebration». Up to 1996, for the awarding of the «UNESCO Prize for Peace Education».



Emmaus was present through a message in which she invited everyone to *«spread the life of the Gospel. [...] to bring the presence of God through your reciprocal love, as the only valid answer to the expectations and the problems of society».*

Gwenaelle Delalande and Henri-Louis Roche, the Delegates of the Zone, updated everyone on the important moments at the recent meeting of Delegates at the Center, outlining the challenges and prospects of the Opera today. In a strong and solemn atmosphere, based on the Word of Life of November «Forgive one another just as God has forgiven you in Christ» a «jubilee» moment of reconciliation sealed in a new way the pact of reciprocal love among all.

A counsellor of the Nunziature and some person in-charge of Movements (Claire Amitié, Fondacio, Pax Christi, Sant'Egidio, Vivre et aimer...) expressed the friendship that binds them to the Focolare.

At the end of the three days, there was a Eucharistic Celebration, of joy and festivity, presided by Mons. Michel Dubost, Bishop of Evry Corbeil-Essonnes, who knew Chiara personally.

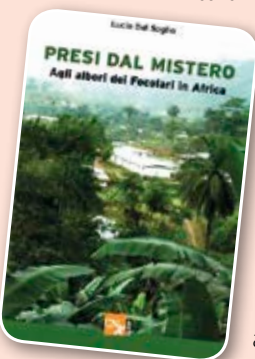
Priscille Garet, Monu Kennis

«Seized by the mystery» in Africa

In commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the arrival of the Focolare Movement in Africa the enthralling story of the beginnings as shared by an exceptional witness

I will never forget the first time more than thirty years ago in Fontem, that I listened to Lucio Dal Soglio share about the beginning of his African adventure. It started in Rome, in Libya Street, where he was working with other focolarinos in the «Lucas» Clinic. One beautiful autumn morning Chiara Lubich and Fr. Foresi went there. They wanted to talk to him and with Nicasio Triolo, a pediatrician from Trapani. «In your opinion – Fr. Foresi asked – is it more important to run this clinic well or to open up a new front line?». Lucio doesn't hesitate to answer that he would choose the second option. «They were just waiting for this reply – he commented – and so they asked us: "Are you ready to leave for Africa?"». Those were the first days of October 1962. A few months later, they arrived in Camerun together with Danilo Gioacchin, a veterinarian.

From the title «Seized by the mystery» at the dawning of the Focolare in Africa, published by Città Nuova, last October, the book of Lucio is a collection of his memories of the early times in



Camerun, during the period that extends from 1963 to 1983. It is not just a purely historical narrative, even if it is accurately documented, and it is not even the just a coverage of a string of more or less interesting facts; instead we find ourselves in front of an engaging story with flashes of poetry and also of mysticism: a true experience of God fully immersed in the created reality and in the trials and tribulations of life in Africa fifty years ago; an experience which takes us back to the nobility and the concreteness of the mystery of the incarnation of the Verb.

To question ourselves daily about the realities that surround us, in an attitude of honesty and disarming respect for a culture that has been up to this moment completely unknown, and for its people, alternating in an enchanting way the unwinding of a multiplicity of events within a span of twenty years.

Amazement, uncertainties, discoveries and the acute perception of one's limitations in front of the mystery, but above all an unconditional openness to the plans of that God who will transform everything into a stupendous song of love that runs parallel to the founding of the Movement and the diffusion of the Ideal of unity in the black continent.

The great poet of Martinique Aimé Césaire, wrote «A people without memory is a people without a future». For this reason Seized by the mystery is a great gift that Lucio gives to all those who had or have had something to do with Africa, and not only this, but in a special way to the new African generations who come into contact with the charism of Chiara in the history of today.

Yao Koffi Aimé



From the community of Trent onwards

Everyone in motion

With this issue we will start to present the life of the many local communities of the Movement spread throughout the world. In this article we will travel from Switzerland to Sicily and Cuba

In Eschenbach (Switzerland)

With 5,500 inhabitants, just about an hour's train ride from the city of Zurich, the courage and enthusiasm of a group of ladies in the town who promote an initiative that leaves its mark. It is here that Brigitte Bucher (married focolarina) came back to live after being away for 30 years, with her husband and four children. With seven of her friends, she regularly holds the Word of Life meetings until they realized that together they formed a local community and so they asked themselves: what can we do concretely? They remembered a group of refugees that no one seemed to care about who are housed in a former elementary school in the midst of the scholastic complex of the town. They contacted Sr. Marianne, Deaconess of the Reformed Church, a volunteer collaborator of the town's Council for Refugees. «For years we have been praying that someone in the town would take an interest in them. God has heard our prayers!», they heard them reply. They understood immediately that these people don't just need material help, but above all they need human warmth so that they would feel welcome and at home. So one of the first ideas was that of preparing a Christmas party for them. They put up invitations to the party which would be held at «The Ark», the name

of the structure, in every shop in the village. A Muslim and a Christian together decorated the Christmas tree, children from the village and those who were living in the Ark, prepared together the

skit about the story of Christmas, each one prepared something in various languages. In the end 52 people from the village attended the event together with



12 refugees: the language barrier crumbled away and deep and lively conversations took place. The residents of the Ark were able to share their stories, and they are welcomed and listened to: and maybe for the first time they are understood. The mayor was also present and gave a monetary contribution at the end of the event. From that first meeting, others followed that bring the inhabitants of Eschenbach to become more of a family with the residents of the Ark. Brigitte, and her friends, are trying to answer to the needs of their new friends. One of them is Habton, who comes from Eritrea. He is only 25 years old. Due to the political situ-



ation in his Country it is not possible for now, to go back. He only has 450 Swiss francs to pay for his food, housing and clothing. Once in awhile he rides the bus to go around and he calls his mother once a month. «I am happy because here I can live in peace – he said with gratitude. But my life at the Arc consists of just sitting and waiting». Brigitte and the others understand immediately what the most urgent problem of Habton and also many of his companions was: they want to feel useful even if they cannot earn anything.



Pray with Chiara Luce

«This very young girl, our contemporary, one of us, without any special consecration in the Church except that of baptism – and therefore of the royal priesthood – bears witness first of all to the beauty of being a disciple of Jesus Christ». With these words, Florence Gillet introduces her *Pray 15 days with Chiara Luce* (Gribaudo, 2013): fifteen simple chapters that offer rich ideas for meditation and personal prayer, going over, from a spiritual and theological point of view, the itinerary that had brought Chiara Luce to a «privileged acquaintance» of Jesus, through the vital experience of the great mysteries of Christian life: God love, Jesus crucified and forsaken, the Church, the Eucharist... The luminous «extraordinary normality» with which Chiara Luce lived the Ideal becomes an invitation to imitate her «in the adventure of letting ourselves be transformed by the Word of God, with a limpid and living faith».

prepared by Salvatore Maciocco

For this reason, through their contacts in the Town Council, the refugees have started to make themselves available to sweep the snow from the streets and to take care of the forests. Habton, who is taking a course in German that is offered by the Town itself, in the meantime has been able to make himself understood and has increased the possibility of forming contacts and friendships with the people of the place.

The subsequent Christmas parties have become much easier to organize: by now they know each other already. Starting from this experience, new initiatives were born that involve both Christian Reformed and Catholic forces. During the year, evening get-togethers are organized for people of all nationalities, the attitude in the town towards these asylum-seekers changes, the social welfare department and the mayor work for them and whenever new people arrive Brigitte and her friends are called to help.

