

MARIAPOLI

Notiziario del movimento dei focolari

God among us

His presence even in the hot spots of the earth

Rocca di Papa

The new Centre of the Movement starts off

Advise for Italy

The programmatic message of Emmaus for the new set-up

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«I have come as Light into the World»

We were struck by the fact that only that one time the earth saw the Son of Man arising among the children of human beings. That one time he remained so briefly, in a determinate era, in a restricted environment. But then we understood. Having become human, he took upon himself all the limitations of a human being, with the exception of sin. Since he was God, even the brief but splendid discourse with one single woman like the Samaritan woman, spread throughout the whole world. Those words had that flavour suitable for every mortal being, because every person thirsts for that water and awaits to go to Him to drink. ...

One fact is truly wonderful; it is an admirable, very lofty, supernatural and consoling fact: even though he was known only in Palestine and he said few words, even though his passion and death lasted for a few hours, it was a solemn expression of an infinite love, he knew the hearts of people because his heart beats for them. He seemed not to give in to that limit imposed by human flesh, which he had taken on. Before dying, alongside the divine jewels of his new commandment and the all powerful prayer to the Father, he wished to leave us something that would multiply him in time and space. Thus he invented – an invention by a God for which Heaven with all its angels and saints and Mary perpetually will barely be able to give a worthy thanksgiving – he invented the Eucharist.

Here we should remain in silence, we should simply remain in adoration. That is a mystery of love that can be compared to no other.

[...]

No one will ever know, if not God himself, what Jesus in the Eucharist has worked throughout the centuries and in every corner of the world. Looking at things from our limited field of vision, we have to admit that if our Movement came to life and had its beginnings, it was thanks to Him in the Eucharist. ...

It was Jesus in the Eucharist who gave courage and thrust; he is the first reason for our joy in our vocation, and He was the nourishment, the strongest bond of unity, our ideal.

[...]

While Jesus was on earth, He spoke; he was the Word and he had to speak. In the Eucharist, he is silent. We were struck by this fact many times. Yes, it was a lot, so much. It was incredible that God had made himself flesh; but there, at the last moment He would hide himself under the appearance of bread, this was too much. And instead, no; this is the logic of love. Having become human, he loved us as himself. But there was a huge gap between him and us; so then He invented the Eucharist in order to make us Him. He placed himself at our service as food is at the service of human beings, because he wanted to make of us another Him, another Christ. He lived the Gospel well, and he knew how to love.

Through the Eucharist, he wished that we could repeat his words, all of his words, with consciousness and truth. In this way, because of Him, we are no longer us, but He in us through our life could say to others: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life" (Jn 14:6). "I have come as light into the world" (Jn 12:46).

Text prepared by Chiara for the Mariapolis in 1959.
Translation of the published Italian text in *Gesù Eucaristia*,
Fabio Ciardi, integral text pp. 107-111. Excerpts here pp. 108-
111, Città Nuova 2014

1 Jn 14,6.

2 Cf Jn 12,46

Foto: Chiara a Mollens, Natale 2005

Words of Life for 2015

January | «Jesus said to her: "Give me a drink"» (Jn 4,7).

(A phrase chosen by the mixed Commission for the Week of prayer for Christian unity)

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

(A phrase chosen by the Evangelical Church for 2015)

March | «Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me» (Mk 8,34).

April | «I have become all things to all» (1 Cor 9,22).

May | «But God, who is rich in mercy, because of the great love he had for us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, brought us to life with Christ» (Eph 2, 4-5).

June | «Martha, Martha, you are anxious and worried about many things. There is need of only one thing» (Lk 10, 41-42).

July | «Take courage, I have conquered the world!» (Jn 16,33).

August | «Live in love» (Eph 5,2).

September | «You shall love your neighbor as yourself» (Mk 12,31).

October | «This is how all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another» (Jn 13,35).

November | «That all may be one» (Jn 17,21).

December | «Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths» (Mk 1,3).

From 2015 the commentary on the Word of Life will no longer carry the signature of Chiara. They have been entrusted to Fr. Fabio Ciardi. A novelty which is also continuity (see the interview in Città Nuova 22/2014, pp 36-37).

Paolo VI and Chiara Lubich.

The prophecy of a Church that makes herself dialogue

A Study Meeting 50 years after the first audience of Paul VI with Chiara

«The question that concerns us in these days represent a decisive unravelling of the history of the Catholic Church in the Nineteenth century that saw significant transformations in the ways and forms in which the faithful brought their Christian witness to the world, gave their contribution to ecclesial life and participated in the building of the human community». This is how Fr. Angelo Maffei, president of the Paul VI Institute of Concesio (Brescia), expressed himself last November 7, as he declared open the Study Meeting organized by the Institute and by the Chiara Lubich Center. The event, by a happy coincidence, took place just a few days after the beatification of Paul VI.

At the origin of the meeting was a brief phrase of Eli, behind which was all the depth of the life of Chiara: the desire to bring to light who this Pope was for Chiara and for the whole Opera. This was the «inspirational spark» that in 2012 pushed us to weave a closer bond with the Paul VI Institute and to include in this initiative, representatives of other realities of the Opera:



Eli Folonari, Cesare Zucconi della Comunità di Sant'Egidio, il card. Paul Poupard, Andrea Riccardi

the Abba School, Iginio Giordani Center, Sophia University Institute, «Uno (One)» Center.

What Emmaus entrusted to all to «*do everything together*» accompanied every step of the preparatory work, her light and her warmth followed this «adventure» from the very beginning. In the greeting which welcomed the participants, she focused on the «*profound harmony that is revealed in a special way in the very refined spiritual capacity of Paul VI which was able to grasp in the charism, given by God to Chiara Lubich, the action*





Da destra: p. Giancarlo Salvini, già direttore de *La Civiltà Cattolica*, Maria Voce, d. Angelo Maffei dell'Istituto Paolo VI

of the Holy Spirit». A «great Pope» who for the first time in history, elevated two women (Teresa of Avila and Catherine of Siena) to the title of «doctor of the Church», encouraged the feminine presence in the ecclesial realities and, with regards to Chiara, he accompanied her in the complex process of institutionalizing the charism of unity, with a particular attention for its ecumenical journey and the realities of the youth.

The first interventions, entrusted to two historians, Andrea Riccardi and Alberto Monticone, provided a framework of the presence and of the quality of the lay movements starting from the XIX century; in this broad context Riccardi highlighted how much the precocious Church, in which the Movement took its first steps, was something innovative and also how the concept of «charism» was groundbreaking, understood as a gift of the Spirit side by side with the hierarchical ministry, and how the experience of the Focolare was the «front-runner» leading to the recognition of other realities that followed chronologically.

Analytical interventions followed presented by Lucia Abignente, Paolo Siniscalco, Joan Back (Pavi), Alberto Lo Presti and Adriana Cosseddu (of the Focolare Movement), which, according to the different expertise and fields of research, identified pathways and opened up prospects, eliciting great interest and also surprise, at the new elements and never before published materials that were presented.

Similar to a mosaic, the speakers presented in depth, the relationships interwoven between Mons. Montini/Paul VI and Chiara Lubich in relation to the process of the recognition of the Focolare Movement, the attitude of full trust that Paul VI had for the Movement with regards to keeping the Christian spirit alive in Eastern Europe before 1989, the ecumenical dynamism of the Pope who had found in the person of Chiara a privileged interlocutor, the question of the juridical recognition of the Statutes of the Opera

as an occasion to open up new opportunities for other lay aggregations, the singular affinity between the concept of the Christian social doctrine of Iginio Giordani and the *Octogesima adveniens* of Paolo VI. «It was particularly enriching for me – commented Fr. Fabio Ciardi – to be able to see the Focolare Movement and its foundress, through the eyes of Pope Paul. This great man, who had a very broad view of the Church and of society in his time, and who also had a particular gaze on this work of God. Putting oneself in his perspective of things one can grasp new aspects of this charism and of its moving ahead in the Church». Fr. Gianpaolo Salvini, former director of the *Civiltà Cattolica*, who was the moderator for the first session was impressed by the atmosphere and he underlined the high quality of the interventions.

Piero Coda offered a theological reading of the profound harmony that existed between the Encyclical *Ecclesiam Suam* of Paul VI and the charism of unity. Among other things, he highlighted how the three points that characterize the encyclical – conscience, renewal, dialogue – substantiated the reflection and the experience of Chiara during her entire life.

Concluding the meeting, Brendan Leahy (bishop of Limerick in Ireland) noted in this harmony a precise plan of God: on one hand a Pope who had received an extraordinary light for modernity, for ecclesial awareness, for dialogue, thanks to the greatness of his soul, his

spirituality, his sensitivity towards the laity; and on the other hand Chiara Lubich who, a lay person and a woman, had this ecclesial awareness as a social mystical body and who had a marked sensitivity to dialogue. And he added: «Paolo VI and Chiara are like instruments used by God to give rise to a new, epochal step in the Church [...]: it is the emergence of the Marian profile, not in the religious or pious sense, but in the vibrant sense of lay ecclesiality, which is modern society Christified».

The unanimous appreciation of the participants for this Meeting, the first «going out to public life» of the Chiara Lubich Center, seemed to us an answer to the guidelines of the recent Assembly: «going out», «together», «adequately prepared». Fr. José-Román Flecha Andres, of the University of Salamanca, who is conducting studies on Spanish mystics of the '500 com-

mented: «I had the chance to feel the «breath», the experience of a life lived in a mystic incarnated: this is something very interesting». Recalling how St. Teresa of Avila and St. John of the Cross had the intuition of the need of transmitting to the entire Church their own interior experience, affirmed: «we have seen here how, thanks to the spirit of God, to the Holy Spirit, this has been realized in the life of Chiara, of the Movement».

The sentiment of fullness and gratitude that reigned, could be expressed in the words of Card. Paul Poupard: «We are gathered together to give thanks to the Lord, giver of all good things and graces in his Church, for having given us, in our troubled times, two great witnesses of his love, whom we venerate as our teachers in the faith».

Brendan Leahy, Paolo Siniscalco, Lucia Abignente



Francesco e Gerusalemme

Per i tipi di Città Nuova esce un libro nel quale l'autore, Paolo Loriga, rivisita il viaggio di Papa Bergoglio in Terra Santa

Ci sono eventi che, per la loro densità, sono destinati a produrre i loro effetti sul medio e lungo termine. Ci sono ge-

sti che, per la loro intensità, continuano a produrre e riprodurre senza posa il loro significato simbolico. È presto per sapere se la visita di Papa Francesco in Terra Santa e il successivo incontro tra Abu Mazen e Shimon Peres in Vaticano si iscrivano nella categoria dei cosiddetti *game changer*, degli snodi della storia che segnano una discontinuità sul piano politico-diplomatico. È certo però che il primo impegno realmente internazionale (e non solo pastorale) di Papa Francesco è dello stesso spessore, ad esempio, della preghie-

ra universale di Assisi per la pace, convocata da Giovanni Paolo II nell'ottobre del 1986. La prospettiva profetica e la prospettiva simbolica non sono affatto estranee alla politica, al contrario. È proprio quella che gli analisti politici chiamano la *vision*, la visione, cioè il disegno complessivo. Una prospettiva ampia, che permette di comprendere anche il presente per poterlo trasformare, unitamente alle componenti evocative (e non semplicemente emotive) dell'agire politico a rappresentare la miscela per innescare il cambiamento e demolire paradigmi rocciosi, come quello della prevalenza (illusoria e instabile nel tempo) delle soluzioni di forza su quelle negoziate, del dominio della paura sulla fiducia.

