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MARIAPOLI

Newsletter of the Focolare Movement

unstoppable
Generation

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Gen2

An unstoppable generation

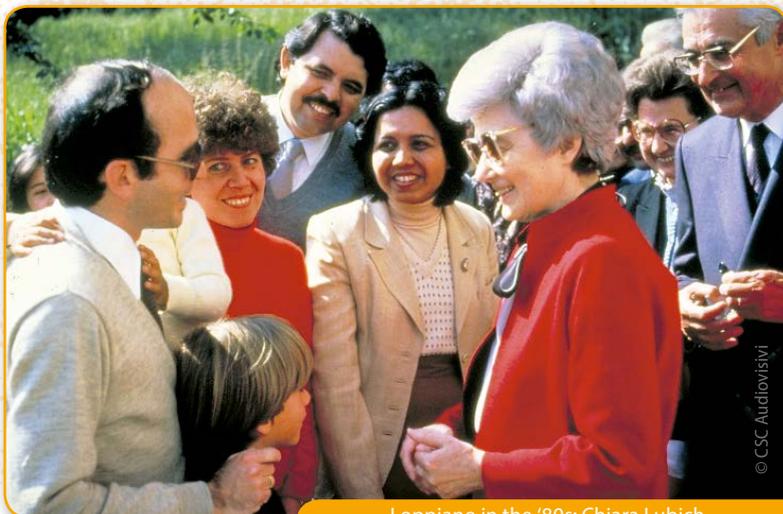
2017
Families
protagonists

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Chiara and the family

«Chiara and the family». The theme of the 9^o anniversary (2008-2017) of Chiara Lubich's departure for Heaven, will highlight the extraordinary contribution of light and wisdom that she gave to the family through her numerous interventions, also in public, and in her giving life to to **New Families Movement**, which celebrates the 50^o year of its foundation in 2017. Here are some excerpts taken from her talk delivered in Lucerne (Switzerland) on the 16th of May, 1999 at the 19^o International Congress for the family entitled «The family and the future».



Loppiano in the '80s: Chiara Lubich with the first families of the Loreto School

[...] Possiamo plasticamente rappresentarci la famiglia contemporanea con un'immagine: una madre ferita e desolata, che raccoglie in seno la sofferenza dell'umanità e grida al cielo il suo perché.

È una situazione che lascia quasi senza respiro. E viene da chiedersi: quale il futuro della famiglia? O peggio: esiste un futuro per la famiglia?

Davanti al grande mistero del dolore si resta come smarriti.

C'è nella Bibbia un vertice del dolore, espresso da un «perché» gridato al cielo. Riferisce l'evangelista Matteo, nel racconto della morte di Gesù: «Verso le ore tre, Gesù gridò a gran voce: Dio mio, Dio mio, perché mi hai abbandonato?» (Mt 27, 46).

Cristo è arrivato a quel momento passando attraverso una gamma di sofferenze devastanti: la paura angosciosa, il tradimento e l'abbandono dei suoi, un processo ingiusto e pilotato, la tortura, l'umiliazione, la condanna alla crocifissione, pena capitale riservata agli schiavi e che forse noi oggi non riusciamo a capire nella sua efferatezza, distruttrice della persona e della sua memoria.

Alla fine, quel grido inatteso e che lascia intravedere il dramma dell'Uomo-Dio: «Perché mi hai abbandonato?». È il culmine dei suoi dolori, è la sua passione interiore, è la sua notte più nera. Lui che aveva detto: «Io e il Padre siamo una cosa sola» vive la tragica esperienza della disunità, della separazione da Dio. E questo perché, per amore dell'uomo, si è caricato di tutto il negativo, di tutto il peccato dell'umanità.

In quell'abbandono, segno ultimo e più grande del suo amore, Cristo raggiunge l'estremo annullamento di sé e riapre agli uomini la strada dell'unità con Dio e tra loro. In quel "perché", rimasto per lui senza risposta, trova risposta ogni grido dell'uomo. Non è simile a lui l'angosciato, il solo, il fallito, il condannato? Non è immagine di lui ogni divisione familiare, tra gruppi, tra popoli? Non è figura di Gesù abbandonato chi perde, per così dire, il senso di Dio e del suo disegno sull'uomo, chi non crede più all'amore e ne accetta qualsiasi surrogato? Non c'è tragedia umana o fallimento familiare che non sia contenuto nella notte dell'Uomo-Dio. Con quella morte ha già pagato tutto; ha firmato una cambiale in bianco, capace di contenere il dolore e il peccato dell'umanità che è stata, che è e che sarà.