In Scicli (Sicily)

It is 1990, we look around and we realize that in our city there are people belonging to the Methodist Church, so we go to visit them and a profound dialogue is born, made up of communion and the exchange of ideas. We discuss together and come up with the idea of starting a weekly canteen for the numerous immigrants present in our city. With many of our Moroccans and Tunisian friends we share their life, their daily sufferings.



Hichem and Samia, are a young Tunisian couple who have just recently arrived in the city, and whom we are helping to build their little house. They share with us their worries due to their great economic uncertainty, and confide to us that they are expecting a child; it is the concrete love among us that reassures them in going ahead with the pregnancy. The birth of Deysem, after the initial moments of joy, turns into a worrying race against time due to a malformation that must be corrected within a few hours. We had to organize his transfer to Rome and one of us, who is present just by chance, offers to accompany the baby and the father whom he had just met. The operation is a success and the baby is saved!

In that period, together with other institutions, a reception and intercultural center is born: named «La Sorgente» (The Source) . It hopes to be a place of encounter, of exchange. Besides this, in answer to the appeal of the Local Authority for Culture of the Town Council, it also offers Italian lessons to some young immigrants, which are held three times a week for two consecutive years.

As the Christmas Season grew closer and at the year's end (we are in 1997) the young people of the community felt the desire of not being captured by consumerism, and so they thought about a special way to celebrate the New Year. The invited guests were in fact extra special: marginalized men, women and youth that no one looks for or considered important. We went to look for them in their homes, in the corners of the town square, in the places that they often go to and, today, after all the years that this has been going on, to meet them once again is really a celebration for us and also for them who joyfully await this invitation.

In these past years the whole community has become involved. Also for our teens and children, many of whom have been participating ever since they were born, this has become a unique experience that forms them naturally



towards a culture of fraternity. The involvement of the priest is also important. This initiative, which has now reached its fifteenth year, has become always more beautiful and always transforms us into a family, in a true relationship of reciprocity.

In 2005 the Teens for Unity single out a day-care centre for children as the place to carry out their project «colour the city». The centre is managed by the religious sisters and caters to children from 6 – 14 years of age with particular family situations. These children have lunch there and spend the afternoon. A schedule is prepared for those who would like to spend time to play games with them and to help them with their homework. The children discover in the Teens for Unity special friends. The following year another important reality starts: our families are requested to contribute to the formation and to starting a dialogue with the families of the children. Albanian families with a different culture and religion, broken families with parents in prison or under house arrest, for us they are all another Jesus to welcome. With them we have started a journey that continues up to now.

In Florida (Cuba)

We live in a small city and we all belong to the same parish, and so we are all very much inserted in the life of the parish community. For some time now we wanted to do something for Jesus in the poorest

and so we started to offer breakfast every Friday to a group of elderly. Those committed in the parish started this project but then soon after they were joined by others in the community from different vocations. From the initial 20 elderly we have now reached 60! During special feast days, like Christmas and Easter, assisted by the youth and our friends, we open a «beauty parlour»: haircut, manicure, bath, etc. We are also able to give them clean clothes, especially for those street-dwellers. Some of them, feeling how much they are loved, start to help in doing some small tasks in the parish, such as sweeping the courtyard, throwing the rubbish, etc.

It is a very beautiful experience for everyone in the community, and so we thought of enlarging it. For Christmas, some of our families prepared food at home and in the late evening we went in groups to distribute these meals, looking for those people who were street-sleepers. It was a marvellous Christmas! The experience was so edifying, the youth were very happy, and together we decided to do this once a week. Other members of the parish joined our group because they wanted to live like us.

When we shared this experience during the Mariapolis, a lady stood up to share. She belongs to the communist party and has just recently started to go to Church. She shared that on her way to work everyday she would see a man who was quite dirty and badly dressed. She would greet him but he wouldn't even look at her. This went on for a long time. One day she was surprised to see him clean and well-dressed and he was the first one to greet her. She found out that he was one of the elderly who went to the parish and she understood that it is love that gives dignity to a person.

Our community is characterized by a big number of teens and youth. This year it seemed important to us to come closer and to get to know better their families, so as to better understand their situation. We started some activities for parents and soon the fruits of our journeying together appeared, like, for example, the decision to get married of the parents of one of our gen 3, precisely as a fruit of the relationships that was built among all of us.

prepared by Aurora Nicosia

In Naples

A «fire» that heals

After the public appointments at Santa Maria Capua Vetere, Emmaus and Giancarlo meet the community of the Movement of Puglia, Basilicata and Campania, with some representatives from Albania

Sunday, November 24. In spite of the rain they start arriving at eight o'clock by car, by bus, by subway and by ferry (more than 200 come from Ischia): they are the members and adherents coming from Puglia, Basilicata and Campania, eager to meet Emmaus and Giancarlo. There is also a group of 16 people coming from Albania. The three halls that are linked together at the «Palacongressi Oltremare» of Napoli are not enough for the more than 2200 people who came, together with 130 children representing many others.

The title of the day-meeting is «On earth as it is in Heavena»: an intention, a commitment, a real experience that has involved even those who are not physically present but are all builders of unity.

The program starts at 10 and at 11, welcomed by a marvellous warmth, Emmaus enters the hall together with Giancarlo. But, almost as if by surprise, the Mayor of Naples, Luigi de Magistris, also arrived and stayed for about an



M. Rita Cerimele e Bruno Cantamessa
con il sindaco Luigi de Magistris

The modernity of Chiara Lubich

At 10 years from the conferring of the «Santa Maria Capua Vetere City of Peace» Prize to Chiara, last November 23 Emmaus went to the city and spoke at the Convention «Chiara Lubich woman of dialogue» together with the representatives of the Jewish and Islamic worlds and of the secular culture. The following Monday she gave the *Lectio Magistralis* for the opening of the Academic Year of the «San Roberto Bellarmino» of the city of Capua on the theme: «Jesus Forsaken light for theology». See the articles in www.focolare.org and www.cittanuova.it



painful, varied. With answers rich in love, wisdom, light. Emmaus and Giancarlo take turns in answering to people of all ages, who express different sensitivities and origins.

At the conclusion of the program together, at around 5 p.m., a final greeting that is reserved only for the around 400 young people present. Friendship, affection, attraction expressed in the simplicity of a dialogue that goes out and comes back.

Among the many impression, a Pastor of the Baptist Church wrote: «Thank you for this day spent together, you have given us food for the soul, and also for the body, seeing that you have also put in common your sandwiches: this is concrete love». Another person: «This year, work was much more difficult than usual due to the situation of social degradation in which many of my students belong to: it is a “land of fire” in all aspects, but within me I feel another fire that wants to spread up to the last boundaries of our heart».

Maria Rita Cerimele, Bruno Cantamessa

hour to enjoy the celebration. In his greeting, the Mayor underlined the greatness and the capacity for redemption that the Neapolitan people have always shown in front of suffering.