Dalla prefazione di Pasquale Ferrara, diplomatico, segretario generale dell'Istituto universitario europeo

Politics for unity
making a
WORLD
of difference

Towards March 14, 2015

Chiara Lubich unity and politics

This year the 7° anniversary of the departure of Chiara will be celebrated by deepening the incidence of the Ideal of unity in the political dimension

Vademecum to be protagonists of Politics for unity making a world of difference

What is it

the gathering of many initiatives - national/local - that will take place around March 14, 2015, the 7° anniversary of the death of Chiara Lubich, to get to know and to implement her thoughts today. Linked on the web through the websites: focolare.org, mppu.org, newhumanity.org, uwp.org, edc-online.org, netone.org and many others.

Who is organizing it

the Focolare Movement through the Movement of politics for unity. In the scientific/organizing Committee the following are represented: Dialogue with contemporary culture, Abbà School, Uni Sophia, I.Giordani Center, New Humanity, Youth of a united world, University Network for fraternity.

What are its objectives

- to get to know the Ideal of unity in its 'political' dimension, understood in the wider sense as the participation of everyone in building one's own city, one's own Country, the unity among peoples.
- to understand politics as the fabric of a network wherein economy and law, urban and social planning, communication and environment, art and culture... bring about their own renewal
- to be world-citizens, to love the Country of the other as one's own, to contribute to coexistence and to peace not through words but through fact and concrete actions. To keep alive the possible dream of universal brotherhood.
- to put into practice today these ideas, everywhere and together with all those who have the same objective

How to organize a local initiative

- form a committee even of only 2/3 persons who are interested, possibly a youth)
- study in-depth, first of all in your committee, the selected writings of Chiara Lubich
- involve personalities and friends offering them the selected writings and the possibility of commenting on them (not more than 30 lines to be inserted also in the website mppu.org)
- choose the date and the venue for the local event (it would be good to use an institutional forum, but a private house may also be used)
- based on the writings prepare a programme with a local and a worldwide dimension and to insert the video of the event accordingly
- invite some of the personalities involved to be active in the programme
- suggest above all to the youth to make use of the social network on the web page, by watching the videoclip and posting their own mini-video made using their smartphone

Material available

- immediately available chosen writings of Chiara Lubich translated in some languages in some languages in www.mppu.org, others available upon request
- in January a web page: with a listing of the events, materials, videoclip, social
- at the end of February a video of around 20': some ideas of Chiara Lubich and experiences from all over the world
- at the beginning of March notes: a look at the Ideal of unity in an international context

Contact info@mppu.org 0039 06 945407210
to: share one's initiative, to request for the video, to ask for help, to send news

Always on the road, always moving

**Freshness of the charism, patient accompanying, communion.
The words of the Pope for each movement and for all of them together.**

«A step forward in maturity» was the wish of Emmaus during the press conference for the presentation of the III Congress of Movements and New Communities organized by the Pontifical Council for the Laity, with the theme: «The joy of the Gospel: a missionary joy».

In declaring open the event on November 20, Card. Rylko, president of the Pontifical Council for the Laity promoter of the event, referred back to Pentecost 1998 when Pope Wojtyla «with a prophetic intuition indicated a new step for the life of the new charisms, which by now had to necessarily follow their initial blossoming, which is the step of ecclesial maturity».

It was the words of Pope Francis, during the audience of November 22, to the 300 del-



18 novembre. Conferenza stampa di presentazione del Congresso. Da sinistra il vescovo Clémens, il card. Rylko (rispettivamente Segretario e Presidente del Pontificio Consiglio per i Laici), Jean Luc Moens della *Communauté de l'Emmanuel*, Maria Voce

egates belonging to 100 movements and coming from 40 nations, that marked this new step in the Church today.

There were three key points: preserve the freshness of the charism; welcome and accompany with patient love the men and women of our times; do not forget that the most precious thing is communion. «After all – Emmaus shared in a spontaneous impression – it was

this gift that we wanted to bring to him: this communion, and he underlined this very strongly in his talk, inviting us to bring it ahead and defining precisely communion as the seal of the Holy Spirit».

«For me, participating for the first time in a meeting of this kind, the experience was really extraordinary – affirmed Jesús Morán. I experienced a special communion with many movements and communities in this kairos or this formidable time of God that the



Gli interventi in plenaria.
Fra i relatori Anna Pelli dei Focolari

Church is living today with the gift of Pope Francis. In this regard, I felt once again and with new strength his call to missionary conversion, that calls out to all the charisms and brings them to the attainment of a new maturity which is at the level of the Church today (pushing aside every temptation to indulge in auto-referentiality) and a radicalness that is anchored in the freshness of the charism».

«I asked myself – continued Emmaus – what does this new step mean for us as a Movement? Certainly this means an even greater communion with the Church, but, precisely because we have reached this profound unity among the Movements, maybe God is asking us now to open ourselves up more and go towards the Movements that belong to the other non-Catholic Churches, because there too we can find very strong experiences of people who live the Gospel and who bear witness to this with their life. To get to know them too, to open ourselves up more could contribute to a wider communion and, why not? also to coming closer to that moment of unity of all Christians».

They were three days that erased differences and closure, in an increasing atmosphere of fraternity among the representatives of the movements with histories of more than fifty years and with those new communities that have just recently taken on an international dimension. The presence of bishops and priests was conspicuous, immersed together with the laity, in an atmosphere of reciprocal listening.

«Another thing that I want to underline – continued Emmaus – is this: to go outwards towards a more vital unity between the “shepherd” and the “flock”, [...] a more profound communion between the laity and the clergy [...] and so we must not distinguish the ecclesiastical part from the lay part in the various Movements and not even in its entirety».

For the Focolare Movement, together with Emmaus, Jesús and Giancarlo, there was a delegation composed of Anna Pelli, Severin Schmid, Gisela Lauber and Marta Chierico.



«The commitment made by Chiara in that memorable encounter of Pentecost '98, “to work for the communion among the Movements” – affirmed Anna Pelli, who was one of the speakers of the convention – has become a surprising fabric of life brought ahead with dedication, with passion by the people of the Opera all over the world. Many representatives of Movements whom I met for the first time told me of this sharing of joys and difficulties, projects and prospects. The Church should be happy of this journey because there are those who have been bringing it ahead with the desire to build the “church communion” everywhere».

«A plus of ecclesiality and of social commitment» is the demand that Jesús perceived: «In this sense we must move towards a truly trinitarian way of thinking that would qualify with greater depth, our communion. It is no longer enough to have just some kind of cordial collaboration but we must live one in the other, a reciprocal empowerment and enrichment so as to go out and together to make ourselves the bearers of the sufferings of humanity».

All this so as not to disappoint the final greeting of Pope Francis: «You have already brought many fruits to the Church and to the entire world, but you can bring other even greater ones with the help of the Holy Spirit ».

Prepared by Gianna Sibelli

Other news on: www.laici.va

The new Center of the Opera

First meeting first novelties

On December 2, the council members elected by the General Assembly met for the first time

Ray had already spent most of his day in Manila. His watch said 16:15. Donna, in the United States, instead, lengthened the evening of the previous day up to 2:15 at night. For Francisco, who was still in Argentina, and Gloria, in Brazil, it meant being in front of the computer a little after five in the morning. Only Juanita, from Dublin, didn't have to contend with the time lapse and with the alarm clock so as to be able to participate in the much-awaited appointment.

In fact, on Tuesday, December 2 at 9:15 the first meeting of the new governing body elected by the General Assembly of the Movement that was held last September at Castelgandolfo, took place at the International Center of the Focolare Movement in Rocca di Papa. An important appointment, marked by a novelty in the technical aspect: the first video conference meeting of the central body of the Focolare Movement, the so-called Center of the Opera.

Together with Emmaus and the co-president Gesù, the general council members for the aspects (from economy to communication) and for the different geographical areas of the planet, entered the conference room, together



Il collegamento con Ray, dalle Filippine

with the two central delegates of focolarine and the focolarini.

Some of them arrived just a few days or a couple of weeks ago, and all of them were involved in the task of receiving the work that was being handed over to them by those they had replaced. A task for which one of them said that an «external hard drive» for the brain was needed, just like that of a computer, to be able to store the avalanche of information and situations that they continue to receive.



This first meeting is special: a moment to look at each other face to face so as to begin to work together. The opening greetings from the five council members who were linked-up brought to life this inaugural meeting and brought an air of universality to this gathering. It was punctuated in the middle by the arrival of Genevieve from Africa. The world seemed to be there in that room, as a confirmation of the strong internationality and representation manifested by the consultations of the Movement in the world and approved by the Assembly, with the election of 30 council members coming from twenty Countries.



«The only word to keep in mind is: “we”. This is what we want and this

is what the whole Movement desires. To build together. *Eccomi* (Here I am) !», Cecilia began; she was the last to arrive (nine hours before from Buenos Aires) and the first to be invited by Emmaus to speak. Many contributions followed which expressed the joy of the new ones (two thirds of the total), the experience (rich with many challenges to face) lived by the six who are on their second term, the suggestions of those who have had other responsibilities within the international Center. These indications were very much appreciated by everyone and welcomed by the president as her own, so as to enter into the crucible and in the dynamism of the Center.

It was a morning spent in the spirit of “chorality”. Emmaus and Jesus spoke only briefly, to set in motion the first step of a long journey of six years, giving ample time to the council



members to speak. It was just a indication, that underlined the need for team work.

There were clear signals and some priorities regarding the work to be done in the coming months. January, February and March will be dedicated to meetings with the international secretariats of the different branches of the Movement, to develop a team spirit and being in tune with one another. In the same way, there is also the precise objective of unity among the centers of the different dialogues.

May and June will serve to gather the life of the charisma from all over the world, influenced by the experience of the Assembly. In Trent, from May 4 to 10, the General Council will have its retreat.

Two important appointments at the end of winter: on February 27, the ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I, will receive the Doctorate *Honoris Causa* in the “Cultura of unity”, from the Sophia University Institute (Loppiano), and on March 14, the seventh death anniversary of Chiara will be celebrated.

Other indications: the trips abroad will be limited to the minimum necessary to allow for the presence of the council members at the center so as to jumpstart a constant collaboration.

Emmaus focused on the final document of the Assembly (the “Guidelines”), and underlined the need of «immersing oneself in the text and in its contents so as to draw from it topics and timelines for our work during the year». A work to be done as a team. But already, in the joy and the unity of these first hours, one can feel the desire in each one to face the challenges that the Assembly left us (“going out”, “together”, “adequately prepared”) and underlined by the Pope at the audience in the Clementine Hall.

by the editorial



Il Patto di Unità nella
Abbazia di San Nilo a
Grottaferata

Bishops of various Churches

«The disciples are recognized by love»

33^o gathering of bishops of various Churches, friends of the Focolare Movement

«There are great theological differences among our Churches, but the disciples are recognized by love. And this is the reason why I feel at home here, among the bishops of various Churches: there is love among us.» This is how a Lutheran bishop from Hungary summarized the gathering, wherein 39 bishops of 8 Churches participated. Every year they meet in a different country, and this time from November 3 to 7, they met in Castelgandolfo.

«It is a remarkable fact» continued the Lutheran Bishop Krause, «that a lay movement invites bishops, and we come willingly, because, away from the lights and the mass-media, we can meet as brothers in Christ». In this atmosphere Emmaus presents the theme of the year on the Eucharist. A topic that is among the thorniest in the ecumenical field, but the vision of Chiara is widely understood and accepted. From the contributions of the Syro-orthodox, Orthodox, Lutheran and Anglican bishops what emerges is that we as Christians all believe in a real presence of Jesus in that which some Churches call the Divine Liturgy, others the Holy Meal, or the Mass. The Rumanian-Orthodox

Metropolitan Serafim affirmed that in this mystery of faith «there are various aspects of just one reality seen from various sides, and we we must learn “inclusion”, rather than exclusion».