[...] Attraverso quel vuoto, quel nulla, è rifluita la grazia, la vita, da Dio all'uomo. Cristo ha rifatto unità tra Dio e il creato, ha ricomposto il disegno, ha fatto uomini nuovi e quindi anche nuove famiglie.

Il grande evento della sofferenza e dell'abbandono dell'Uomo-Dio, può dunque divenire il punto di riferimento e la sorgente segreta capace di trasformare la morte in risurrezione, i limiti in occasioni d'amore, le crisi familiari in tappe di crescita. Come?

Se guardiamo con occhio solamente umano la sofferenza, i casi sono due: o finiamo in un'analisi senza via d'uscita, perché dolore e amore fanno parte del mistero della vita umana; oppure

cerchiamo di rimuovere quello scomodo ingombro, fuggendo in altre direzioni.

Ma se crediamo che dietro la trama dell'esistenza c'è Dio con il suo amore, e se, forti di questa fede, scorgiamo nelle piccole e grandi sofferenze quotidiane, nostre e altrui, un'ombra del dolore di Cristo crocifisso e abbandonato, una partecipazione al dolore che ha redento il mondo, è possibile comprendere significato e prospettiva anche delle situazioni più assurde.

[...] È l'incontro con lui, che da «Persona divina» si è fatto individuo senza rapporti, con lui, il Dio dell'uomo contemporaneo, che tramuta il nulla in essere, il dolore in amore. Sarà il nostro «sì», il nostro gesto d'amore e d'accoglienza a lui, che inizierà a sgretolare i nostri individualismi, facendoci uomini nuovi capaci di risanare e rivitalizzare con l'amore le situazioni più disperate.

[...] A volte i traumi si ricompongono, le famiglie si riuniscono; a volte no, le situazioni esterne restano come sono, ma il dolore viene illuminato, l'angoscia prosciugata, la frattura superata; a volte la sofferenza fisica o spirituale permane, ma acquista un senso unendo la propria alla "passione" di Cristo che continua a redimere e a salvare le famiglie e l'intera umanità. E allora il gioco diventa soave.

La famiglia può dunque provare a ricomporsi nell'originario splendore del disegno del Creatore, attingendo alla sorgente dell'amore che Cristo ha portato sulla terra.

Penso che gli sposi e le famiglie possano saziare a quella sorgente ogni sete di autenticità, di comunione continua e senza riserve, di valori trascendenti, duraturi, sempre nuovi. Anche perché è Dio stesso che può farsi presente nella loro casa, per condividere con loro la sua stessa vita. «Dove due o tre sono riuniti nel mio nome (= nel mio amore) – ha detto Gesù – io sono in mezzo a loro» (Mt 18, 20). È una splendida possibilità



offerta anche alla famiglia, quella di diventare luogo della presenza di Dio.

Per una famiglia che vive così, nulla v'è di estraneo di quanto le succede attorno. Semplicemente essendo quello che è, ha la capacità di testimoniare, annunciare, risanare il tessuto sociale circostante, perché la vita parla e opera da sola. È mia esperienza che essa sa aprire casa e cuore alle urgenze e ai drammi che attraversano la società, alle sue solitudini, alle sue emarginazioni. Sa persino incarnare e organizzare la solidarietà in cerchie sempre più vaste, fino a promuovere azioni efficaci per influire presso le istituzioni, bloccare leggi e disposizioni errate, orientare i politici.

Per la presenza e l'attività dei suoi membri nelle varie scansioni del sociale, essa sa pure entrare in dialogo con le istituzioni, avvicinare le risorse ai bisogni concreti, creare la coscienza e le premesse per adeguate politiche familiari e per correnti di opinione fondate sui valori. Credo che per il mondo non ci sia cosa più bella di una famiglia così. Perché, chiediamoci, cosa cerca l'umanità? La felicità. E dove la cerca? Nell'amore, nella bellezza, e pur di ottenerla è disposta a qualunque cosa. Lì, in quelle famiglie, c'è la piechezza dell'amore umano e la bellezza dell'amore soprannaturale.