And Emmaus pointed out that everywhere else the celebration is usually held at the end but here it is significant that it is held in the beginning. And truly, the entire day had the flavour of the Resurrection, of a hope that does not disappoint, because it is based on the Life. Celebration with Emmaus and Giancarlo: an explosion of vitality, creativity, art, and beauty of the local communities. And then the questions, in two segments. Sincere,





Jerusalem calls to unity

**32° Meeting of Bishops of various Churches
friends of the Focolare Movement**



From November 18 to 22 a Congress was held in Jerusalem in which more than 30 Bishops who share the Spirituality of the Focolare Movement, belonging to 12 different Churches, among whom were Catholics of five different rites, coming from 17 nations of the five continents, participated. The meeting was promoted by the moderator, Francis-Xavier Kriengsak Kovithavanij, Archbishop of Bangkok, assisted by a team of Bishops of various Churches among whom was the previous moderator, Cardinal Miloslav Vlk, Archbishop emeritus of Prague.

The Bishops chose to meet in the Holy City, to explore new venues of communion and to show, with their joint presence, solidarity and support for the faithful brothers and sisters in the Middle East.

The guiding thread was the theme: «The reciprocity of love among the disciples of Christ» which Maria Voce, president of the Movement, spoke about in video-conference. Other talks

were dedicated to recent documents on the common vision of the Church and on the common celebration of the 500th year anniversary of the Reformation. The underlying question of the meeting was how to increase the reciprocal love among the Churches and the aim of «reviving a personal Ecumenical commitment – aside from the official one already in action – of realizing a communion among the Bishops of different Churches in a fraternal love that respects diversity», as Archbishop Kreingsal affirmed.

From the very first morning, the spirit that animated the meeting caused Mikhail Abrass, Bishop of the Melchite Church (Greek-Catholic) of Lebanon, to exclaim: «Being united here, Bishops of different Churches, rites, Countries and cultures, but all of one heart, I see before me – even if in a small way – the Church of Christ united».

The importance of the contribution that the Bishops can give to unity highlighted the words of the Apostolic Nuncio, Mons. Giuseppe Lazzarotto, while the Syro-Orthodox Bishop Mar Sewerius Malki Murad, referring to the migration of many faithful from the Countries of



the Middle East, said that the witness of communion among those present could give back confidence and courage to the Christians of those nations that often feel abandoned. The greetings from the Patriarch of Jerusalem Fouad Twal and from the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I, were not lacking, while it was also possible to visit the Greek-Orthodox Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III, who, visibly happy affirmed: «I am happy that you came. I already know some of you personally, because we have lived very beautiful experiences together». He compared this meeting to a pilgrimage, a blessing for the Bishops themselves and also for the Patriarch and all the Christians who live in the Holy Land because they have not been forgotten. He concluded: «You don't only talk about dialogue but you are a living dialogue ».

The testimony of those who adhere to the Movement in the Holy Land was very important: they presented some initiatives promoted by the laity who are committed to being promoters of peace and unity everyday. The com-

ment of a pilgrim as the Bishops walked by in their various garbs and in profound communion among them, was consoling: «This is the Church of the future».

**Helmut Sievers
(Chiarama)**



Argentina South At the gen2 School of the Mariapolis Lia

A visit from the World Gen Centers



From November 5 to 11, Gabriella Zoncapé and Marius Mueller, from the World Gen 2 Centres, came to the Mariapolis Lia. For us, these days were the occasion to deepen the gen vocation, starting from our reflections, worries and questions, in an open dialogue with them.

Accompanying them as they were getting to know the different realities of the Little City and welcoming them into our homes, they participated in our daily experiences, in the unity that we are striving to build among us.

We deepened together the experience of the Genfest 2012 and the «United World Project», which we feel that we must support and be active protagonists.

After this week we feel that we are much more a part of this big world-wide family and we are certain that we can count on the unity of all the gen all over the world.

Encouraged by the words of Marius and Gabriella: «We are living days of light in this Little City that Chiara has defined as “the perfection of reciprocal love”» we launch ourselves with enthusiasm so as to make this a reality together with the whole Opera.

the gen2 of the School of Argentina South

It's Christmas!

Love is needed.

Jesus must come back with power.

[...] Let us look around us...

May this love be directed towards everyone, but especially towards the one who is suffering, towards those most in need, the lonely, the poor, the little ones and the sick...

May the communion with them of affection and of material goods make a family of true brothers who celebrate Christmas together shine brightly and beyond.

Who can resist the power of love?

In this Christmas Season, let us do something, let us bring forth concrete actions. They would seem just like small remedies to such great ills, but if put into action on a vast scale they can be a light and an answer to the serious illnesses of the world. Merry Christmas to all!

Chiara

In the island of Cebu, affected by Typhoon Haiyan, many members of our community lost their homes. But the race to love among all gives rise to hope. See the report of the Collegamento Ch of November 30, that can also be found in www.focolare.org/notiziariomariapoli

The complete text can be found in Mariapolis online www.focolare.org/notiziariomariapoli



Let's not get used to injustices

A network has started that links the social organizations of Latin America and the Caribbean, generated in various ways by the spirituality of unity of the Focolare Movement

A new step: that will allow a permanent exchange of experiences, problems, resources, that will set in motion new synergies, and will have a greater impact on change. A data processing platform has already been created: www.sumafraternidad.org in Spanish and Portuguese.

This is one of the goals that has been achieved during the first meeting of the representatives of 40 social action projects, representatives of many others, who came from 13 Countries and gathered together in Brazil at the Maripolis Ginetta at the end of October.

A long-awaited event that some called «historical», a step in the journey of weaving this net that began two years ago distinctly in Brazil and among the Spanish-speaking Countries, in the light of the design of God on the continent that Chiara prophetically described since the end of the '60s.

The social projects that were already ongoing in Brazil and Argentina, were for her the guarantee that South America could be the example for the other continents, so much so that she said: «this is how the social problem will be solved». She gave a symbolic colour to this continent: «Blue», because it is called to compose an always more harmonious society, starting from the poorest.

It is a call, as defined by Vera Araujo who was linked to them from Rome, «that is demanding and decisive because it represents the specific contribution of this continent to the realization of a united world» and «it requires – she added – a development that invites us to a task that is constant, in depth, never-ending but always open to new dimensions of the charism itself and to the novelties that history will bring».

This is what happened in this seminar that had as its main theme «Fraternity in action: foundation for social cohesion in the XXI century». A comparison was made with the socio-political panorama of the continent which is today wounded by the lack of social cohesion that gives rise to exclusion and profound inequality, just as the political analyst Juan Esteban Belderrain asserted. Citing a recent document on the U.N., he denounced the worrying «general indifference» that «paralyzes the processes necessary for change». He highlighted the fundamental values brought about by

the social interventions inspired by the charism of unity: the culture of unity, fraternity, communion and he defined the points of the spirituality as «true methodological proposals that give rise to social change». The five points indicated by Vera Araujo, who was linked to them from Rome, were enlightening: «agape», «cornerstone»; «to make yourself one», indispensable in building relationships: fraternity that imposes the tearing down of inequalities; «love the country of the other as your own», so as to live an active citizenship at the local, national and international levels. Jesus crucified and forsaken, the answer to all the sufferings and conflicts that arise from the social situation. «It is this cry – Fr. Wilson Groh, for many years committed to saving the marginalized youth said – that will make us enter into the abandonment of those who are excluded, that will make us capable of entering in communion with them and will not allow us to get used to social injustice».

