

Press Release – September 7, 2015

Refugees: new commitment and greater convergence

The Focolare Movement thanks Pope Francis and adheres to his appeal.

Pope Francis' words during the Angelus on September 6 shake consciences. He indicated a concrete way by which to support the plight of hundreds of thousands of refugees who are forced to leave their homes: “Before the upcoming Jubilee of Mercy, I appeal to parishes, religious communities, monasteries and sanctuaries of all Europe to express the reality of the Gospel and host a family of refugees”.

On behalf of the Focolare Movement, Maria Voce expressed “gratitude for the Pope’s brave and practical appeal” while emphasizing the decision to “open more of our homes and other reception places”.

Many initiatives, promoted by individuals or groups of the Focolare Movement, are already being carried out in various nations in North Africa, the Middle East, Europe, Southeast Asia, North and South America: support is given to thousands of people from Myanmar who live in refugee camps in the North of Thailand; bed & breakfast service is offered to migrants in the province of Florence; shelter is offered to refugees in Szeged and other cities in Hungary and Austria; refugees are hosted by families in Lyon; letters stimulating a supportive attitude to refugees have been sent to the President of Uruguay. These are just a few examples of the many initiatives pooled in the United World Project. But these are not enough.

“We need to do more” Maria Voce said, to stimulate actions that bring change in political vertices, in the circles of arms trade and in the choices of strategic decision-making, because it has become quite evident that these actions can be initiated from down below through the mobilization of civil society. The president of the Focolare Movement also called its members “to be more committed and to increase convergence” so that together with all those who move in this direction, they can promote initiatives to unmask the causes of war and the tragedies that plague many parts of our planet and find remedies for them “while we put at risk our strengths, our means and our resources”.

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