[...] «Salvare la famiglia – scrive il grande scrittore cattolico Igino Giordani – è salvare la civiltà. Lo Stato è fatto di famiglie; se queste decadono, anche quello vacilla»¹. E dice ancora: «Gli sposi divengono collaboratori di Dio nel dare all'umanità vita e amore... Amore che dalla

Families protagonists

2017, a year to highlight the potentialities of the first cell of society illuminated by the Charism of Chiara. Events all over the world

«A family that lives the Gospel does not remain indifferent to the things that happen around it and by simply being what it should be, has the capacity to bear witness and to heal the surrounding social fabric». The experiences and the initiatives that emerged during the Congress of the New Families Secretariats (3-6 November 2016) at Castel Gandolfo have well highlighted this thought of Chiara and her vision of the family as the primary venue where the fundamental values for building society are learned.

The widespread sharing among all the participants - coming from Europe and Countries from the other continents such as Paraguay, Taiwan, Philippines, Lebanon - became the ideal

platform to launch the proposal of how to celebrate the 50° anniversary of its foundation: «To experience a journey with all the realities of the Movement on the local level, to



famiglia si dilata alla professione, alla città, alla nazione, all'umanità. È una distribuzione per cerchi come un'onda che si dilata all'infinito. Da venti secoli arde un'inquietudine rivoluzionaria, accesa dal Vangelo, e chiede amore»².

Chiara Lubich

Da *Nuova Umanità*, 21 [1999/5], 125, pp. 475-487, pubblicato in *La dottrina spirituale CHIARA LUBICH*, Città Nuova, Roma, settembre 2006, pp. 274-281,

1 I. Giordani, *Famiglia comunità d'amore*, Roma 1994, p. 15
2 I. Giordani, *Il laico Chiesa*, Roma 1988, pp. 107ss

be a living testimony together of the Ideal of unity incarnated in the family and to offer this to all the families in the world». This is how Maria and Gianni Salerno, the new central delegates of the New Families, expressed themselves explaining in detail that «it will be a journey of reflection and elaboration of the contribution that the charism of unity offers to the family».

The death anniversary of Chiara in 2017 will therefore be dedicated to «Chiara and the family» and will be the beginning of a journey which will be shared with all the families around the world during the entire year: an opportunity to work together with the whole Movement and to offer the thoughts of Chiara and the life born from it, in relation to the challenges the family faces today.



Gianni e Maria Salerno



Stefano e Roberta Serratore

Stefano and Roberta Serratore, who are coordinating the preparations, shared to the participants what they have been living in these past months: «As the ideas gradually developed, we understood that this anniversary was continually acquiring a more wide ranging scope. The theme "family" in fact is transversal and concerns the entire Movement».

There are three paths which trace the steps of our journey: «Family: a story of relationships from the "I" to the "we"» (couples relationship, relationship with the children, among generations); «Love: instrument and answer to the critical situation of the family» (wounds, challenges, sufferings: the realities of life in a journey of communion and sharing); «Family: a creative resource for the social fabric of all peoples» (life, family ties, solidarity and acceptance, social commitment and work).

There will be various local events all over the world, organized

according to the resources and the more urgent challenges of a given territory, realized in the individual Countries, as steps along this journey.

The main event will be held in Loppiano from March 10 to 12, 2017 with families representing the entire planet, coming from different cultures, religions and convictions. It will begin with a cultural Convention for experts in this field to be held at the Sophia University Institute, a seminar with a universal scope that will give the «go signal» to the birth of a Study Center to study in depth Chiara's thoughts on the family and to identify its innovative contribution.

On Saturday, March 11, 800 persons

representing the whole world will gather together. In the morning, different *workshops* will be held for all the different age groups, leading to the afternoon programme in the Auditorium with the participation also of the experts on the family present at the Convention and with the

possibility of live streaming of the event. On Sunday, March 12, the conclusion of the event with impressions, reflections and contributions of the participants, followed by a *focus* on the prospects and plans for the future.

A school for those responsible for the Family-Focolares will follow (March 13-18) and a school for Families (March 13-17) both to be held at Castel Gandolfo.