The rich exchange of experiences showed the power of transformation brought about by fraternity in action in different Countries, where



drug trafficking sows death especially among the youth; where children at a very young age, already live on the streets because there is only poverty and dissension at home; where the farmers migrate to the city because of lack of livelihood, multiplying the favelas, among the differently ables, among the marginalized indigenous peoples, among the refugees from the «guerrillas».

The profound communion allowed them to share the many difficulties, such as moments of loneliness, feeling bewildered, of doubts, at times a feeling of powerlessness. As Giuseppe di Pietro, of the International Secretariat of New Humanities said, «there is a need of welding myself with the others so as to become a “we”». This

is the new step that is foreseen: to enter into the network and to set in motion the synergies, not only among the social projects. Throughout the years the charism of unity has generated articulated answers to the social question that assails the economy, the family, the youth, and many other environments, and is committed to introducing fraternity and communion everywhere. The network would like to embrace this vast horizon. And to be a venue of formation.

Emmaus in her message hoped «that Mary, through you,, will be able to sing the “Magnificat”, the most powerful social manifesto». The enthusiastic reply: «Yes, together with the entire Opera».

Carla Cotignoli

Emergency Sardinia When «everything crumbles»

**In the Gospel is the strength to live
for the others and to look to the future**

On the occasion of the violent cyclone that hit the various zones of our island we relived together, the experience of Chiara that everything passes away: only God remains, seeing in this event an immediate chance that God was giving us to go towards those most in need. Many recalled what Chiara had written in 1949: «You Sardinians will be the one to give the world an example of brotherly love that it has never seen before» and we felt ourselves committed more than ever to live it.

Some experiences: one of us saw his apartment flooded by water in a matter of minutes. He heard the voices of the elderly neighbors, and he found them in water up to their chins; he was able

to save them by swimming them out to safety. A gen boy from Oblia wrote us: «I couldn't remain just twiddling my thumbs and I felt that I must do some-

thing: a friend whose basement was flooded, at the school there was mud to be shoveled. With the Youth for a United World, who came from Sassari, we went into action in one of the houses destroyed by the flood».

A woman volunteer of Nuoro: «What struck me the most were the many persons who volunteered. It was a big race of solidarity that made me realize all the Love that God has for us».

To facilitate the communion of goods we have opened a bank account:

IBAN: IT31B0335967684510700162788 - Banca Prossima
Associazione ONE LAB - Laboratorio d'Unita
Via Aresu 3 - Cagliari
Causale: emergenza alluvione Sardegna

Franca Campio, Enzo Stasi

How to donate: Alluvione Sardegna • Emergenza Filippine
<http://www.focolare.org/it/news/2013/11/30/emergenza-sardegna-e-filippine/>

The Opera today

The new set-up concerns everyone

A change of mentality and perspective: the commitment of the general Council in the Opera today. Interview of Nadia Xodo and Fr. Tonino Gandolfo, spokespersons of the group workshops

When we speak of new set-up what emerges is the commitment of the Zones to realizing this new phase of the Opera. But the Center is also involved, or better still, it has already been moving for sometime now in this direction. Is this so?

«Yes, in fact all of us feel that we are involved in the change of mentality and perspective: to look at the Opera “from the outside” towards a new sowing. This pushes us, as Centers, to support not only each single reality that has been entrusted to us, but instead to start from the challenges that every zone, nation, territory, have to face, and we feel that we are called to ask ourselves: how can we help each zone – together as Opera – to realize “Ut omnes”, at the service of the Church and of humanity? “To invert the pyramid” makes us think about the Opera from the point of view of the local community: “point of unity of the Opera within a territory and the effective

means of spreading the Gospel”. Branches, movements, dialogues we are at the service also of these realities so as to tighten the knots of the “net” and thus incarnate more fully the Ideal of unity».

What then is the function, the service that the Centers can offer to the Opera today?

«We can discover more and more this function by intensifying the relationship and the communion among the different realities that make up the Opera. In the meantime some paths have come to light which we can follow.

- To orient ourselves to the role of service and consultancy: the Centers take care of the patrimony of the Ideal for each reality and can be consulted by the Delegates of the Zones to ask for advice and specialized guidelines in the different sectors.
- To increase the function of subsidiarity: to help and not to take the place of what

La commissione per la preparazione dell'Assemblea 2014 formata da rappresentanti del Centro e delle Zone



is being done in the Zone, for example to greatly decentralize the schools of formation in the Zones, Big Zones and Little Cities. This would allow us to use up less energy at the Center and as a consequence it will lighten the structures.

- To keep alive the «dimension Opera» in every reality. To always keep alive in this way the universality, our characteristic (for example: to encourage the communion of goods on a world-wide level; to bring about a universal dimension to the programs in the Zones, for the congresses or the retreats; to circulate the life among the Zones etc.).

- To develop a project of permanent formation of all the members of the Opera based on the various specificities. To offer general guidelines and projects to be carried out in the different cultural realities with freedom and discernment».

How should the relationship be between the Center – Zones – Zonette?

«We are still talking about the ways that could promote communion and this is the fundamental desire that moves us. There is a felt need to start from the needs of the Zones: for this reason it is fundamental to listen to what they tell us, what they feel is important to maintain this reciprocal relationship. In any case, it is clear that to build relationships does not coincide primarily with giving directives. The challenge remains open as to how to maintain the relationship of a family in zones that are quite vast, made up of many zonette and with a big number of intern members».

How can they contribute to the different realities in the new ste-up of the Opera?

«Without a doubt with a greater synergy and by putting themselves at the service of a unified “project”. Let us start for example with the local communities: there is a felt need to deepen this reality and to have the suitable instruments to promote them and to make them

grow. The fact that various local projects are inserted in a global vision particularly at the national level (see “Project Italy”) have produced positive results. From this viewpoint a mode of service of the Centers could be precisely that of supporting and giving life to the “projectuality”.

With the mass Movements we are thinking of working more together at the service of the Opera, looking at the territory and safeguarding the national realities. By developing shared projects we can have a greater impact. We are tending towards planning meetings together of the various Secretariats at the Center, within the framework of the global calendar that is already ongoing.

The Dialogues – the new roads towards “Ut omnes”, as they have been defined – are always more committed to working together, even as they maintain the necessary expertise and specificity with the aim of consolidating the stages that have been achieved and opening themselves further towards a new sowing.

The branches, welcoming the invitation to no longer live for themselves but for the “outside”, will work always more with the mass movements and the Dialogues.

Those in-charge of the Aspects, being of service to all the realities of the entire Opera, can help to encourage this process of integration between the Center and the Zone. Since we are no longer in the period of foundation with Chiara, we have seen that it is timely to map out the “essential guidelines”, to gather the life and to make it circulate, always guaranteeing unity with the source.

And finally, the role of the Little Cities is important as “centers of formation”, venues in which one can discover and deepen the different vocations, aside from their natural vocation of diffusion and a new openness towards the realities of the youth. We feel the need to increase them from the point of view of people and structures so that they may carry out their function of service and of mediation in the geographical areas».

a cura di Aurora Nicosia

IN DIALOGUE

Economy of Communion

Hope and responsibility



In Portugal and in Germany international meetings to focus on the «already» and the «not yet» of the project

prove so as to be on the same level as the EoC of Chiara, and nothing less. The contribution of the youth was very important, who are by now a stable presence in the commissions, many of whom are involved directly thanks to the various summer schools of EoC (the last one held in Madrid last July) that were held throughout these years all over the world.