Everyone was interested in the updating on the request for the initiation of the cause for the beatification of Chiara, that has recently been brought forward by the Movement to ensure an authentic presentation of her testimony of faith and of an evangelical life. «What does it mean to be a saint?» a Swedish Lutheran bishop asked and then continued: «A saint is a model of life, one who knows how to answer life's questions: he or she represents something that is good for everyone» (Åke Bonnier). An Anglican bishop from Peru: «When I think of Chiara I think of the words of Jesus: “you will know them by their fruits” and for Chiara you don't have to look far. When I see the Focolare Movement in the world – which is “Evangelical”, “Catholic”, “Orthodox”- you will understand who Chiara is» (William Godfrey). And the Copepiscopus Adai from India added: «What is lacking today among the Christians and among the Christian Churches? Unity and reciprocal love

are lacking. And this is what Chiara has brought, that is why we are here» and according to him this is enough for sanctity.

The days spent together included visits to Rome, to the Anglican Center, with the recent excavations that brought to light the probable prison of St. Paul, and to the German Lutheran Church, where the ecumenical hospitality was made concrete through a dinner offered to the Bishops.

In the ancient Abbey of San Nilo, Santa Maria in Grottaferrata, where since 1004 when the Church was still undivided, the monks have continued to follow the Byzantine rite, a moment of profound significance was lived. After the vespers, the Greek-Orthodox bishop of Aquisgrana, Evmenios, celebrated the *Artoclasia* – the blessing of the bread. «It is an act of great faith and courage to do this in a Catholic Church» P. Michel van Parys, the new abbot who just recently arrived from the monastery of Chevetogne (Belgium) later commented. And in this atmosphere of «already an not yet» the bishops renewed in a solemn way the «pact» of reciprocal love, including also those who were present.

The joy explodes in the hearts which is visible in all the faces. At the distribution of the consecrated bread and wine someone spoke of an «an eschatological moment» and one asks oneself: «what will the full unity among Christians be like?».

The urgency for a witness of fraternity and of unity among Christians is marked during the much-awaited hour: the special audience with Pope Francis. Three bishops from various Churches address him with a word of welcome, which as bishop of Rome he answers saying among other things: «*This fraternity is a shining and attractive example of our faith in the Risen Christ. If in fact we intend to strive, as Christians, to answer in an incisive way the many problems and the dramas of our time, we must speak and act as brothers, in such a way that everyone can easily recognize*». And like a «brother» among brothers the Pope goes to each one to share some words and to greet them personally. «If the Petrine ministry is lived in the way that Pope

Francis does, then maybe the time has come to start and talk about it again» – commented a Lutheran bishop.

In a message of greeting Card. Kurt Koch, president of the Pontifical Council for the Unity of Christians, seemed to summarize this ecumenical

week among the bishops: «If the spiritual ecumenism is truly the soul of the ecumenical programme, its heart is friendship. Friendship and bonds of affection allow us to consider everything [...] in the best light possible, it helps us to situate the problems in their proper context and it makes us more secure in our own identity».

Helmut Sievers



Città del Vaticano, 7 novembre 2014.
L'udienza da Papa Francesco



Secretariats of Teens for unity Create synergies

**Working with the new generations:
useful, tiring, creative**

The 101 dalmatians. This is the cute name with which the 101 participants to the international meeting of the secretariats of Teens for unity, called themselves.

The programme revolved around three key words that came from the Assembly. In order to *go out*, they spoke about prosociality: how to build a project in one's own territory starting from one's own community and what are the indicators to verify if it is prosocial and therefore fraternal.



The central point was the meeting with Emmaus and Jesús: an hour of dialogue where-in they touched on many topics that were then developed during the programme. They spoke of synergies and of their importance. *«For us, synergy is not an obligation, it is not optional– Jesús said - it is our way of doing things»*. The word, which is of Greek origin, *«indicates a useful task, not just any kind of task; a tiring task, in fact synergies are useful, but they are also tiring»* the creative action of God. *«This is enough to tell you how important synergy is: it is something useful, something tiring, but it is something creative»*. For us to speak of synergy means *Trinitarian relationships*.



In the programme there were various moments that were already the fruit of synergies in action: with the Youth for a United World also in view of Run4unity (May 3, 2015) during the United World Week; with the AMU- Education to Development and New Humanity for projects related to education; with *Città Nuova* for Teens magazine. With the MPPU an idea was born for a course of political formation for teens that will be developed during the next meeting of the Rainbow Units; while with New Families they presented *Up2me*, a course of integral formation of the person for pre-adolescents and adolescents that will include themes on emotions and sexuality. *«The Opera is very happy and is closely following this work that we are doing together»*, said Emmaus speaking to a Volunteer regarding the project - (...) *The Opera will surely put all its resources to support it, and you must feel that all of you who are working on this project are part of the Opera»*.



And still some more topics regarding ethics: Jesús, in answer to someone who asked how to put together the human formation with the spiritual one, made this observation: *«In Sicily they say: "If you want to build a boat, don't call the people to work, but try to entice them with the sea. Then they will build you a boat". I believe that we must attract the world with the 'type' of person that Jesus presented to us, to give a fascinating vision of what it means to be a man, to be a woman, to love one another, to love reciprocally».* Then in this way, each one will be capable of building the boat of his or her existence and to reach that sea.

Within the questions also lay the challenges of our times: what language shall we use to transmit the Ideal to 'digital natives'? Jesús reminded us that in order to transmit the message of Jesus we had to pass from an oral culture to a written one, translating from Aramaic and Hebrew to Greek, the language in which the Gospels were written. The Greek language brought with it also a new vision of the world. But if the primitive Church did not take this step, the dogma would not have been saved; neither Hebrew, nor Aramaic had concepts that the Greek language had. *«Today we must do the same thing with the digital language. And who knows, we may even find in this world certain things that will allow us to better express not only Christianity but also the Ideal».*

At the conclusion of the dialogue, Emmaus answered to someone who asked her what to do when the human resources for the new generations are few: *«If we who are here today have l'ut omnes in our heart, then we will certainly have the passion for the teens, for the new generations, why? Because they are part of l'ut omnes. Therefore we cannot neglect the new generations because we cannot reach l'ut omnes without them, but we*

must focus our gaze at l'ut omnes and not just at them.»Therefore – she added – the more l'ut omnes spreads, the more the Kingdom of God expands, the more help we will have to bring it ahead. (...) If there are no new generations then the Opera will die, therefore imagine if it is not important to have the new generations and to make them flourish, but this is always just one particular aspect of the Kingdom of God, just a part of that mission that God gives us to build l'ut omnes, to contribute to the realization of his design on humanity».



On the day dedicated to "adequately prepared" Cecilia Marchisio, psychologist, and Marurizio Biancotti, pedagogist, made their interventions, and in explaining some of the characteristics of adolescence, they spoke of the development and the strengthening of the Life Skills, the ability to live a life recommended also by the World Health Organization which is indispensable for the adult and the teen, so as to favour a good adaptation to the world around them. These characteristics were studied

in-depth thanks to the assistance of a psychologist, but, as explained by Cecilia, are already inherent in the pedagogical method that is born from the Charism.

Anna Lisa Innocenti



Where there is war Let's make a home

The warmth of Christmas also in places where there are situations of conflict. From Iraq to Jordan there are many initiatives being done so that no one will feel alone or a stranger.

The situation in Iraq continues to be marked by great political instability and the events of the past months, with hundreds of people forced by the extremists to abandon their homes, has made the humanitarian situation even more dramatic, especially in the North. For many Christian refugees the hope of being able to return to their homes is slowly disappearing. In front of this absurd situation many, with much sorrow, have decided to leave the Country in search of a better future for their children. Our community too have taken the path of migration and are preparing for it but in search of a better future for their children. Our community too have all of them, who have remained in the country or have migrated, have experienced and continue to experience up to now the strong spiritual and material support of the Opera which they welcome as the hundredfold of their daily struggle to transform everything into «God loves me» in the midst of this tragedy.



In **Iraq** the solidarity among our people with those around them is the underlying note of their daily life, the way to go out, together, without closing themselves up in their own sufferings! With the communion of goods and the providence that continues to arrive they are able to cover their daily needs and even more, and they experience the consolation of feeling the nearness of many brothers and sisters all over the world. There are so many experiences lived and so many little anecdotes have blossomed like



drops of love and hope! There was a competition to welcome into their homes, in the focal point itself, relatives or friends, or to find houses for rent for some and employment for others, without forgetting about winter clothes that no one had. Our community is also fully involved with the huge efforts that the local Church is doing to ensure lodging, basic necessities, heaters, various activities for the refugees without exceptions. They don't only try to meet their needs, but they strive to build personal relationships and so they continue to visit these families which are an occasion for an enriching exchange of gifts and life experiences.

Now, as Christmas approaches, our families with the youth, the gen4 and gen3 are trying to prepare and evening together in a big hall that can contain many refugee families. We don't want them to miss the joy of the coming of the «Holy Child», He who was born and welcomed also in very precarious conditions.



In **Jordan**, where our community is made up of Christians and Muslims, we continue to welcome refugee families. The local Church, especially Caritas (where many intern members of the Opera work) is doing a notable job of welcoming everyone in the best way possible. Here too a big race of solidarity and of the communion of goods has involved relatives, friends and colleagues at work in an atmosphere of great generosity and respect for those who had lost everything. This communion together

with those of the family of the Opera all over the world, has allowed us to furnish the houses, even if just minimally, so as to provide at least the basic necessities for these families with whom a relationship of fraternity and friendship continues to grow. Everyday, then, we rejoice at the «miracles» that happen: the surplus of a family that cover the needs of another, some children who are able to insert themselves in a local school, or someone who surprisingly finds a job!

Very beautiful moments are lived together in the Center of the Movement in Amman. A week after the arrival of the first group of families, Mons. Salomone Warduni, auxiliary bishop of the Chaldean Patriarch of Baghdad (who was passing by in those days), celebrated the Mass asking together for the gift of peace. On Sunday the Mass, which was followed by a delicious lunch shared together with around sixty of our Iraqi members, was celebrated by Jordanian a priest belonging to the Greek-Catholic Church. Some children, feeling the atmosphere of the family, said that they felt like they were in their native village in Iraq!

The gen4 boys and girls prepared a small celebration on the day of St. Martin inviting the Iraqi children to be part of the skit: a moment of great joy! In the end, a surprise: the Iraqi families who were present were able to choose some clothes that were gathered for this occasion, most suitable for their children and for themselves. They left with their hands full and with their hearts overflowing with the love that they received but also gave!

The family of the Opera is now working so that we will be able to celebrate Christmas with these families. There are already some initiatives planned. On December 25, we will share together with them the joy of Jesus' birth, with the Mass and then with lunch at the Center of the Movement which has now become their home.

Rita Moussallem, Alvaro Pires



Hope is reborn from the faithfulness to the Gospel

For around two years already the daily life of Bangui and in most parts of the territory of the Central African Republic revolves around, shall we say, normal activities – work, school, market, traffic, etc. – and ... activities of war, armed tension and insecurity with the persecutions and strong tensions among Muslims and Christians.

In the community of the Movement, even in the midst of many difficulties – there are still many who cannot go back to their neighbourhoods and to their homes, others have lost loved ones and properties – they continue to maintain a strong faith in the love of God. In these months, new activities have flourished, among which is a transmission in the diocesan radio through which we share the Word of Life with experiences, convinced that it is only through the life of the Word can we give a solution also on the political and social level.

