

Press release - June 15, 2015

Pasquale Foresi, co-founder of the Focolare Movement passes away

The first focolarino priest

Maria Voce, president of the Focolare Movement communicated the brief news that Pasquale Foresi passed away on Sunday June 14, 2015. She added: *"We unite ourselves with Chiara in donating to Mary this dear son of hers, thus overcoming the pain of his departure"*.

Who is Pasquale Foresi for the Focolare Movement? *"In the case of founders of great spiritual movements, we often see that God places beside the original custodian of the charism, persons who perform a very important function in its historical configuration"* – this is what Maria Voce wrote in the preface of the book, *Light that is incarnated (Luce che si incarna, Città Nuova, 2014)*, in which the author, Pasquale Foresi, comments on the twelve points of the spirituality of unity.

One such person beside the founder of the Focolare Movement has been Foresi, the first focolarino priest and first co-president.

Maria Voce continues to write: *"A rich personality, in whom Chiara Lubich always saw someone with a particular "design", the design of incarnating the charism, that is, of helping to materialize in concrete works the intuitions and motions that the Holy Spirit was gradually arousing in her"*. Thus, in the history of the Focolare Movement, *"fundamental dimensions of the charism of unity took shape in the field of thought and culture, its juridical system, its formation structures, its reach-out and editorial activities, and others"*.

She says: *"If Igino Giordani, a politician and a well-known Catholic writer, contributed not only towards the Movement's 360 degrees openness to humanity but also towards that experience of illuminations known as Paradise'49, Foresi contributed towards making those illuminations find the adequate structures and the appropriate instruments of mediation and incarnation"*.

Pasquale Foresi was born in a Christian family, in Livorno, on July 5, 1929. In 1946 his father, Palmiro Foresi, was elected to the Constituent Assembly for the Christian Democrats and he served for the I and II Legislature. Pasquale Foresi met Chiara Lubich in Trent in December 1949. Since then and until the end he was always beside Chiara and shared with her the Movement's responsibility. In previous years, he felt called to priesthood and for some years he attended the Seminary at Pistoia and the Capranica College in Rome, but then he faced a crisis in faith. It was only a few years later, when he noticed *"an absolute faith in the Catholic Church and at the same time a radical evangelical life"* in members of the Focolare Movement, that, as he himself related, *"I understood that this was my place and soon the idea of priesthood returned"*. He was ordained priest on April 4, 1954.

Countless are the number of times that Pasquale Foresi spoke or wrote to present the theology of Chiara's charism. He presented its social and spiritual dimension and emphasized with authority its novelty, both with regards to life and to thought. His works contain keenness of analysis, fullness of vision and optimism in the future, *"made possible by the wisdom that emerges from a strong and original charismatic experience, as well as from those abysses of light and love, humility and loyalty, that only God can engrave in a person's life"* (taken from the preface of *"Colloqui"*, Città Nuova, 2009).

Victoria Gómez (+39) 335 7003675 – Benjamim Ferreira (+39) 348 4754063