New projects were born, also enterprises, alliances, synergies among the various industrial parks all over the world, among which is an «Erasmus» exchange among the European entrepreneurs.

Moments of celebration were not lacking: from the festive «FADO EVENING» in Lisbon to the evocative Mass celebrated in Fatima by Fr. Antonio Bacelar.

The EoC is just starting to reveal its potentialities in the world. Therefore, a leap forward in its organization

is needed so as to serve and increment the life that already exists and that is still to come. To do this, the contribution of the Industrial Parks and the Associations of entrepreneurs (among which is the newly-born Italian AIPEC) is and will always be decisive.

A Ottmaring. La settimana dopo Lisbona, eccoci già

Lisbon. Decisively launched towards 2013, we must equip ourselves to be able to face it well. This is the synthesis of the international meeting of those responsible for the EoC, who for the first time, met together with the Commission, the national Associations of the EoC and the Industrial Parks. A meeting that took place from October 17 to 21, framed by the welcoming surroundings of the Mariapolis Arco-Iris, headquarters of the Portuguese EoC Industrial Park Giosi Guella. Four intense days, of true dialogue, numbers and data in hand, so as to understand what to change and im-



in viaggio verso Ottmaring, in Germania. Erano 150 i partecipanti, da Serbia, Polonia, Slovenia, Germania, Austria, Irlanda, Slovacchia, Francia, Russia, Croazia e Svizzera, per il quarto incontro EdC Nord ed Est Europa. La figura dell'imprenditore e dell'impresa è stata posta al centro dell'incontro: «La comunione ad ogni livello della nostra vita, anche imprenditoriale, è l'elemento distintivo del progetto rispetto a tutte le altre economie civili», ha spiegato Anouk Grevin, docente presso l'Università di Nantes (Francia). Nei tre giorni si sono avvicendati oltre 10 *workshop*, sui vari aspetti dell'EdC, in un clima di grande dialogo, responsabilità, gioia: «Se non comincio ora, se non dò ora i miei primi cinque euro di utile, non comincerò mai», sottolineava Koen Vanreusel, imprenditore belga della Selfmatic.

Ci siamo lasciati con i prossimi appuntamenti: la Summer school per giovani a Parigi (agosto 2014); il quinto incontro europeo (ottobre 2014) alla Mariapoli Faro; l'Assemblea generale internazionale EdC, nel 2015 a Nairobi, in Kenya.

Due incontri carichi di speranza e di responsabilità, che dicono il «già» e indicano le sfide appassionanti del «non ancora» dell'EdC, sempre più al servizio e in dialogo con tanti.

Luigino Bruni

Religions for Peace in Vienna

Fraternity enriched by the differences

To face the challenges together



«Welcome the other: a multi-religious vision of peace». Around six hundred delegates of various religions, representatives of a hundred or so groups of Religions for Peace (RfP) on the national and continental levels, gathered together from November 20 to 22, to face the growing hostility towards the foreigner that is being felt in the world today.

Ban Ki-moon, secretary general of the United Nations, in his message, congratulated them for the enormous progress that has been achieved thanks to persons of faith: «And the power of religions to promote reconciliation through forgiveness can significantly advance our work to address the root causes of conflicts and achieve lasting peace».

In the course of the Assembly various sub-themes were tackled such as the prevention of conflicts, the process of reconciliation, the protection of religious minorities, migrations, and the education to peace.

The appeal for prayers for the Syro-Orthodox Metropolitan Mar Gregorios Yohanna Ibrahim, one of the



adheres to that invitation and assures him of her collaboration in the nations where the sections of the RfP were present.

At the Assembly in Vienna, Emmaus was present and shared a talk on the theme; some members of the Center of Interreligious Dialogue together with members coming from Brazil, Uruguay, Singapore, Belgium and Holland. Around twenty members from Austria gave a precious contribution for the organization and welcoming during the event.

Presidents of RfP, kidnapped in Syria together with the Greek-Orthodox Bishop Paul Yazigi was very moving. There was a long applause for the participants from South and North Korea who were onstage together to demonstrate that the Country is divided but not the religious communities.

With many of the participants, profound relationships have been woven throughout the years in particular by Chiara and Natalia Dallapiccola. This Assembly seemed to us like a spearhead where a piece of humanity is realizing unity and fraternity going beyond the differences.

Today RfP is the biggest world-wide coalition of the religions which, in preserving the identity of every religious community, collaborates on essential values, deeply rooted and generously shared among all.

Our contribution in the past years both in the world-wide Assembly and on the national level in various parts of the world, was very much appreciated. In this occasion, the leaders wanted to elect Maria Voce among its Presidents, Christina Lee in the International Committee for Women.

Our collaboration goes back to the first trip of Chiara to Tokyo in 1981. During a private talk with Nikkyo Niwano, founder of the Rissho Kosei-kai and one of the founders of RfP, he asked her to support this organization. Chiara

Christina Lee



In Paris «Culture of communion»

«Friends» of *Together for Europe*
meet at Montmartre

«Our charisms are like candles, together they give a stronger light. Our communion is geared towards Europe». Gérard Testard of *Fondacio* thus opens the annual meeting of the «Friends» (7 - 9 November) held for the first time in Paris. There were 125 founders and persons responsible of 46 Movements and Communities who are deepening one of the «7 Yes» of their common commitment, the one regarding the poor and the marginalized. It is a reality that unites everyone.

When Jean Vanier, founder of *Arche* - 141 communities that dedicate themselves with evangelical innovation to those who carry mental handicaps - spoke, there was absolute silence. The light that emanates from his calm gestures is moving: «Living with the weak makes us discover how we can create a world that is more humane. We don't say: "Jesus loves you", but we say: "I love you". Let us learn how to love: it is a long journey».

The profundity of the Orthodox spirituality is fully highlighted with a meditation: «The sacrament of the brother» by Cyrille Sollogoub, the young woman president of the *Acer-Mjo* (Russian Students' Christian Action - a Movement of Orthodox youth). Referring back to



the Fathers of the Church, it puts into evidence the intimate connection, for the Christians of the first three centuries, between liturgy and the brother. It was the same link that was discovered by many Russian Orthodox who were forced into exile after the revolution of 1917, in a context of suffering and loss.

During the two intense days in Paris in an exchange of experiences among different Countries and Churches, the fruits were also shared. Noteworthy was the meeting in Germany with Bishops of the Evangelical Church and the Catholic Church, wherein it was seen how important the groundwork created by «Together...» is for bearing a common witness.

And so now we look to the future: the prospect pushes us towards a Congress to be held probably in Germany in 2016.

Diego Goller (*Iride*), counselor at the Center of the Opera for Central Europe (newly appointed to the Secretariat of «Together» with Anna Pelli of the 1° dialogue) said: «I was present for the first time in a meeting of the "Friends". I was impressed by the atmosphere of profound listening. One can feel the underlying strong reality, that has its origin from the inspiration of Chiara and in the love that is lived to put together people, subjects, inspirations, so different from each other. Her words "the musical score is written in Heaven" are a constant, and one can see the action of the Holy Spirit. I knew that it was a ground-breaking initiative but I never imagined it to be like this».