Zita shares with us: «That night everyone had to leave their homes because we were told that some acts of revenge were about to be inflicted on our community. The neighbourhood was suddenly empty. We didn't know where to go and so we decided to remain hidden in our house, praying. All around us there were sounds of weapons being fired, numerous dead, a terrible situation right before our eyes. Many children of our neighbours escaped without knowing where to go because of the absence of their parents; I took them all with us. For several hours we remained locked in a room without making a sound, praying the rosary slowly, because all the children were frightened and some were crying. A short while later, when everything was quiet, I heard the children of the neighbours who were

shouting. Their mother had gone out to look for something to eat, their father was nowhere to be found. In spite of my fear I went out. When I arrived there I saw one of the children lying on the ground and losing a lot of blood: he was playing war games with his brother, imitating what was happening outside, when his brother really hit him. I brought all of them to my house even if the children with me became even more frightened when they saw the wounded boy. I don't know how I did it but I was able to stop the bleeding using just some herbs.

The next day there was shooting quite close to us. At a certain point I heard right in front of our house the voice of a young boy, he was crying out for help with a feeble voice. It seemed to me like the cry of Jesus Forsaken. He was seriously struck by a bullet in the stomach. Everyone begged me not to go out, but I could not allow myself not to help him: the Ideal of unity was born during the war and God and Chiara will help us to live like in those early times... I was no longer afraid to give my life, to give it seriously, concretely».

Patrick: «As the situation slowly improved, all the refugees that we had taken in went back to their homes. But after new attacks we welcomed into our home a family of relatives who were Muslim. We were a little bit in doubt if



we should do it – if the others discover it, what would they do to us? But even our children were happy to do it and so we entrusted ourselves to God. I noticed that our Muslim sister prayed many times during the day, alone, but she didn't say the usual prayers, instead she was asking for the gift of peace, and so one day I proposed to everyone that we could pray together. They all agreed. I thought that when it was their turn to pray they would have used their own prayers, instead we prayed simply, asking God to grant us many things, peace, unity. It was beautiful to live with them, to make this experience of family among us, Muslims and Christians».

Chancella, 15 years old confided: «After the death of my father, my eldest brother who was supporting the family was killed and my mother was wounded. Nothing made sense any longer, not even God. Why did He abandon us? I closed myself up, I stopped attending the meetings of the Movement and I even stopped studying. Because of her wounds, the situation of my mother became serious, but because of the fighting it was not possible to bring her to the hospital in time. Before she died we experienced a very strong moment. She took my hand, she put it on her chest and, crying she told me: "Take care of yourself and your little sister, and God will take care of you both". After her departure, this phrase always came to my mind. Yes, God exists,

even if we have to suffer and all die, God exists. Then one day, a light: the Ideal of Chiara! I had learned in the gen3 meetings that God is Love, he is a Father, he is merciful, he is providence... therefore he still loves me. Even if we were only three left: my second brother, my little sister and me, we did not lack for anything. An auntie came to stay with us for awhile. Every evening my brother came home with something to eat from the market where he sold a few things: it was not much, but I thought of those who did not have even this. I no longer had anyone to take care of me and so I have to grow up by myself. Then... I went back to the focolare, and I started again my life with the gen3».

Clément: "We had already started the school year in the beginning of October preparing ourselves to welcome the children but then, the situation that up to that moment seemed calm, suddenly changed, everyone had to escape once again, to go back to the refugee camps. I took courage and I went around to the houses of my students. Once again there was discouragement not only among the parents but also among the children who were finally so happy to be going back to school. In spite of the continuous fighting, I continued to go to visit them to show them, especially the children that we must overcome our fear and to continue living. So on October 20, the first children began to timidly arrive in school. I continued to go and visit them in their families and to share their fears, to listen to them and gradually all of them came back, with the faith that some things can change.

Monica Padovani



New set-up Councils for Italy

Representatives of the present seven Italian zones met at Castel Gandolfo for an important step towards the new set-up that foresees the establishment of a single zone.

The meeting was very much awaited and in the zones there was a certain involvement both in the elaboration of proposals and in the choice of their representatives, some who are part of the actual zone Councils and others no. In the two days of intense work, a «preview» of the future zone, the around 130 participants experienced a workshop of unity in the spirit of «faithful creativity».

The work started with the message of Emmaus which many defined as the framework for the Opera today (see box). The first day consisted in group work wherein all those concerned were divided into twelve groups to study four topics: Establishment and function of the Lauretanas; Establishment and function of the zone Councils; Relationship of the zone and zonette; Relationship zone/zonette-Center/Centers. The following day was dedicated to the plenary session on the four summaries that were prepared at the end of the previopus day. In general we can say that there was a very active participation. In the groups it was not unusual to start with very divergent ideas and in the course of the day a synthesis was achieved that brought together the different opinions and sensitivities, while other steps needed further



reflections. We found ourselves in fact, faced with a complex reality that saw the presence of around 20 zonette spread throughout the national territory, with a big number of intern members (from the six thousand Volunteers to the 1,500 focolarini and married focolarini just to give you an example).

In all those present there was a common desire of starting with an experimental phase, ready to correct the aim as we go along, without being afraid of making mistakes, but carrying in the heart the committment to live for the Country. In fact, although the two days together did not directly tackle certain topics such as Project Italy, Città Nuova, the Movement of politics for unity, these were horizons of





«natural» reference points for an Opera that wants to move in the direction of «Going out», «Together» and «Adequately prepared». We were even able to put in the calendar some of the next steps that will lead to an establishment of a new zone in the coming months.

Aurora Nicosia

The message of Emmaus A horizon with the boundaries of «Ut Omnes»

Center of the Opera, 19 November, 2014
Carissime e carissimi,

while you are meeting to look with renewed love and with the light of Jesus in the midst at this «new» zone of Italy, which is now fast approaching, I am in Rome to participate in the Gathering of the Ecclesial Movements and New Communities, organized by the Pontifical Council for the Laity, on the theme: «The joy of the Gospel: a missionary joy...».

Is this a casual coincidence? I would like to think that it is rather one of those synergies born from the fantasy of the love of God; this commits me to bear witness to this joy that comes from the Gospel and for all of you to experience this truly and profoundly during your meeting.

To prepare myself I read again and meditated on Chapter 1 of the *Evangelii Gaudium*, rediscovering in it new stimuli to incarnate and modernize our charism.

I was urged on by article n. 29 which speaks of the Movements as: «...a source of enrichment for the Church raised up by the Spirit for evangelizing different areas and sectors. Frequently they bring a new evangelizing fervour and a new capacity for dialogue with the world whereby the Church is renewed».

But even more so with article n. 20 that analyzes the *Ma più ancora il n. 20 che analizza il «dynamism of going forth»* that God wants to provoke in everyone and which pushes every Christian to discern *«the path that the Lord points out»* and to *«go forth from our own comfort zone in order to reach all the peripheries in need of the light of the Gospel»*.

It is in this horizon – which has *ut omnes* as its boundaries – that we need to put every search for faithfulness and novelty so as to be free in the way the only God can make us and so that *«all things become new»* as only He knows how to do.

The articles n. 26 and 27 are also very important, on the new structures, wherein it is written: *«There are ecclesial structures which can hamper efforts at evangelization, yet even good structures are only helpful when there is a life constantly driving, sustaining and assessing them. Without new life and an authentic evangelical spirit, without the Church's "fidelity to her own calling", any new structure will soon prove ineffective»*.

Pope Francis continued: *«I dream of a "missionary option", that is, a missionary impulse capable of transforming everything, so that the Church's customs, ways of doing things, times and schedules, language and structures can be suit-*



ably channeled for the evangelization of today's world (...).».

This is what God is expecting from us.

In evaluating how many and which collaborators should be beside the two new delegates of the Opera for Italy (focolarini/ or others) we need to keep in mind that they should know how to be an echo and sounding board of all the life that there is and which continues to flourish in the numerous answers of love from all those who live our Ideal so as to go towards those in need in the various peripheries wherein they are immersed.

It is important that these collaborators are aware of this and know how to share, encourage, nourish, link, being guided by only one criteria: that every activity should be useful to bring ahead, even if with just small steps, the journey towards unity.

I renew with you the Pact of Jesus in the Eucharist so that He may help us realize, in all its fullness, the design of God on the Opera, contemplated by Chiara in Paradise '49. May she, from Heaven, smile at us and guide us always.

I greet you all, one by one!

Emmaus

IN DIALOGUE



Concrete projects in view of the birth of the Sophia University Institute in Latin America, with the typical connotations of this region.

«We put ourselves at the school of Wisdom, ready to allow ourselves to be surprised by what the Spirit of God will do in these days». These were the opening lines of Piero Coda, Dean of the Sophia University Institute, at the opening of the meeting that was held last October 31 to November 2 in Brazil, at the Mariapolis Ginetta. There were a little more than 50 participants: university professors, former students of Sophia, and others active in the social field coming from all over Brazil.

And the Holy Spirit truly surprised us! The reason for the meeting was to reflect together so as to identify ways and possibilities to have the presence of Sophia in Latin America. But something even more happened! Concrete projects emerged in view of the birth of the University Institute in the con-



At the Mariapolis Ginetta the cultural project of Chiara and Latin America

continent, with the connotations typical of this region. It was what Chiara had foreseen even before Sophia took off in Loppiano: that it would be multiplied all over the world. And even more, since 1999, upon Chiara's request, Ginetta had acquired a piece of land beside the Mariapolis, precisely for this purpose!

The next steps? From the group work concrete proposals emerged that will be pre-

Piero Coda who traced the history of Sophia and through listening directly to Chiara's programmatic talk during its foundation in 2001. Then there was a *«glimpse of the past and present history of the Latin American continent with all its challenges»* through the much appreciated contribution of Maria Clara Bingemer, noteworthy theologian of the Pontifical Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro, and the analysis of the socio-cultural situation of the continent presented by the political scientist Juan Esteban, an Argentinian married focolarino. The presentation of experiences in action in Brazil at the university level in the field of research in social epistemology, in education and, with the mature experience of the faculty of Asces, in Caruaru, were very precious.

The last day was marked by a new step: a conversion of the intellect by putting aside primarily human structures and cultural treasures of one's own origins, to allow oneself to be open to something new. A profound communion followed.

From the beginning one could feel the total harmony with the guidelines indicated by the General Assembly and by Pope Francis: *contemplate*, faithful to the inspiration of Chiara, *to go out* so as to offer the cultural contribution of the charism in the present moment of epochal change, *to teach and to learn*. Everyone was moved to witness the action of God, his demolition and rebuilding, his call and his illumination of the pathways to follow.

Fernando Gregianin Testa and Carla Cotignoli



sented to the Center of the Opera: the establishment of a study group formed by local experts who would have to present, within one year, a detailed plan of action; September 2015, in Caruaru (North East Brazil), a moment of formation for the professors; 2016 Summer School of Sophia for the whole continent.

This meeting brought everyone to *«reflect and relive the inspiration of Sophia born in Paradise '49»*, through the intervention of

Ecumenism

Beyond the fear of encounter

The experience of a focalarina who participated in the Consultation between the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of Christian Unity and the World Evangelical Alliance - WEA

Since 2009 I have been participating in the Consultation with representatives of the World Evangelical Alliance¹; the Pontifical Council for the Unity of Christians had in fact asked for someone coming from Latin America who was available and the Uno Center requested if I could attend. I immediately felt a great joy to be of service for the Church, but I was also frightened of such a task. The Words of the Gospel: «Don't be afraid, little flock [...]» (Lk 12,32) from that moment onwards – I still remember it well – have accompanied me.