It will be possible to follow the journey throughout this very special year for the family through the website: www.famiglienuove.org

the central secretariat of New Families



27 January 2015 - 27 January 2017

Collective Sanctity, **sanctity of the people**

Two years after the opening of the cause for canonization of Chiara Lubich, the journey continues, which at present is in its diocesan phase

«We are always on a journey to realize our sanctification. Without this objective, after all, life would have very little meaning because God, who created us, has also called us to sanctity. Everyone must pursue this goal. The call to sanctity is in fact, universal. [...]

For us it is the will of God to walk along the way of collective sanctity. To do this we must always keep in mind two elements of our spirituality which we cannot disregard. We cannot become saints if we do not keep the Risen One alive in us and among us».

*Chiara Lubich
Loppiano, 14 May 1987*

Words such as these often inspire us to experience a new enthusiasm, to make new decisions in life to strive for a greater union with God and among us. It is like finding in Chiara a model for our life, a «mould» - as many say - to realize our own Christian identity. This is what the cause for the beatification of Chiara bears witness to.

On January 27, 2015 in the Cathedral of Frascati, the solemn opening of the diocesan phase of the cause of beatification and canonization of Chiara Lubich was held. From that moment on Chiara was called Servant of God. Two years have passed, marked by a journey coordinated by the Postulation office that is located in the International Center of the Movement in Rocca di Papa.

The special "Tribunal", instituted according to the practice of the Catholic Church, nominated by bishop Raffaello Martinelli of Frascati, has up to now gathered first the testimonies of the first focaline and focolarini, totalling 32 in all. Then around 90 testimonies were then gathered from persons of the most varied vocations and origins. According to the normal procedure, they have to collect the testimonies of all those who present themselves in order to express their opinion, even those unfavourable or contrary to the cause.

The members of the Tribunal were accompanied to the Little Towns of Montet (Switzerland), Ottmaring (Germany) and Welwyn Garden City (England) to collect

the testimonies of persons from various Churches. Representatives of other religions and of non-religious cultures also gave their contributions. The cause of Chiara has assumed - as underlined by the Postulator Fr. Silvestre Marques - an extraordinary scale and dimension that confirms the universal proposal of her sanctity.

Waldery Hilgeman, vice-postulator, is in the process of completing a doctorate degree in Theology on the way of sanctity that Chiara proposes in her writings, in her teachings and in her life. It is a study that is destined for a wider audience.

Who are those who normally approach the Postulation office? A wide variety of people: those who would like to have more information, those who would like to offer their testimony that attest to the reputation of Chiara's sanctity shown through her actions, attitudes, at times seemingly small, and which are shared in person or sent in writing.

A useful documentation are the impressions left by persons or groups who visit her tomb in the chapel of the Center of the Movement or her house. In these places one can witness to the emotion that grips many, decisions to conversion, the return of many people who had always remained close to Chiara, who has remained as an inspiring model for them and also for new foundations who find in her a source of life and strength for their journey and the support for their charism.

The Postulation office encourages everyone to continue to write, to communicate the fruits and the graces received. It also renews the invitation to contribute financially to the cause so as to feel that in this way we are also a living part of this journey. It is moving to see for example, simple people who send their savings, or children who sent what they have earned from their sacrifices.

The Postulation office is also preparing a document that will present the person of Chiara in greater detail and it is hoped that a new biography of Chiara can be compiled as the centenary of her birth approaches.

Of notable importance are the analyses made by experts of the Movement who have studied aspects of *Paradise '49* or other elements of the doctrine and mysticism of Chiara. One can understand the importance of this first diocesan phase, whose task is to gather all the details of the patrimony of the charism of Chiara.

In the next phase (the so-called Roman phase) they will proceed with the study of the documentation gathered.

There is much attention and interest in this journey on the part of the media.

prepared by the editorial board

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Gen2

Un unstoppable generation

At Castel Gandolfo from November 17 to 20, 2016 the world congress was held 50 years after the beginning of the gen movement, the jubilee celebration began in Cuba on July 6 with the gen2 of the Caribbean who met together for the first time¹

«Young people of the world unite!», this is how the gen Movement started 50 years ago. On July 6, 1966 the first cry and today we have reached the ends of the earth. From Cuba to Vietnam, from Guatemala to Brazil, from India to Burkina Faso, Kenya, Nigeria, we went everywhere to trace our roots.