*Prepared by Gianna Sibelli
and Gabri Fallacara*



«I want to tell her 'Thank you'»

The first Bangwa Bishop

«I came to the tomb of Chiara to tell her first of all my 'thank you'. Andrew Fuenya Nkea, nominated by Pope Francis as coadjutor bishop of the Diocese of Mamfe (Cameroun) is the first Bishop coming from the Bangwa tribe of Fontem. He met the Movement as a seminarian and he was attracted by the spirituality of unity. As the day of his ordination grew near, he wrote to Chiara asking her for a phrase to put on his souvenir picture. Since the answer was not coming, Andrew gathered himself in prayer and thought: «God is love». A short time later Chiara's answer came, wherein she asked for forgiveness for the late reply and she suggested a phrase from the Gospel as his Word of Life: «God is love». This coincidence was a light, a gift for Mons. Nkea, and this gave rise to a profound bond with her. It is because of this that as soon as he was nominated Bishop, he came to Rome to thank her and to ask her to continue to help him, from Heaven, in his new task.

The visit of Mons. Nkea to the various places at the Centre, last August 4, offered the opportunity of updating him about the latest events and developments of the Opera. Accompanied by Gisela Lauber, counsellor for Africa, and by Marita Machetta, who was the Delegate of the Opera in Fontem for many years, they also went to visit the Priests' Center.

It is quite rare in Africa that a Bishop is sent to the Diocese where his tribe is found. It was precisely the Bishop of Mamfe, Mons. Francis T. Lysinge, who requested this so as to give a continuity to the work started by him in this recently instituted Diocese.

The episcopal consecration of Mons. Nkea, took place on August 23 in the big open space at the new Cathedral, and drew an immense crowd from all the surrounding

regions, especially from the Bangwa tribe, in the presence of 22 Bishops and more than 200 priests.

At the «Seat of Wisdom» of Fontem

As his first official visit in the Diocese Mons. Nkea went to the College «Seat of Wisdom» of Fontem. for the opening of the new academic year 2013-2014. You can just imagine the joy of the 34 professors and the more than 500 students!

In his warm welcome greeting, the principal, Raphael Takougan, recalled the wish that Chiara told them: «Professors and students are called to become saints together» and Mons. Nkea explained that «"Our Lady Seat of Wisdom" is not simply a college, it is a family animated by love, a community of peace and a school of unity». Desired, encouraged, supported by Chiara, the College, we think, is one of the most beautiful fruits of Fontem, that used to be a desolate and unknown piece of land, and which is now a city where many come «to learn how to love», just as she had wished..

Fr. Adolfo Raggio



Telegrams of Emmaus at the «departure»
of the last four focolarini

Doris Scheimann

«When I come to Jesus
I will fly»

Doris Scheimann, focolarina in Ottmaring, took «flight» for Heaven on November 7, due to a sudden heart attack.

Born in 1956 in the Northwest of Germany she grew up in a beautiful, harmonious Catholic family with 3 sisters and a brother. Her dad was a shoemaker so it was not always easy for him to maintain his numerous family. Therefore already at 15 years of age Doris began working as a book-keeper in order to contribute as a breadwinner.

After meeting the Ideal, in 1975 she participated in her first Gen congress where the discovery of God-Love swept her away. She decisively thrust herself into loving and shared her 'discovery' with her co-workers whose sarcastic remarks did not stop her! Two years later she attended a meeting at Rocca di Papa and heard a talk given by Fr. Foresi in which he remarked about Jesus' calling the rich young man. She then understood just how rich she was, perhaps not materially, but in the desire to form a family. Aware that for some time Jesus was asking her the same question, she communicated to Chiara that she had «understood» to want to follow Him.

At that time she received a Word of Life: «There is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields, for my sake and for the sake of the good news, who will not receive a hundredfold now in this age ... and in the age to come eternal life» (Mk 10:29-30). Chiara added how she would pray to Mary Desolate so that she be «A teacher for you in losing everything, everything, everything; not to be left empty-handed but to be full of the life of God and give Him to humanity».

In 1980 Chiara confirmed her name «Doris» with this meaning: «a gift for Christ». Following



her school of formation in Loppiano and Montet she returned to Germany and lived in the focolare centers in Munich, Nuremberg, Berlin and from the year 2000 she lived in Ottmaring. She worked in different banks and was greatly esteemed by her colleagues and was able to establish relationships that had lasted till now. She was a Gen 4 and Gen 2 assistant and was responsible for a focolare. Since 2008 she was a counselor for the «Red» in the little town of Ottmaring.

She was hospitalized in 2001 for a growth in her thyroid. In a post-op visit Doris received the news that her tumor was benign while her hospital mate's tumor was malignant. This woman was so desperate she cried the entire night. Doris recounts: «I remember praying so much for her telling Jesus that He could have given me that cross». The next morning the doctors came back to the room and were most apologetic because they had exchanged the names and therefore even the diagnosis. «I felt strong and I joyfully said my Yes to Jesus Forsaken», continued Doris. She underwent a second operation which seriously damaged her vocal cords making it difficult for her to breathe. She wrote Chiara: «Looks like God is telling me now to try harder to become like Mary. She who gave the Word to the world, remained in silence».

In 2009 she wrote to me confiding: «I feel totally loved and in the Father's hands» and added, «while visiting Chiara's house I felt her so present: as if she were telling me that is now my turn to take on more responsibility to bring the Work of Mary ahead».

During the past 12 years Doris confronted her situation with great courage without burdening anyone although, even after taking a few steps, she became breathless. «However, when I'll get to Jesus, I will fly» she would say in her usual witty manner.

Those who were close to her had noticed that recently her acts of love took on a new, delicate manner with more commitment to live mutual love and a greater attention to the small things.

Doris knew how to be a «gift» for the Movement and humanity



Benedetto Vena

Three red carnations

Last November 7, Benedetto, married focolarino of Cosenza, left for Heaven following a traffic accident that happened a few days before. He was 79 years old. All his life was a preparation for the

encounter with Jesus, in total faithfulness to the choice of God and always giving himself for his family and for the Opera.

Married to Lia, also a focolarina, Benedetto met the Ideal in 1966 in Naples, where he was working. In '73 the family moved to Cosenza, his hometown, and as the years passed their family was enriched with five children. Even as a young married couple, they welcomed and made their own the spirituality of the Movement and they were always on the frontline in giving their active contribution for its development. How many trips they made in all of Calabria to spread the message of love and of unity of our charism! And up to his final days Benedetto had prayed, suffered and offered for everyone. What immediately comes to light about him is his refined and delicate charity that attracted reciprocity, the personal love that left its mark in all those who came to know him, the profound relationship with Jesus in the Eucharist made up of silences or of simple glances, the familiarity with Mary as if with a mother to whom he would direct his constant prayers while he walked the streets entrusting everyone to her. He was always attentive to people and to situations of the family, of the Church and of the society with its problems. In his life, difficult and painful moments were not lacking, physical and spiritual trials, but Benedetto learned from Chiara about the preferential love for Jesus Forsaken, chosen as the Spouse of the soul. The three red carnations that he wanted placed on his coffin are a witness of this marriage. The funeral was an extraordinary moment: the church was full of people who came from all over Calabria to give back the love received and in the homily of the Mass, Benedetto was defined as a «man of unity and of communion». There were many who shared about

him during the Eucharistic celebration. Here are some excerpts: «With Benedetto it was natural and immediate to shift from the usual conversation to a profound one». «He gave the Life, that true one, to me and to many others with his typical style, with that love with which he dealt with anyone he approached». A young girl: «I met him only in these last few years and I will always remember his always warm greetings, accompanied by a beautiful smile that came from the joy of having met and loved a brother». One of his children: «Daddy gave me everything; he couldn't give me anything more. Now I am also trying to give my all, just as he had shown me!». In '78, Benedetto wrote to Chiara: «Jesus loves me, he accepts me as I am and I want to be free for Him 24 hours a day, watchful for when He knocks and would like to

come in and dine with me». In '97: «I have understood once more how I must take advantage of all the occasions to love, not because I have something to give but because it is Jesus in the midst that makes all the Love come out from my heart. On my nothingness I feel that I am building the Kingdom of God». Now we believe that Benedetto has reached the Heavenly Mariapolis to enrich the ranks of fully realized Christians. Together with Lia and all his family, we are grateful and let us pray for him.