I thought that I would participate only that first time – since the event was being held in my country, Brazil – instead I have been a part of the Commission up to today. We meet once a year and we have already been to five nations; the last meeting was held in Bad Blankenburg, in Germany, last August 31 to September 8.

It was an experience that left its mark in me. With these few lines I would like to make you participate in it.

The first surprise was the identity of the speakers: I had understood that it was to be a dialogue among Catholics and Evangelicals and therefore I was happy to meet my Lutheran friends once again. Coming from the south of Brazil I had met some of them on the local level. But, when I arrived, I found a very mixed group – five Catholics and eight Evangelicals – not only because they came from different coun-

tries and cultures, but above all because it was not a dialogue among Catholics and Lutherans but rather among Catholics and the members of movement present within the Protestant world: the *Evangelicals* (in some countries they are called «*evangelicis*» in others «*evangelicali*»).

A world that is totally unknown to me, so what was I to do? I tried to make myself one, the concept of being a movement was clear to me, but for them? They explained to me that they were a movement of re-awakening, missionary and of renewal. I met people who truly love God!

I realized how preconceived ideas and prejudices create so much difficulties in relationships. We don't know each other, so much so, that in some Countries we look at each other as enemies.

In the discussions, the Consultation had kept this situation in mind. Among the Catholics, we were bishops, priests and a lay person. In working together, we became amalgamated like one body. I experienced how the Catholic Church brings ahead dialogue in unity, in total communion, in all its rich diversity.

During the meetings, the person in-charge of both sides encouraged us to identify the challenges and to discover the treasures of our traditions. At times it was difficult to understand because there was fear. We have great differences regarding the role of the Church in the plan of salva-

tion; while we share all things regarding the Sacred Scripture and many Christian values and approaches regarding ethical questions.

Serious tension among us was not lacking but we tried to face them – in the light of the call of Jesus to unity – with honesty, love and in the truth. Personally, the words that Chiara spoke in the Church of Saint Anne in Augsburg helped me: «Ecumenical work will truly be fruitful in proportion to how much those who dedicate themselves to it will see Jesus crucified and forsaken as the key to understanding every disunity and to recompose unity. Whoever does this will find in himself the light and the strength not to stop in front of the wound, in the crack of division, but to go beyond and to find the solution»².

I was the only woman in the group, but my role as a lay person and a woman was recognized, appreciated and welcomed. On the theological level I had to work hard, to study to be able to understand and to be able to give a contribution. I was able to appreciate the academic discussions when they were imbued with the love for the Church of Christ, when the faithfulness to

the respective traditions was respected and valued. As Catholics, for example, we heard Mass everyday, we abandoned ourselves to God and asked Him to help us in the dialogue. An Evangelical affirmed that he learned the value of the Eucharist from this «habit» of ours.

And as members of the Focolare Movement? Are there possibilities for a dialogue of life between our movement and the evangelical movement? Certainly, yes. We have elements in common which we can share such as the Word of Life, the sharing of experiences, the value of the family in our society, the respect for life. Pope Francis, in this last period, gave a new push to dialogue with the Evangelicals because of his experience and personal friendship with them. It is up to us to strengthen this moment by finding new occasions to meet at the local level. This will help us to experience the beauty of being sisters and brothers in Christ.

Beatriz Sarkis

1 <http://www.worldevangelicals.org>

2 Chiara Lubich nella Chiesa di S. Anna, Preghiera ecumenica per l'Avvento, 29 novembre 1998 ad Augsburg, Germania



Il gruppo che ha partecipato all'Incontro a Bad Blankenburg quest'anno

Here are the telegrams of Emmaus

Marie Antonia Fancello (Emanuela)

«Walk in the light»



Maria Antonia, focolarina of the Roman Mariapolis, known as Emanuela, the name given to her by Chiara, left for heaven on November 16. The funeral was held at the Center of the Opera with the presence of her sister Aurora, who is also a focolarina, a brother and many relatives who came from Sardinia, Rome, Calabria and from Switzerland. In a sala filled with members of the Movement and the people who knew her, we lived a moment of intense communion with the Heavenly Mariapolis.

Emanuela was born in 1932 at Dorgali (Nuoro) in Sardinia in a Christian, united family tried with many sufferings. Their mother, who passed away at only 50 years old, left behind five children, the youngest of whom was only ten years old. When she was only fifteen, Emanuela understood that she must not think of her own sufferings, but to make hers those of her father, her brothers and her sister. So she developed her talents of dedication and service for the others, her sensitivity towards those who suffer, an attentive and caring love for everyone, which had always been her characteristics.

Since she was a child she was a member of the Catholic Action, and as such she received a solid religious formation and acquired an openness towards the others. With Aurora in '58 they met the Movement through their parish priest who had invited some of the first focolarini: Dori Zamboni, Guido Mirti (Cengia) and then later Gabri Fallacara, to talk about this evangelical life to the youth of the Catholic Action. Emanuela was fascinated and together with her sister and other youth they started to live the Ideal. They formed the first group, which later became the seed of the future developments in the whole region, cared for by the focolares of Sassari. A short

while later some vocations to the focolare were born and Emanuela, even if she could not immediately answer to this call since she had to take care of her father, felt that God was preparing her to follow Him along this path.

She left for the formation school in Loppiano in '68. Throughout all her life

in the focolare she gave her precious service to the Opera also in her profession as a nurse, doing everything with a great charity. In '77, during a period in which she was in Rome because of her job, she wrote to Chiara: «It often happens to me that I pass by some church. When I am in front of Jesus in the Eucharist I see myself as if in a mirror, without looking at myself; I see the dust that has settled on my soul. But He is the answer: "I am here for you!" And immediately I fell as if I have been washed clean, made new, and I leave happy». In '81 she wrote to Chiara, after having listened to what she said about unity: «While you were speaking, it was as if a fire had entered my soul and destroyed everything that was not love ...».

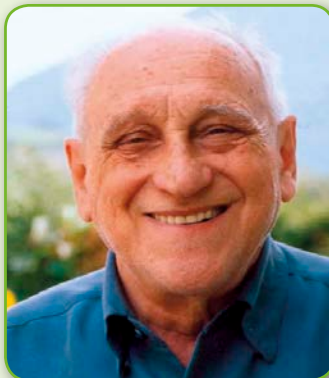
In 2009, after having given herself for the others, she is now the one who needs help. Her health has made it necessary to move to the Casa Verde in Grottaferrata, a focolare that will allow her to receive continuous assistance. The virtues of Emanuela that emerge are many: she remains serene and bears all physical pain without complaining. Rather, she created an atmosphere of joy, and she was always ready to share her talents. She recognized the love of God in everything.

Her Word of Life is: «While you are in the light, walk in the light and you will become children of the light» (Jn. 12,36). her smile up to the end bore witness to this.

Let us be grateful for the fruits of her life, that has been totally given to God and to humanity, and let's ask the Father that the joys and the sufferings offered by Emanuela contribute to the spread of His Kingdom.

Giulio Maria Sarrugero

«Sanctity out of love»



Giulio, focolarino of the Mariapolis Ginetta (Brazil), went back to the house of the Father on November 12, accompanied by the love of the focolarini.

He was born in Melzo (Milan) in 1925, the youngest of eight brothers in a beautiful Christian family. In the beginning of the second world war he was called to the army. A few months later he is able to escape because he was against the madness of the war. In this circumstance he understood that he had to spend his life to bring peace among people, giving himself to God in some way. After the war, he commits himself in the labour union and actively participated in the life of the parish. But he was not satisfied.

In '53 he met the Movement and was fascinated by the possibility of always living the Gospel. The next year, during the Mariapolis of Vigo di Fassa, he found his way; to consecrate himself to God as a focolarino. In '63 he participated in the school of formation in Grottaferrata and in '64 he was sent to the focolare of Turin.

Two years later he left for Recife and thus began his long Brazilian adventure. He learned a new language, he adapted himself to new customs and he got to know a new people. In contact with the extreme poverty of some of «peripheries», Giulio saw how the Gospel contained the true revolution. In answer to the request of a Bishop, he agreed to go with another focolarino to the island of Marajó, in the mouth of the Amazon River, in order to manage a social project, living in the midst of simple people and a vibrant nature. In '70 God called him to move to a «forest of skyscrapers» of San Paolo and there he brought the ideal also to the States of Minas Gerais, Paraná, Santa Catarina and Rio Grande del Sud.

During those years, Chiara gave him the Word of Life: «*Estote parati* (Be ready)» (cf. Mt 24,44). Giulio wrote her some years later: «Meditating

on the thought of the Link-up wherein you push us towards a «sanctity out of love», I understood that the words «*Estote parati*» fix me in the Will of God and, if I live well in every present moment, the sanctity out of love is a logical». Chiara answered by giving him a new name: Giulio Maria, so as to

be «*all Hers, a very alive instrument for the realization of Her Magnificat*».

In '74 he returned to Recife. After having overcome a difficult period he wrote to Chiara: «What surprises me is the new dimension with which I live the Ideal... Before, Jesus Forsaken in all his thousands of shades was often difficult to accept (and many times I ran away from him)... and it was even more difficult to welcome him with joy; but now... it is normal, I would say, natural to do so. Another splendid reality was having discovered in a new way the beauty and efficacy of the trinitarian life, the life of unity».

Nine years later we find him in the Mariapolis Ginetta, where he lived for 31 years, contributing through his different responsibilities, to its development. He was the author and witness of conversions, life changes, miracles that happened in the history of the Little Town. Many particularly remember him as one of the pillars of the *Cidade Nova* Publishing House. His poems were famous, texts filled with insight and wisdom, with a marked sense of humour, which he often shared during birthday celebrations. Gifted with artistic talents, he prepared many *Mariapolitals*.

As the years passed, his health diminished. He wrote to Chiara in '99: «I have something precious to offer for the Opera, both in Brazil and for the entire world». Even when his physical limitations did not permit him to do much, his presence in the focolare was always a source of joy.

Grateful to Giulio for his living example, all for «*Ut omnes*», let us offer prayers for him.

Assunta Sorgi

«*With Tommaso behind Chiara*»

On November 27 Assunta, married focolarina, wife of Tommaso Sorgi, left for heaven at 93 years old.

A crowded and profoundly recollected church gave her the final farewell in Teramo, expressing the gratitude for the gift that she had been for many.



Assunta was born in a beautiful family of and at two years old she lost her mother. She wrote to Chiara about her infancy: «As she died she held my hand and told me: "I am leaving, but the heavenly mother will be with you". I always had a special love for Mary, but you, through the Ideal made me discover that She is my mother also here on earth: I have only one mother on earth». At 25 years old she married Tommaso with the intention of building a solid Christian family; they have four children: Pino, Magda, a Volunteer, Gabriella, married focolarina, and Chiara.

In 1956 Tommaso met the Ideal. Assunta, even if she did not immediately adhere to this new spirit that often «took away her husband, who was already super-committed as a parliamentarian in Rome and then later also her daughters», she always welcomed with great generosity the focolarini and focolarine who came from Rome to Teramo.

But her real decision dates back to 74 during a meeting of the New Families: in those days she felt that Jesus was alive in her heart and she understood that she had to tell this to Tommaso. It was not easy for her since she was quite reserved by nature, but this act marked the passage from an individual spirituality to a collective one. She participated with Tommaso in a school for married focolarini in Loppiano. From that moment on she committed herself with generosity to living and spreading the spirituality of the Movement by caring for the families and the newly born community of Teramo. Their house was always open for anyone, and whom Assunta would welcome with elegance and refinement.