In Novembre the international Congress was entitled «Unstoppable generation» and 1,200 young people came to take stock of the present and to look at the new prospects for a united world.

«It will be the second generation that will make the cry of abandonment of Jesus Forsaken re-echo up to the ends of the earth. And in that cry the whole world will hope again». These words of Chiara Lubich were the golden thread that ran through the entire Congress which began with an Expo that made them re-live the moments of foundation: the world Man, the Rainbow Revolution, going against the current, the pact of «*fino alla fine* (up to the end)».

A precious pearl was the greetings of the first focolarini and focolarine addressed to all the gen in the world. Aletta

Salizzoni, who left for Heaven a few days after, touched everyone with her words «go ahead».

The second day was spent together with the secretariats of New Humanity and had as its title «United World Project»: a glance at what has been done so far ever since it was launched during the Genfest 2012 up to planning the new steps to be taken together as the first and second generations, a project of the whole Movement.

We concluded in St. Peter's Square participating in the closure of the year of Mercy with Pope Francis, on Christ the King Sunday. A gen girl wrote: «Today on the feast of Christ the King, we offer our lives with Chiara for a united world. I don't think it is by chance that we are here in the Square».

One of the key moments of these four days of Congress was the morning in which we shared our experiences on Jesus Forsaken in the different contexts and environments.

1 v. Mariapoli 7-8/9 2016





In preparation for Genfest 2018

Once the Congress ended, those responsible for the Youth for a United World, Marco Desalvo e Maria Guaita, together with those of the gen2 girls and boys, Gabriella Zoncapè and Marius Müller, with Cinzia Panero, production director of the genfest 2018, left for Manila, in the Philippines: an important step in the preparation of the event. The title will be «Genfest 2018: Beyond all Borders», chosen by votation from among various titles that were presented during the meeting of the secretariats of the Youth for a United World and the gen2 Rainbow Units last March 2016.

It will be structured in three parts, a pre-Genfest and a post-Genfest, with the main event being the Genfest itself, that will be held at the World Trade Center, Manila, from July 6 to 8, 2018. The pre-Genfest will offer the opportunity to the young people coming from Countries outside of Asia to get to know the Asian culture; the post-Genfest will consist of a school for Youth for a United World to be held in Tagaytay, in the Little Town of the Philippines.

A commission for the programme was set-up to prepare the Genfest made up of around 35 youth, an expression of the many realities of the Focolare Movement, the different dialogues and the various geographical areas of the world. It hopes to be a consultative body that will evaluate the various proposals (some of which were already expressed during the Congress last March), and will define the content of the programme.

The archbishop of Manila, card. Luis Antonio Tagle extended an invitation to all the young people for the Genfest, saying: «Let us celebrate the call to be one, to be united. And so we are waiting for you. Let's see each other in the Philippines»

Emmaus too followed us through live streaming and she made her presence felt through a video wherein she greeted us and conveyed her best wishes for our 50° anniversary and she assured us of her presence entrusting us with bringing ahead the Movement until we reach «*That all may be one*» with the same love for Chiara and for the Movement that the first focolarini and the first focolarine had, as they are leaving us and gradually passing on to us all that they have done up to now».

In another moment she spoke to us about Jesus Forsaken as the victorious king who will bring us to the fullness



of joy, and so we must never be afraid but we must embrace him in the sufferings of humanity without

hesitation so as to bear witness to the love of God. She told us: «Answer yes to anything, then it will be Him who will bring you there where He is».

With this same light, love and wisdom, Gesù answered all our questions, speaking several times of love as a natural and ontological necessity, as the motor of social change, and as the condition for a life that is truly worth living, over and beyond our beliefs and securities. He entrusted to us in a particular way the need to give back a human dimension to the disciplines studied in our universities because love always has a social dimension

With 80 gen from the different continents a travelling School was held which brought us to Loppiano, Trent, Tonadico and to the Center of the Movement. They were days filled with an immersion in the Charism.

the gen girls and the gen boys of the gen2 Centers

Called by name

At the heart of the focolare

**Moments of going in depth starting with the theme on Jesus Forsaken.
The annual retreats held all over the world brought new life in all the participants**

Strasbourg, Melbourne, Melong, Mariapolis Vita, Seoul, Fatima, Loreto, Johannesburg, Lima, Aparecida, Mumbai, Castel Gandolfo, these are just some of the places where the annual spiritual exercises for focolarine and focolarini were held. Agnes van Zeeland and Flávio Roveré, central delegates of the two Sections, some of the Councillors of the Big Zones and COouncillors of the Sections, present in different retreats, brought the unity of Emmaus and of the whole Centre of the Movement.