Rod (Rodrigo) Gorton

Since the beginning of the Loreto School

November 14, Rod (Rodrigo) Gorton, married focolarino of Loppiano, reached Paradise following a fall from a ladder, while he was doing an act of love. Born in Massachusetts, U.S.A. in 1933 he met the Ideal in the '60s. Chiara confirmed his name Rod = Providence of God. His childhood was marked by the separation of his parents: «I was six years old and I found myself without a father and, because of this family environment, also without God». With his sister and brother they shared the desire to form good and healthy families.

During this period, what helped him was his passion for music. At 20 years old he enters the Naval Academy to become a Marine Officer of



the United States. The regulations included the obligation to go to Sunday service in a church of your choice and so for the first time Rod hears someone talk about God. The first questions arise and he asked himself: «Are these people all crazy? Or

am I the one crazy?». After a search full of doubts, he realized that something had changed within him: «I believed!». But soon he discovered the contradictions in his new life because he didn't find people who took the Gospel seriously. After he became a Naval Officer he began to travel around the world. He is attracted by the missionaries whom he met in the various Countries and, after four years, he entered the seminary to become a priest and a missionary. But he was always in search of a place where reciprocal love was lived. In the American edition of Città Nuova, which he found by chance, he read a writing of Chiara: «If you want to conquer a city to the love of Christ... Gather your friends who share your sentiments, unite yourself to them in the name of Christ... promise one another perpetual and constant love...». This was what he had been looking for all his life. He attends a Mariapolis and is strongly impressed by the reality of the family that is experienced among all: «White, black, yellow, youth, elderly, rich, poor... the Gospel was the basis of everything, for all of them». In November of '66 he is already in Loppiano, where for six years he is part of the Gen Rosso playing the acoustic guitar, the trumpet, and the harmonica. «There I found the hundredfold in fathers, brothers, homes and even more I came to know my God: Jesus Forsaken. He has illuminated every "why" in my life and even more, I found in Him the "key" to forming a family». With simplicity and straightforwardness Rod is always ready to help, attentive to the needs of each one, characteristics that he has kept all his life. One day he meets Mazia. «With just a few words we understood each other; both of us had the same flame in our heart: to form a family for God».

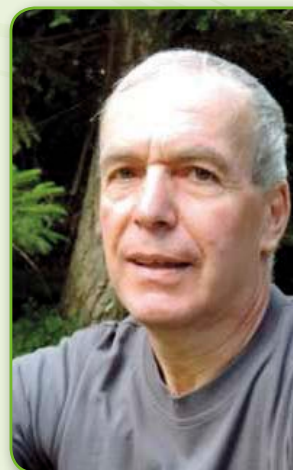
He wrote to Chiara: «Because I said my yes first of all to God, I can say my yes to Mazia, and having said "I love you" only to Jesus, now I can say it to her». Rod and Mazia get married in January of '72 at the Centre of the Movement, in Rocca di Papa, during a meeting of married focolarini. Among the witnesses to their marriage were Foco, Spartaco Lucarini and Chiara, who gave to the new family the Word of Life: «Love one another as I have loved you» (Jn 13,34). Cielo, Clarence, Sara, Peter, Giovanna and Pina were born from their marriage. Always available and generous, they give their lives without measure in the various aspects of the Little City of Loppiano, committed above all, since the beginning, to the Loreto School, to accompany hundreds of families. A lot of people were touched by their love and by their witness. Now we believe that Rod is in the joy that will never end with Chiara and with our people of the Heavenly Mariapolis. ... we are certain that from Above he will continue to accompany Mazia and all his children whom he loved so much, just as the Opera in its journey towards ut omnes.

Pierre Llambi

Delicate and strong

Married focolarino of France, Pierre left for the Heavenly Mariapolis on November 20, at 59 years old. The circumstances of this death were particularly painful for his wife Odile, also a focolarina, for their five children and for all of us in the Opera.

For some years now he was not well and was passing through a very difficult period, with moments of great anguish. During one of these moments, he attempted to commit suicide and he was found by an emergency squad, 15 kilometers from the permanent Mariapolis of Arny, near Paris. He was brought to the hospital where he died a few hours later. Pierre met the Ideal in 1975 from a chaplain while he was doing his military service, and then he



shared this also to Odile. A discrete person and a man of few words, he carried out his profession in the national office of Forest Conservation. Just recently retired, they decided with Odile to try to stay for a period of time in the permanent Mariapolis of France and they had arrived last September. Pierre knew how to do many kinds of manual labor and it was really a big help for the members of the Opera of the area and for those friends who were just passing through. In focolare, especially in Lyon, all of them there remember him as a very active person in the life of unity. Thirsty of the truth, he did not hesitate to express a different opinion in he saw that there were some inconsistencies, but he always did it in a constructive way and with humility. He was close to people who were alone or in difficulty, he always found the right words and actions to make the others feel his brotherly presence and his heart burned for those «wounded by life». As many had said, he was a model of listening and of concrete love.

Many were also touched by the love between Pierre and Odile. How many families and young couples expressed their gratitude to them! For years they were responsible for the New Families in South France. Anna and Alberto Friso, persons responsible for the New Families at the Centre said: «For us, he will always remain as a witness of a delicate but strong love, a person who never spared himself, someone who thought always of the others and who knew how to understand everyone».

In 1987, during the school of the married focolarini, he wrote to Chiara: «Everything seems new and splendid to me. The presence of Jesus in the midst is a precious gift that Jesus gives us so as to reach unity in our families and in the focolare». In these last days, Odile and their children, even in their great suffering, are also experiencing a great peace. «Through many messages and the testimonies that I receive – Odile writes – I can feel the love of the whole family of the Opera for me and this is truly enormous».

Respecting the mystery of his departure and united in the love for Jesus Forsaken, let us pray for Pierre and let us ask God, who knows the depths of his heart, to welcome him into the Kingdom of infinite Love. Let us entrust to Mary, Mother of the Opera, also Odile and all her family.

Fr. Antonio García

A joyful giving

Priest volunteer of Granada (Spain) he was ordained in 1969 and everywhere he was sent, in the various tasks in the parish, he showed his generosity, in a joyful and enthusiastic giving of himself. He was very active among the youth whom he followed with diligence and depth. When he went to a Mariapolis to greet some of them, he was touched by the discovery of Jesus Forsaken, so much so that he changed his program and remained up to the end. He starts to live the spirituality in Huértor-Tájar where he started the Parish Movement, with different vocations to the Opera. He knew how to put himself at the service of unity among priests, not only with his nucleo, but also with many other acquaintances. With this disposition he welcomed his various destinations: Granada, the Zubia, etc. where he encourages also other Movements such as l'Equipe Notre Dame and the Neocatechumenals. He lived the last years of his life in the hands of Mary Desolate. A few days before he left for the Heavenly Mariapolis, his Bishop went to visit him and told him with gratitude: «I can really feel that you know the Focolare Movement! You have lived your illness in communion with your brothers». He left us on April 21 and we are certain that Jesus has welcomed him into the bosom of the Father.