She always gave her life to build Jesus in the midst in focolare: this was her absolute priority.

She was very forgiving and she knew how to make herself a friend to her children in the various phases of their growth. In '85 Assunta and Tommaso moved to Grottaferrata upon the request of Chiara and remained there for 25 years until the end of June 2010. A short while before leaving Teramo, Assunta wrote to

Chiara: «Now that the moment of our departure is really coming, I feel my smallness, my inability to face everything that this move will bring. But what gives me peace is the choice that Jesus, through you, has made of me. And I trust Him totally... Growing a little bit in the Ideal, I feel that everything I possess is if it is a reflection of the Opera: is because of His grace, both the things that I am bringing with me, and those things that I am leaving behind: children, grandchildren, places and also the community that I have tried to care for with much love throughout these years». Assunta continued with perseverance in the Holy Journey facing the inevitable trials of life: «...In front of the enormous gifts which His Love continually showers on me, I truly feel that I am a useless and unfaithful servant. But what matters is to accept myself as I am, even with the baggage of my imperfections weighs heavily on me, that it takes away my courage to take the risk. Then the great reality that we strive to guard within us becomes stronger and is lit up: Jesus Forsaken».

In 2010 when, due to health reasons, it was deemed as necessary that Tommaso and Assunta move back to Teramo, the fact of leaving the Center of the Opera and the Roman Mariapolis become a great trial for both of them that only the love for the Desolate and the affection for their children and for the community, soothes. For the focolare of Pescara the presence of Assunta is a gift of wisdom, of essentiality and radical giving. She cannot always be present: «I would like so much to come to focolare, but my health is becoming more fragile. This is a suffering for me, but it is also a gift because I feel that these detachments that I live here on earth are preparing me for Paradise».

Many of her faculties become weaker, but what remains untouched are her love for the Ideal, charity towards everyone and especially with Tommaso. Often we would hear her repeat with simplicity and truth: «Tommaso is Jesus, I am Jesus, we have Jesus among us».

In '99 she wrote to Chiara: «While praying the Hail Mary (the fruit of your womb) I felt like a small tabernacle, with Him within me. Even the present moment acquired a new flavour: a moment of God, a moment of life that will never come back, a grace to welcome totally there, and not to let it pass in vain». It seems that Assunta fully realized her Word of Life: «I in them and you in me, so that they may be perfect in unity and the world will know that you sent me» (Jn. 17,23).

Anna Maria Bondielli

«*Make yourself one*» up to the end

Anna Maria, married focolarina of the zone of Florence, returned to the House of the Father on October 26 at 71 years old.

I was able to write her three days before her illness became serious, thanking her for her faithfulness to the Ideal, of how much she had always given and continues to offer for the Opera and for our General Assembly. The example of an evangelical life that «Ia» – as everyone fondly called her – has left us, in Massa, her city, was highlighted in an article published in the daily newspaper *La Nazione*. The depth of her relationship with God and her commitment to the Holy Journey emerge from the letters that she had written to Chiara in time. Here are two excerpts. In '76, after having listened to Chiara talk about Jesus in the Eucharist, she confided: «I was strongly touched by the fact that by consuming Him we become "Eucharist" for the others; this leaves me breathless». And in '97, at the end of a meeting Castel Gandolfo: «I leave from here to go and build always more Jesus in the midst in the focolare, in the family and in the local community... with a passionate love for Jesus Forsaken:



that nothingness of Love that I too would like to repeat with my life so as to be a mediator between God and every soul that passes beside and will pass beside me».

From the profile read during her funeral:

Anna Maria wrote: «One Sunday many years ago, I was going up to Loppiano, citadel of the Focolare Movement, without knowing what I would have found there, and I didn't know that my life would take a decisive turn on that day. I was happily married to Andrea, we shared the same religious principles and we wanted to have many children, he was an industrialist dealing in marble, therefore we were facing a beautiful, comfortable and even a rich life.

But that day in Loppiano, broke into pieces all my human expectations, and thanks be to God, a new life opened up before me that I saw and continue to see as stupendous. Among the many things that I saw and which struck me in a special way was the "making yourself one", the life of reciprocal love. I went back home and I was

deeply emotional and I said: "If I will be able to transmit this life to the people around me, it will bring about a chain reaction", and this is really what happened.

Even with Andrea (who also became a focolarino n.d.r.) we started a new life as a couple, that "make yourself one" became reciprocal and our unity as spouses was a crescendo that allowed us to open ourselves more and more to the others. I didn't have time to become a depressed housewife or a mother in anguish due to the problems of her children (they had four), because in striving to make myself one with everyone I was enriched by the many and mist varied realities. I always tried my best to live the present moment loving each person one by one and with my interior silence, various people shared with me also the most intimate and delicate realities they were living: many looked for me to talk to me saying that they never felt judged but rather, understood.

Making myself one was not always easy or did not bring consequences: I burned my pots and pans, I learned to prepare instant meals, to

exercise the virtue of patience and of being calm which are truly not my character.

But all these, together with Andrea and other people who were attracted by this life, started that chain reaction that I had foreseen in Loppiano and which gave life to a community wherein the experiences, the strengths, the courage were multiplied and we even were able to face many difficult situations together. As the community grew, the communion of goods among us also increased.

We could not solve all the situations but we tried, together with the clothes, shoes, and some pieces of furniture to pass on our experience of being truly brothers and sisters to one another; we were always able to create an atmosphere of fraternity and to live very beautiful experiences».

In the succeeding years Anna Maria felt the call to give herself to God as a married focolarina.

For her and for Andrea (also a focolarino) difficulties were not lacking, but both of them always stayed united to bear witness with an unshakable faith, to whom they had entrusted their life and brought it to its fulfillment.

If it's true, as Chiara told us, that one dies as one has lived, in "la" we saw this realized.

Around a year ago, when a serious illness manifested itself, she said her yes to God considering this as an important step in her life. In her room there was the presence of the divine, and whoever was beside her or passed by to visit her had the sensation that she was already in God. She never stopped loving up to the end.

To the gratitude of everyone was added also that of her grandchildren expressed by Irene who read a writing of her grandmother in which she confided to them the beauty of the choice that she had made in her life.

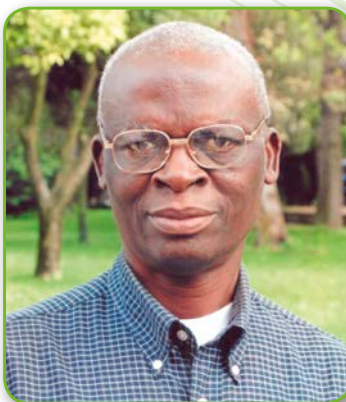
Robert Onyealusi (ROBU)

«Bridge» for the Ideal in Nigeria

On the feast of All Saint's, Robert, the first married focolarino of Nigeria, concluded his «Holy Journey» peacefully, surrounded by his wife Priscilla, by the focolarini and focolarine of the Zone who were together that day for the updating. Attracted by his life with Jesus Forsaken, they all went together to visit him and at the end of the recitation of the Rosary, while they were singing the Salve Regina, Robert «slid» into Paradise. He was born on April 30, 1952.

He himself shared his first encounter with the Ideal in Cameroun, in the period in which he was there for work: «In 78 three men entered my store in Bamenda, Western Camaroun. I noticed a great difference in them compared to the others in the way they spoke and in their actions.

This impressed me and when they had concluded their purchases, I decided to accompa-



started to receive the Word of Life. Afterwards I discovered that one of them was really a Nigerian – his name was Dick – and this encouraged me a lot. The Focolare in Cameoun entrusted me with bringing the Word of Life every month to Nigeria, since being a business-

man I made regular trips there. With joy I accepted to become the 'bridge' between Cameroun and the life that was starting in Nigeria».

When he went back to live in his homeland in '81, Robert was one of the first pillars of the Opera there, giving himself with great generosity, faithfulness and untiring commitment. Together with Priscilla, who both became married focolarini, they were the family focolare in charge of that nation. With special dedication and love they accompanied numerous families and, with the arrival of the focolare in Onitsha, it was their home

that welcomed the focolarine who came to start it. During the years that followed there were very many people who remained impressed by the luminous testimony of personal love given by Robert. Many were impressed by his readiness to do the Will of God and to go ahead in spite of the difficulties which he knew how to overcome thanks to his deep relationship with Jesus Forsaken. He didn't speak much, but he was always projected towards the brothers. He built the reality of the focolare with simplicity and concreteness. In '98 with the sudden death of the then responsible of the Movement in Nigeria, Miguel Angel Andradas, he immediately made himself available to move with his family from Onitsha to Igbariam to help the Ideallife of the growing community there, and they remained for four years. His relationship with Chiara was deep. After a School of formation in '89 he wrote: «I promise you with the help of God to bring this fire with all my strength. I will do everything possible so that the Opera will go ahead wherever I will go». His joy for the visit of Chiara to Fontem in 2000 and 2001 was great. And when, on December 7, he pronounced his perpetual promises, he wrote to her: «I can only say an enormous thank you to Him Abandoned and to you mama Chiara, I repeated my decisive "yes" with all my heart». The new name he received from Chiara was: ROBU (*albeRO BUono* (good tree) = a tree that bears much fruit) and his Word of Life is taken from Jn 8,29: «I always do what is pleasing to Him». In 2004 he was diagnosed with a serious illness and he started a new stage of his «holy journey». He often shared with me the moments of suspension and acute suffering, but he took everything from the hands of God. A few months ago when his condition worsened he said: «I am ready for what He wants» and with the support of the unity of Priscilla, of their four children and the focolare, he approached his encounter with Jesus, offering everything for the Opera, the Assembly.

Grateful to God for having given us such a brother, a giant of charity, let us unite ourselves in prayer.

Valter Todesco

«*The Ideal helps me to live*»

On November 21, two days after his departure for Heaven, the funeral of Valter, married focolarino of Italy was held in Genoa. Valter, was born in Parma 67 years ago, and he was eight when his mother moved to London, entrusting his care to the grandparents and then later to his aunts and uncles. Having finished his studies, he started to work in the craft workshops, then at twenty years old he left for Turin, where he worked as a warehouseman in a factory. The big city absorbed him in activities typical of the youth of his age. Among his many friends who promised



him a better future, there was also someone who invited him to go to the mountains for a holiday that was different from the usual one. Full of expectations, Valter left for Val d'Aosta and there he found himself in his first Mariapolis. He experienced a growing enthusiasm, his life acquires meaning starting from his work, the relationship with other colleagues and friends. He felt within himself a new fullness when he put into practice the Word of God. He met Delia who was also trying to live this evangelical spirit and she too is enriched by the teachings and the experience of the charism of unity/ When in 1972, marriage seals their love, there was a big celebration. Soon the family started to grow with the arrival of Dario, Maria Chiara, Enrico and finally of Alessandro and Matteo. They were beautiful years. In '83 he wrote to Chiara: «The Ideal helps me to live always more in Jesus. In order to thank Him I want to give myself to Him forever». Valter and Delia mature in their vocation in the opera with the families. The children are growing and work is not lacking. After these peaceful years a dark period begins. Valter's work, he has by now become started his own business, absorbs him so much that he sacrificed the most precious family affections that led

to the separation from his wife. In 2000 Valter left Turin and alone he went to Genoa. He looked for a job and found employment, and settles down in a small house. He gave up many comforts so as to be able to support his children's studies. The family crisis made him suffer a lot and he lost contact with the Movement. Slowly his focalare friends came to him, they had never abandoned him and respected his freedom. New relationships flourished and the focalare of Genoa is celebration for this brother who adheres once more and fully to the ideal of Chiara which as a young man had filled him with enthusiasm and totally satisfied him. Then the symptoms and the announcement of an illness that developed rapidly. Valter told Delia of his illness and immedi-

ately told her: «I accept everything happily! You should see how surprised the doctors were!» and still more: «Make sure you pass on this attitude to the children». In fact his greatest desire was that his children be joyful and happy. As the illness progressed, he was welcomed to the focalare in Genoa where the focalarini accompany him in his final journey. And Valter helped them to look only for what is essential and to choose that which counts the most, sharing fully his thoughts, doubts, frailties and difficulties. In '94 Chiara had given him the Word of Life: «Carry one another's burdens» (Gal 6,2), with the invitation to «*constantly maintain the flame of Jesus in the midst alive*». Keeping reciprocal love alive, let us pray for valter and for his family.