A common denominator that ran through these retreats all over the world was: the deepening of Jesus Forsaken, the approach with the realities of «Paradise '49», the centrality of the focolare, to be Church looking at the experience of Chiara and in the context of today with Pope Francis.

Emmaus, present during the Masses of the vows and promises in the retreats held at Castel Gandolfo, shared as a gift a few «pearls». Here are some excerpts: «On the 7th of December, there was that very beautiful reading from the Old testament which says: "... he called them by name" - speaking about the stars, the beautiful things of nature – "all of them came and no one was missing".



Castel Gandolfo. Emmaus with Marco Tecilla and Bruna Tomasi

Certainly we are not stars, we are creatures, but we too would like to be the stars in the crown of Mary when we will reach Paradise. In this hall there are many stars: stars that God has called by name, He looked at them with this special love, those whom Jesus asked to be his friends, who can say in every moment: this is the glory of God, He calls us by name. And our consolation is to answer: "Here I am. here I am today, and I will be here in a year's time, after ten years, here I am when you will call me in the last moment of my life", if you will grant me this grace, if He will grant us this grace. I asked this of the Madonna: that no one will miss this call, not now, not ever, but forever».

Melbourne (Australia)





On December 19 she said: «...a passage of *Paradise* says: one is in fullness and jumps into the void and finds the fullness; one is in the light and jumps into the darkness and finds the light again. It is truly like this if one puts Jesus Forsaken as one's center of balance because a leap into the void makes you crash; if instead you are in Jesus Forsaken he will keep you safe. Any other point of balance is not enough to prevent us from falling. Jesus Forsaken is the only point of balance for the focolarini and the focolarine». During the retreat of the Epiphany she added: «let us wish for one another that this balance, this light that we have experienced will remain always in our hearts, for the vineyard of Jesus Forsaken which is the whole world, for universal brotherhood, for "That all may be one" which is our aim, and that this remains forever».

Particular accents characterized the various retreats around the world. In **Melbourne** the small but happy white array spread in nine focolares of Australia and New Zealand wrote: «It was as if we drowned ourselves in the depths of the charisma that Chiara gave us». The 88 focolarine gathered in **Melong** in Cameroon, coming from the new Central-West African Zone, composed of seven nations and by the Little Towns of Fontem and Man, experienced the «new awareness of being the body of Chiara and that this will be the seed of new life in the Zone». In **Seoul**, the 120 participants of the new Zone of North-East Asia that groups together Korea and Japan, observed: «In spite

of being two realities with different characteristics, we felt ourselves enveloped by an atmosphere of family». From **Lima** they shared with us that «for the first time since the Zone was born, we met together and got to know one another. This has made the heart of the Zone beat more strongly». In **Strasbourg** the 144 participants coming from France, «retraced the fundamental steps of the vocation. It was an experience of inner liberation, of finding once again the enchantment of first love». In **Aparecida** the 760 participants received this message from Emmaus: «I am with you in this Brazilian stage and I assure you of my strongest unity so that the design of the Latin American continent will be better understood and realized according to the plan of God and the vision of Chiara». On the day of the feast of Christ the King they



remembered that in 1959, Ginetta Calliari and Marco Tecilla, as they were leaving for Brazil, Chiara entrusted them to bring Jesus Forsaken, the living crucifix, to the Brazilian people. «You will see the answer» Chiara added. The answer was there and Chiara gave to everyone the same consignment. In the **Little Town Castello Esteriore**, the 180 participants from Spain and Malta deepened some passages of «*Paradise '49*» and experienced in an atmosphere of unity the novelty of the «new set-up» that brought about the unprecedented meeting among the Maltese and the Iberians. They said: «The challenges to be faced are many but all of us entered into the same perspective of communion». Also in the retreat in **Prague** immersing themselves in the reality of '49, was a great source of light for the life of the focolare. Unity