Toni Torres

Pio De Nicola

Faithful example

We remember the first anniversary of the «departure» of Pio de Nicola, volunteer of Pescara (zone of Rome) who died on December 17, 2012 at 61 years old. Manager of the Regional Office of Agriculture, he had just retired two days before.

He came from a family that was the first to welcome the Opera in Pescara, with seven broth-





ers, among whom was Alfonso, focolarino, and others who were committed to the Movement. As a child, Pio was formed by the faith of his parents. As an adolescent, he participated in the Mariapolis of 1964 and since then he became a part of the Movement, first as a Gen

in Perugia, where he was studying agriculture and then as a volunteer. He loved his work very much, seeing in it the possibility of living fraternity, and bringing the principles of equality, honesty and caring for the weak in his managing of public property. Married to Filomena, also a volunteer, he educated his three children in love and in truth; he followed with commitment his brothers and sisters, and all the community. Pio and Filomena were very much united, and they shared their time

and material goods especially with the weak and the suffering. Together, they took care of an activity circle for families – the «Club Pretaro» – and animated various activities, also in the parish. Pio bore witness of his faithfulness to his vocation and he was a stimulus for the others: if he felt a diminishing participation, he would take note and tell the others with meekness, but with determination and always with a smile, even when he was not feeling well. His final illness which lasted for two months came unexpectedly, and he took it from the hands of God, causing admiration from the doctors and paramedics who were taking care of him, who called him a «fighter». «I have experienced some moments of discouragement because nothing was going right with my health – he said – but I continue to offer these sufferings to God. He knows what to do with them» and he would repeat to his nucleo companions to pray: «and for the rest... whatever the Eternal Father wants!», thus bearing witness up to the end of his trust in the love of God.

Claudio Battistutti

Fernando Licheri

«Between God and me there is only love»

Fernando, volunteer of Sardinia (zone of Rome) was among the first to know and to bring the Ideal to the island. We remember him one year after his «departure», on the 10th of November, 2012 at 87 years old. He met the Ideal in Rome in 1951 through Giulio Marchesi and Enzo Maria Fondi. He embrace this new life with enthusiasm, participating in the first Mariapolises and remaining in contact with Chiara who, in a letter of '53 called him «Fernandino of Jesus Forsaken».

He was the Director of the Data Processing Centre of the Region of Sardinia, Mayor for three terms and first President of the Azienda Sanitaria Locale of Ghilarza, his place of origin. These were responsibilities that he carried out in the style of New Humanity, of which he was one of the first animators, inviting Domenico Mangano to Sardinia several times and with whom he had built a beautiful friendship. He put his commitment to work for the Kingdom of God in the first



place. He opted for early retirement so as to have more time and energy to dedicate to the spreading of the Ideal, thus renouncing to some major economic benefits. Fernando was a living witness: of a manager of the highest caliber, gifted with: a vast and profound culture, he knew how to make himself

nothing, so as to be one with everyone, especially with the least and the last. His love for the youth was great. He transmitted to them the love for the Ideal and the passion for politics: the first School of the Movement of Politics for Unity in Sardinia started precisely with meetings in Fernando and Maria's house; Maria was also a volunteer. He lived the last five years of his life limited by a long and painful illness that hindered his body, but at the same time refined his spirit, allowing him to identify himself totally with Jesus Forsaken and highlighting the heroic levels of his virtues. The visit of personal Emmaus, on the occasion of the 60° of the Movement in Sardinia, found him ready and

Our relatives

The following have passed on to the Next Life: **the mother of Ilona**, focolarina at the Mariapolis Center of Castelgandolfo and of **Palko Toth**, married focolarino in Budapest; **Gertrud, mother of Albert Dreston** focolarino in Loppiano; **Italia, sister of Cristina Russo** focolarina in Loppiano; **Jaime, father of Maria Cobo Velez**, focolarina in Gen Verde; **Colombe, mother of Pascal Pontien Ntawuyankira**, focolarino in Douala; **Maria da Glória, mother of Jorge Resende**, focolarino in Porto (Portugal); **Mario, father of Mario Dias Feio**, focolarino in Belém (Brazil); **Eduardo, brother of Maria del Carmen (Neldi) Betoño**, focolarina in Cile; **Marynice da Conceição, mother of Mariana Botelho**, focolarina in Atlanta (Usa); **Carlos, brother of Fernando (Lucio) Rossi**, focolarino in Porto Alegre; **Lorenzo, brother of Angiolino Lucchetti**, focolarino in Rome; **Tommy, father of Jean UiBhroin**, married focolarina of Belfast (Ireland) and of **Ita Ling**, focolarina in the Heavenly Mariapolis; **Vicencia, mother of Cremilda (Seli) Ferreira Loz**, focolarina in Salvador (zone of Recife); **Hélène, sister of Michel Pochet**, focolarino at the Roman Mariapolis; **Antonia, mother of Marie Gimenez**, focolarina in Lyon and **Mared**, focolarina in Marseille; **Bonifacia, mother of José Luis Romero**, focolarino in Madrid; **Carmenchu, mother of Iñaki Guerrero**, focolarino in Bilbao (Spain); **Aurora, mother of Stella Maris Fernandez**, focolarina in Paranà (Rosario); **Lucile, volunteer, mother of Alex Garel**, focolarino in Nantes; **Joao, father of Joelma Regis**, focolarina in the zone center of Dallas (Usa), of **Genidalva**, focolarina in the Mariapolis Center Arnold (Brazil) and of **Miriam** (of the Metalsul-Eoc); **Amelia, mother of Pina** and **Giovanna Ceriello**, focolarinas at the Mariapolis Center of Benevento.

willing to offer his last energy, in gratitude to God and to his brothers, for all that he had lived. In the last days he would often repeat: «Between God and me there is only love».

Claudio Battistutti

Words of life for 2014

January | «Christ, the only foundation of the Church» (cf 1 Cor 3,11).

February | «Blessed are the pure of heart, for they shall see God» (Mt 5,8).

March | «If you obey my commandments, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love» (Jn 15,10).

April | «I give you a new commandment: that you love one another; as I have loved you, so too must you love one another» (Jn 13,34).

May | «... in the name of Christ: be reconciled to God» (2 Cor 5,20).

June | «I am with you always, to the very end of the age» (Mt 28,20).

July | «Again, [amen,] I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything for which they are to pray, it shall be granted to them by my heavenly Father. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them» (Mt 18,19-20).

August | «Forgive your neighbor the wrong done to you; then when you pray, your own sins will be forgiven» (Sir 28,2).

September | «Welcome one another, then, as Christ welcomed you, for the glory of God» (Rm 15,7).

October | «I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me will never hunger, and whoever believes in me will never thirst» (Jn 6,35).

November | «For in you is the fountain of life» [Psal 36 (35),10].

December | «Whoever has two tunics should share with the person who has none. And whoever has food should do likewise» (Lk 3,11).

DECEMBER 2013

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