Margherita Messineo

The focalare as «Church»

On the 1° of December Margherita Messineo Luciani, married focalarina, born in Rome in 1925, left for Paradise.

She met the spirituality of the Movement in 1958 and the next year she was conquered by it when she met Ginetta Calliari, one of the first companions of Chiara. And so this is how she began, together with her husband Agostino, to attend the meetings in the sala of the Bergamaschi in Rome, where the small community would meet every Sunday with the first witnesses of the Ideal of unity. Margherita shared: «*every step that was made was guided by a word of the Gospel that sustained me... I discovered that everything comes from the love of God*».

Soon she understood that God was calling her to make a radical and totalitarian choice of God. She wrote to Chiara: «*Listening to the future programme for us married people, I had the great impression in my soul, as if I was being crushed by so many new responsibilities and I felt incapable of doing it. Then I found the solution, thinking that only Jesus in the midst, with our cooperation, will be able to do everything that you told us.... Thank you for this*



school of life». Agostino too, felt the call to the same way of the married focalarino.

To live unity in the focalare, searched for and renewed, with the gaze always turned towards *Ut omnes*, to imitate Mary in her *stabat* and to experience the joy that comes from love for Jesus Forsaken, became the cornerstones of her Holy Journey. She was simple just like a child of the

Gospel, she loved everyone, her charity was refined. In '96 she wrote to Chiara: «*It was as if a miracle happened in my life because I found my soul renewed by the charism... The collective spirituality was a source of new strength to go ahead and I found the joy even in sufferings of life's daily circumstances*».

Throughout the years her choice of God was subjected to great trials. Margherita wrote: «*These are difficult days, always the cross! I feel that I have reached the limit of my human resistance, but I must continue to go ahead in the present moment between Jesus and Mary. Everything has been swept away, like the leaves of a tree. What remains? The bare cross on which I have to put myself everyday so as to continue to say my yes. To know how to read the difficulties and sufferings with the light of God's love*». And still in '74 she wrote to Chiara: «*I had the intuition that Jesus*

Forsaken is just a passage, he is a dark tunnel without light, or maybe like the fog on the highway, that blinds you, but you know that after it passes there will be the sun. Here then I have found the Sun, it is like the crystal that moves to allow the butterfly to come out. I had lost Paradise, now I have found it again... it is the trinitarian love, I have rediscovered the focolare as new, as Church».

Her health is delicate, but she continued to walk behind the Sun, that Light. The fruits were abundant in the New Families and in the ecumenical dialogue. She followed those entrusted to her with creativity and with generosity she put in common her things to help, together with Agostino, the Movement in Rome since its first steps and all those who were in need.

«Faithfulness up to the end» is the phrase that summarizes the long years of her existence

also in the family, in her relationship with Agostino and her daughters Chiara and Agnes.

Many years before Chiara gave her a programme of life, summarized in the name, «Amata» (Beloved), telling her that her life should be able to express this phrase of Jesus: *“I am the resurrection and the life”*« (Jn. II ,25).

Margherita gave a continuous witness of this resurrection, even when the physical difficulties limited her meetings as travels. Her eyes were always luminous and expressive and her measured words but full of wisdom, knew how to give to whoever was beside her, all the joy that came from her intimate relationship with Jesus.

Let us pray for her and for her family, remaining united in Jesus in the Eucharist the bond between Heaven and earth.

d. Silvano Albisetti

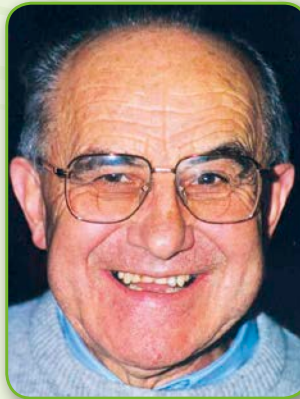
A hymn of gratitude

«“Yes” to consuming myself in unity and for unity»

On August 18, Fr. Silvano, priest focolarino, born in Morbio in Switzerland, reached the heavenly Mariapolis at 83 years old. The youngest of six children, he felt the vocation to the priesthood even as a child and he was ordained a priest at 23 years old. In 1969 he was nominated as the vicar general and in may '72 he met the Movement. In '74 he wrote to Chiara: «I do not want to be just a half-Jesus, I want to be like Jesus, like Mary... that is why I say my “yes” to consume myself in unity and for unity. How will I be able to do it... you will teach me. The Movement has helped me to persevere in this heavy responsibility as vicar general, for which I do not feel capable nor prepared, but i see that the Lord has loved me and loves me and is happy to use my nothingness».

Sensitive to beauty and to art, he wrote lyrics for songs, that up to today animate the liturgy. In '78 he wrote: «It is hard because I find myself

involved in a rhythm of activities that don't give me time to breathe» but in those years he spread the Ideal generously and many came to know the spirituality of unity through him.



Among the present intern members and adherents of Italian Switzerland, one discovers the «accompanying» presence of Fr. Silvano in many of them. His Word of life was: «I have given you this example so that you also may do what I have done» (Jn. 13,15).

He gave much of himself everywhere that he went to work. Among the staff, the religious sisters, and the guests in the home for the aged that he served for many years, it was not rare to hear him defined as «a saint».

Last August, after two strokes, Fr. Silvano enters into a coma. During his long agony, his hospital room became the venue of “pilgrimages” for many from every corner of Switzerland, who were deeply grateful to him.

From his spiritual testament: «years ago I discovered the pearl of Jesus Forsaken and I want to embrace him in the way Chiara has taught us, so as to always be in the Risen One and with the Risen One. In Him I recognize and confess all the frailties and weaknesses of my earthly existence

and I humbly ask for forgiveness from God and from all my brothers and sisters [...].».

At his funeral was a hymn of gratitude for the testimony of his life on the part of the Bishop, of many priests and the people of Chiara in the region.

Franco Galli

Warina Yousif Penyamin

A flower planted in heaven

Known for her love of life and for the family, Warina, a Volunteers of Iraq, reached the heavenly Mariapolis on August 27 at 43 years old, leaving behind her husband Haqi, also a Volunteer of God, and two children Marcel

and Matilde. together with them she met the Ideal in 1997: «From that moment on my life and my way of thinking changed», she shared.

Committed to the Movement first as an adherent and then as a Volunteer, she carried in her heart many of her experiences, especially with her relatives to whom she had always tried to present a witness of love. In 2007 she was diagnosed with a tumour and she had to undergo two operations in a matter of a few days, followed by chemotherapy. It was a very difficult suffering for her and for her family but: «The love for Jesus Forsaken gave me strength and courage... From this illness I learned that God loves me as his child». Up to 2011 it seemed as if everything was going well, but an examination revealed that the tumour was not vanquished. A third operation forced her to be bedridden for a long period of time. It was summer and the temperature would often go above 45 degrees and often there was no electricity. In spite of all of these Warina felt «the inner strength and peace that I tried to transmit to whoever was beside me» in the family or

in the hospital «through prayers or a word of encouragement».

She was surrounded by the love of the women Volunteers who often met for their nucleo meeting in her house. When she regained a bit of strength, she decided with her family, just like many others, to leave Iraq because of the situation in the Country and a few months ago they arrived in Canada. The women Volunteers told us: «We lost a sister and a friend. But she left her love and her faithfulness to Jesus Forsaken in our hearts... She was an example of self-giving and boundless love». Warina, a flower planted in heaven. Now she is closer to God whom she had always loved.

Rita Moussallem

Lois (Kallos) Irsara

A wise artist

Lois de Jan was born 91 years ago, in Cialarun in Val Badia (Trentino Alto Adige) in a family of farmers, the first of eight siblings. He shared: «I was born on a high mountain, at 1,600 meters high: a marvelous place!

My grandmother was the sister of our saint Giuseppe Freinademez (a missionary martyred in China). At 11 years old I was in Tortona, with the Little Work of the Divine Providence (Piccola Opera della Divina Provvidenza)

of Fr. Orione and I remained there for a year and a half: it was a period in which I felt that I wanted to become a saint-martyr, just like my ancestor [...] I began my artistic activity, sculpting small animals, lambs and Crucifixes, that I sold to tourists. But nobody had taught me how to do this. Then an intuition: "SSopn = Sedes Sapientiae ora pro nobis (Seat of Wisdom pray for us), here then was the right and also the best Teacher!". It was an acronym with which I signed my first works».



Silvio Gianotti

«the “dress” that suited me»



Silvio was born in San Michele all'Adige (Trent) and in May of 1951 the parish priest invited him to a meeting of the Focolare Movement, where he met Palmira Frizzera and Aletta Salizzoni. He wrote: «I can still remember the profound impression that they made in me; I was struck and evangelical principles lived. For me it was like an announcement, that reminded me of that of the Angel to Mary».

In '54 he married Afra. They went to Lourdes for their honeymoon: «In front of that grotto, almost alone, with faith and great emotion, we consecrated ourselves to Her and She took us at our word eventually calling us to Her Opera». For 35 years they manage a store «run honestly in a town of 300 inhabitants, which did not make us financially rich, but rich in relationships of family and many of them were built with the community».

In '65 at his first meeting on Rome he understood that the Ideal is a treasure to give and to live with others. And he gave it with joy to his wife and friends. He started a new journey of life, a greater service in the family, a work, in the Church and in society. A short while later even his wife followed him. «With ardour he shared – I threw myself in spreading the Ideal in my valley, making subscriptions to *Città Nuova*, regularly attending the meetings of the Opera, that helped me to grow humanly and spiritually, in the relationships with people, in managing the things of this world with a certain detachment. I felt that I was fully realized, I had found my place in the Church, the “dress” that suited me».

Volunteer of God, «I complete in my flesh the sufferings of Christ» (Col 1,24) was his Word of life. è stata la sua Parola di vita. A collaborator and supporter of the Aid Center for Life, since they were not able to have children, Afra

In '53 he attended a school of painting in Milan and in '61 he married Giovanna; from their marriage three children were born. Together with his friends they founded the cultural association «Ert por i ladins» and for more than 40 years organized painting courses in Brunico and in Val Badia. In '70 he was tasked with painting a big sundial for the school in his town, but he didn't have any ideas on what to do. He was invited to the Mariapolis. «Yes, I found the “sundial” that points its center in God: the Ideal of Chiara. I was enchanted by the face of Chiara: such beauty! I lost myself in the video struck by such beauty!».

His dialogue with her, his teacher of life, was uninterrupted; Chiara herself had collected his watercolour paintings in an album that she liked very much. «I received from Chiara the new name “Kallos = beauty that is peace, harmony and unity” and the Word of life: “Blessed the man who has found Wisdom’ (Prov 3,13), the Wisdom that is Jesus Forsaken”. A phrase that I tried to live in life and in art ... to go beyond the wound is what in painting transforms a work into art, or it is beyond, or it is not art».