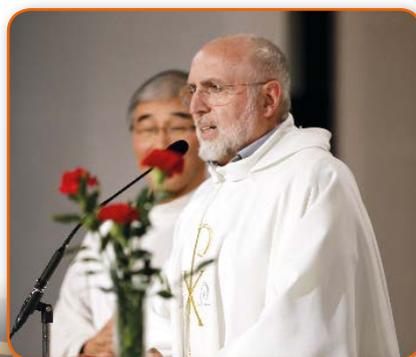
was lived among the small zones of Western and eastern Europe. The presentation made on Foco was a call to be «a window to the world», with the responsibility of sanctifying the focolare. A similar experience was made in the **Little Town Vita in Belgium**. They wrote: «An infinite wealth of gifts that were re-echoed in the impressions: passion for our Churches, faith in the power of the charism today, courage to launch ourselves into the cultural darkness, prayers for future vocations». In **Italy** some retreats were held in eight different parts of the zone and which gathered together around a thousand participants. The preparation everywhere was important wherein the focolarine and focolarini worked together with the married focolarini. The presence, in some moments, of the priest focolarini and priest Volunteers, made everyone experience that they belonged to just one focolare. In Loreto, the commission that is developing a course to transmit the legacy of light of «Paradise '49» to all the intern members of the Zone, made its debut.

Two retreats prepared by the Sections, allowed for a greater participation in Castel Gandolfo of a good number of focolarini and focolarine coming from the continents outside Europe and, in part, by those coming

from other Zones. The Roman Mariapolis and various participants from the Zone of Eastern Europe also came.

Jesús Morán, in the homily during the Mass of the vows and promises on December 9, explained the meaning of the invocation «Console my people», contained in the reading of the day: «We too – he said - are called to console: first of all the Movement, and then the Church and the world. In these times of desolation in many parts of the Planet, our being, our actions cannot but be consoling actions. An action that does not have the limits of space and time, that lead up to the realization of “*That all may be one*”». Citing some passages of *Paradise*, he continued: «“*Paradise '49*” is full of the paradoxical Wisdom of God. “This looking for something in its opposite (the sweet in the bitter) – Chiara wrote – is madness for men but wisdom for the children of God” (cp. 1454)... When we go out from there we fall heavily into the logic of the world, into its wisdom, its calculated balance: no paradoxes, just mediocrity». To conclude: «Let us ask Mary to help us to be always more and more faithful to the immense gift that we have received».

prepared by Centro Foco and Casa Vita



Towards the «World Person» Construction sites

In Croatia 250 gen3 for their Congress, moments of communion and of work also in view of the coming local and international appointments of the teens for unity

«For me the world is divided into two groups: those who are my friends and those who will become my friends». This sentence summarizes well the spirit that animated the four days of the gen3 Congress held at the Mariapolis Faro (Croatia) which gathered together last December 27 to January 1, 2017, teens from 12 Countries (Croatia, Serbia, Slovenia,



Macedonia, Rumania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, Switzerland, Belgium and Italy). It was a meeting wherein they also prepared for the coming international «World Person». Construction site (see box).

The first day was spent in getting acquainted: meeting the inhabitants of the Little Town, but also sharing about the life of the Teens for unity in the world. There were moments spent in the hall and also moments in small groups for sharing and for working. «It was one of the best meetings I have ever attended – wrote a gen3 boy. There were people from so many Countries and so many languages, but we were able



During the trip on the way to the Little Town Faro to participate in the Congress, the group from Rumania (gen3 boys and girls and their guardians) had a very serious road accident while they were riding a bus crossing Hungary. Miraculously, they all survived without any serious injuries. The concrete and immediate love of the Movement's community in Hungary was very moving: «We received a great deal of love – a gen3 girl said - an infinite number of people prayed for us, supporting us through sms, messages, telephone calls». The mother of a gen3 boy confided that she saw what a true family is: she said that even her own relatives could not have done for her son what the Movement did in those days. «We had

doubts about continuing with our trip to the Congress – a gen3 boy shared upon their arrival the the Mariapolis faro – but when we talked among us we said that all precious things must be paid for well. We felt that God wants us to be here, at least a part of the group. Even if the others had to go home, we feel that they are here with us, they said that they would offer to Jesus this great suffering of not being able to be here and they greet each one of you». «The accident made us understand that in anything that happens to us, it is worth it to abandon ourselves to the hands of God – concluded a gen3 girl - Jesus Forsaken united us in an incredible way! Then we understood that we were alive because God has a plan for each one of us, a divine adventure awaits us».