In 2010 Lois underwent an operation in one eye, which took two years to recover and brought continuous pain. «I am trained! Luckily, because “a bandit” like me needs these things to convert myself... these plans of God are beautiful; it is up to us to exercise so as to win the race of the holy journey. I continue to paint even with just one eye, but it is better because I can only see what is essential!». One day he noticed three little birds on a branch and a fourth one which continued to fly around them; Lois noted: «It was like when Chiara spoke to us of Paradise: the Trinity with Mary within it dancing for joy. I took a brush and colours, and fixed this very beautiful image on canvas». He wrote this to Chiara, but also to all of us: «I want to know the Ideal, not to lose sight of you even for a moment, to write to you, to follow you wherever you go, to listen to you, to live what you say, the hammer the Word of life into my head, to run after you even if I don't understand anything, to run after you blindly, in search of your Ideal, the greatest thing that the world has ...».

Lois died in his sleep, waking up in the next Life, which he loved, painted and dreamt of so much.

Glauco Venuti

and Silvio opened their doors to other families and to adoption in '61 of Maria Teresa. His daily food was the Eucharist: from there he drew strength up to the end the impetus to live by giving Love to every neighbour and

to creating the Christian community around him. As an extraordinary Eucharistic minister, he had the chance of «bringing a little bit of love to homes», he used to say. He left us on September 30, at the age of 90 years old.



Antonio Giardina

Pioneer of the New Families in Naples

Antonio, one of the pioneers of the Movement in Naples, met the Opera with his wife Matilde in the beginning of the '70s in a meeting where they were invited to by Fr. Giovanni Sansone (see *Mariapolis* n. 5/2014). They immediately committed themselves to the New Families.

A Bank Manager, he placed at the service of others his notable ability as an organizer and *manager*. In the begibbing of the '80s, with generosity, together with Cipriano Quintale and Antonio Vetrano, he worked with great passion on the renovation of an old convent at Vico Equense, which was for many years the Mariapolis center of the zone of Naples. Then, always together with the other two, he served at the canteen during the weekend, in

the meetings of the opera where a lot of people were formed.

Antonio and Matilde (they were an inseparable binomial) were for more than ten years, one of the principal point of reference of the Movement for the New Families, for the community of Fuorigrotta (one of the most creative in Naples), for the parish and for the religious community of *Canonici Lateranensi* of Piedigrotta. He was able to build a relationship with everyone he wroked with. He shared a dialogue with each one and a deep respect for them: from his children to his wife, from his colleagues at work to his friends.

With his daughter Fausta, focolarina who has been in South America for a long time, together with Matilde they maintained a relationship though *skype*, which they had become experts in using. In this last year, he lost two points of reference that were very important to him: Matilde and Fr. Giovanni, who both left for heaven just a few days apart. Helped by many, he spent his final months in peace, always available for his children and grandchildren. He died suddenly on July 20 at 87 years old.

Bruno Cantamessa

Suor. María Teresa Eller (Marité)

Unity the foundation of her life

Our beloved Marité, sr Maria Teresa, one of the first religious intern members of the Work of Mary in Latin America, reached the Heavenly Mariapolis on September 9. A German, she belonged to the Sisters of the

Holy Cross and she met the Ideal in the first Mariapolis held in Chile and she launched herself in limitless. Unity became the foundation of her life. When she moved to Buenos Aires, in Argentina, she contributed to the birth of the



Movement of Religious Women. She was able to spend one year at the Villa Achillia, in Rome, and she wrote to Chiara: «You taught me how to love my Foundress; you have given me the treasure of my life with Jesus in the midst and the art of loving, but above all you have enlightened me, as a Sister of the Holy Cross, on that which must be the mystery of Jesus Forsaken concretely for me». On her return she translated, using a modern language, all the

writings of her Foundress, a work that was very much appreciated by the whole Congregation

For her 50 years of religious life she wrote to Chiara: «You have been a great gift for my religious life [...] I have reached the fecund happiness of being a Sister of the Holy Cross. From the depth of my heart I want to thank you for everything, and as a gift I ask Jesus for *Ut omnes*». I feel very much united with you through the source that is for me, the focolare».

Cecilia Capuzzi

Olivia Rodriguez Amorim

Detached from things

Olivia, Volunteer, was born in Southeast Brazil, in Claudio, in 1932. In the '70s she embraced the Ideal trying to live it fully, and which made her grow in the love of God. She was active in the parish and all of us entrusted our intentions to her prayers. She collaborated much for the Economy of Communion, as the person in-charge in the community of collecting and sending the donations for the ESPRI. Since she was living in a very central city square, she always placed her home at the disposal of everyone especially during celebrations welcoming all with much affection and attentive to their needs. She was detached from material things; during meetings and Mariapolises, she donated what she had made – she could sew and embroider very well – to help those who could not attend due to financial reasons. In the Mariapolis she was always doing the humblest services. She had health problems and she would feel very sick whenever she travelled, but she embraced Jesus Forsaken



on these occasions and attended the meetings just the same even if they were far. She received from Chiara the Word of life: «Whatever you do, do it with your heart, as if you were doing it for the Lord» (Col 3,23) and she strived to live this concretely, up to the end of her holu journey, on July 8.

Riscelta Lyra

Leny Schmid

The first Volunteer of Vallese

Leny, among the first Swiss Volunteers, reached the goal on September 8, at 94 years old. In 1964 she met the Movement which became her family. With her husband they ran a hostel with a restaurant and a pastry shop in a mountain village of Vallese. Her hostel was open to the Opera, welcoming groups of priests of the Movement for many years among whom was Bishop Hemmerle during summer holidays and later



also with other Bishops. Hard working, with a deep faith, hospitable, she easily established relationships with people and in her town she was well known and loved by many. With a love for Jesus Forsaken and the Desolate she was able to overcome difficult trials like the death of her husband and one of her four children, which happened in difficult circumstances. In a letter that she wrote to Chiara in 2001: «It is true that I have much to lose, but God is with me and often I tell Him: You are my only Good. I only want to do your will». In spite of the in-

tense activities in the family, Leny tried to be present as much as she could in the meetings both in Baar and in Rome that were «sacred» to her. When her strength and her health diminished she moved to a home for the elderly. It was not easy to go to a new environment, but she was happy because she could go to Mass everyday. She was always giving herself, and always asked to be updated in a detailed way on the Opera and the meetings that were held and for which she lived for up to the end.

Marianne Rentsch

Ilva Vannucci Magnini

Great commitment in Pistoia

On August 22, 2014 Ilva, concluded her «holy journey» at the age of 91. She met the Ideal in the Mariapolis of Fiera di Primiero in '58 invited, with her husband and son by a Volunteer of Pistoia who took care of her until she too became a Volunteer. Her husband Marcello, who was profoundly converted by the Ideal in Fiera, strived to live in a Christian way, leaving Ilva much time to dedicate herself to the Opera. After the launching of *Città Nuova*, Ilva would go to distribute the magazine at the doors of churches in Pistoia and in Prato with the other Volunteers of her nucleo. Going around in her motorcycle, she brought the Word of life to the parishes in her city. Being of a simple nature, she put herself at the service of everyone she met. Many became her friends, attending the various Mariapolises with her; a varie Mariapoli; and in turn they stayed close to her during these years, when due to her health she was no longer able to leave the house. One of them in particular accompanied her in her departure for heaven, with the joy of being able to express her gratitude for the gift of the charism. Ilva built



a great unity in her family, so much so that she was able to write, years ago: «Now I can say that everything has changed». Chiara gave her as the Word of life: «I do everything that the Lord wants» (Psalm 134, 6). Ilva wrote: «If I look at what I am, I am very frightened, thinking about this Ideal that is so difficult

to live and stupendous at the same time, but Chiara places in the soul a taste for the divine and you cannot escape».

She regularly took care of a group of the Word of life. «I have known the Ideal for a long time and at times I feel afraid of ruining it ...» but «with Him I feel the strength that is not human, a great trust, peace, union with God».

Ide Manici

Antonio Borrelli

A sculptor for peace

He died in Naples last February 11 at the age of 85, Antonio Borrelli, sculptor and pioneer of the «dialogue among people of religious faith and persons with no religious convictions». He, who had no religious con-

victions, and his wife Diana, a married focolarina, were a shining example of how this dialogue is possible. His humanity was great and also his respect for who had different convictions from his, and his love for the poor, the deprived, the unemployed, the least of society. We see him very young in a poverty stricken Naples in search for a job.



Committing himself to the Italian Communist Party, in the '50s, he gets involved in a lot of situations and even ended up in prison. When he finished his studies in '55, he has the possibility of working in China in Hong Kong for three years as a talented designer and, coming back to Italy, his artistic activities led to teaching positions in the Institutes of Art and to becoming a professor «Technique of fusion» at the Academy of Fine Arts of Naples from '78 up to his retirement. He shared: «The relationship that we had in the family was based on fundamental values such as work and honesty. When, through my wife Diana, I heard that Chiara Lubich, a Catholic had opened in the Church a dialogue with persons of non-religious convictions and without any thought of proselytism, I wanted to get to know this woman and to give my contribution until this dialogue could stand on its own and to spread». He considered Chiara Lubich as essentially a woman of peace inasmuch as for him there was a relationship between dialogue and peace.

With serenity he invited us to reflect on the value of diversity: «When there is dialogue there is no conflict». And still: «The first step, which is not easy, is the acceptance of diversity which in the world is an enrichment and not an element of division. But there is still a long way to go so that this vision enters into our mentality and influences our actions».

«I always felt that there was a close relationship between what I made as an artist and

purity, sincerity, authenticity, all manifestations of the divine" which for a believer is the footprint of God, and which for me is that primordial energy that gave life to the cosmos, the solar system, the stars, to a lake.... I have tried to transmit all of these through life to my children and to my students, to my friends».

The evening before he died, he had been sick for around a month already, surrounded by his wife and children for a toast, he was asked: «Antonio, what shall we toast to?» and he, with the simplicity of a child: «Let us make a toast to peace».

Bruno Cantamesa

Our relatives

The following have passed on to the Next life: **mother of Carmine Donnici**, focolarino in Turkey; **Flavia, sister of Luisa Franzoia**, married focolarina in Trento; **Assunta, mother of Adriana Martinelli**, focolarina at the Mariapolis Center of Cadine **and of Anna**, Volunteer; **Ida, mother of Ornella Ferrarini**, focolarina in Verona; **mother of Franco Franceschini**, focolarino in Milan; **René, father of Marie Pierre Flour**, focolarina in Paris; **Amanda, mother of Jutta Amanda Beyer**, focolarina in India; **Umberto, brother of Donata (Pinin) Paris and Gino, brother of Desolata (Desi) Gallo**, focolarine at the Roman Mariapolis; **Ambrose Nyaga, father of Joan Wanjira**, focolarina of Kenya now at the Roman Mariapolis; **Francesco, brother of Armando Tonon**, focolarino of the Roman Mariapolis; **Giovanna, mother of Pina Capelli**, married focolarina of the zone of Rome.

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Words of Life 2015

EVENTS

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- 6 New publication. *Francis and Jerusalem*
- 7 Towards March 14, 2015. *Chiara Lubich. Unity and politics*
- 8 III International Congress of Movements and New communities
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AT THE CENTER

- 10 The new Center of the Opera. First meeting first novelty
- 12 Bishops of various Churches. The disciples are recognized by love
- 14 Secretariats of Teens for Unity. Create synergies

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