«World Person» Construction site 17 - 30 July, 2017

Every three year the teens for unity promote a two-week international *workshop* to learn how to love, to respect the country of the other as one's own. The first week, the teens coming from various Countries live together and share moments of formation in the culture of fraternity; the second week is spent travelling in the host Country or in nearby Countries to do concrete actions of solidarity together with the local communities. In July 2017 the international Construction site will be held: in the first week in Croatia, Serbia and Poland, and the second week in Italy, Croatia, Slovenia, Hungary, Rumania, Czech republic, Slovakia, Bulgaria, Lithuania, Poland, Macedonia. Simultaneously around the world, many other local Construction sites will also be held.

to understand each other. The experiences we heard were all very beautiful, and what I really liked is that they were shared by boys and girls of my age». «We realized – wrote the gen3 boys and girls to Emmaus and Jesús - how all the many little, daily acts of love can generate big actions of unity. We experienced the great spirit of welcome of Croatia. The gen3 from Western Europe had the pleasure of getting to know more deeply the Countries of the east and the gen3 of these lands built an atmosphere of encounter and friendship over and beyond the wounds of the past. How we wished that you could have been here with us to share the unity we built here!».

The second day, immersed in the life of the Teens for unity, we started from what Chiara had said when she launched it, to follow the concrete ways and paths for a united world. «Through these – she explained – you will be able to propose great ideals to the teens, to invite them to live for something great». Then a lesson on communication, a topic that the gen3 wanted to tackle also in the coming summer Camps. «After the Congress I am full of experiences – a gen 3 said.

«I am really happy for the opportunity to have been part of this meeting, because I felt the union with God and also with the other gen3». The central point was the one dedicated to Jesus Forsaken: the teens shared strong experiences. «Jesus Forsaken presents himself in front of the youth of this century – these are some of the words of Chiara read in the hall. [...] It is up to you to welcome him in your heart as the most precious pearl that I can give you today, for you, for the peoples that you represent here, but above all for the new world that

will be a home not just to many peoples, but to the one people of God». With this spirit we immersed ourselves in the preparation of the Construction sites: an exchange of ideas to define objectives and how to carry them out, an explosion of creativity that will be shared with all the other gen3 in the world to involve them in the preparations. «This meeting was a great experience that will always remain in my heart - a gen3 girl said.

«These were days spent in enjoyment and friendship which have made me feel like a ray of sunshine that enlightens and warms everything. When we were leaving we knew that Jesus was among us, he was renewing us and he will remain with us. Immediately upon our return, we linked up with one another through the social network and we continue to talk with one another everyday».

prepared by the gen3 Centers





Fontem Where inculturation is a daily way of life

A month after the celebration of the 50° of the Focolare Movement in the Little Town Mafua Ndem Chiara Lubich here are some prospects that emerged

«A Little Town where the incarnation of the Ideal of unity has become a reality» with these words the co-president Jesús Morán defined Fontem (Cameroun) during his first visit to the Little Town on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of its foundation. In Fontem one can in fact see that the houses of the people of the Movement are scattered throughout the town, blending entirely with the surrounding society, just as the hospital, the College, the construction site, the mechanic's office, the power plant, the kindergarten are an integral part of the town. There are also many focolarini and focolarine born from this land, even among the Bangwa people, and who today enrich the various focolare centers around the world.

Let us retrace the many events of this fiftieth anniversary celebration.

It began on Wednesday, December 14 with a day dedicated to interreligious dialogue. The intervention of the bishop Mons. Nkea was very enlightening on how one can be both an authentic African and an authentic Christian. Seeing how in his person the values of his culture and the Christian values blended well in harmony,

many of those present felt encouraged to go ahead along the same road. During the celebration in the afternoon, with traditional dances in memory of the focolarini who lived in Fontem and eventually left for the Heavenly Mariapolis (Lucio Dal Soglio, Doris Ronacher, Fr. Lino d'Armi) it was very beautiful to see the members of the Movement and

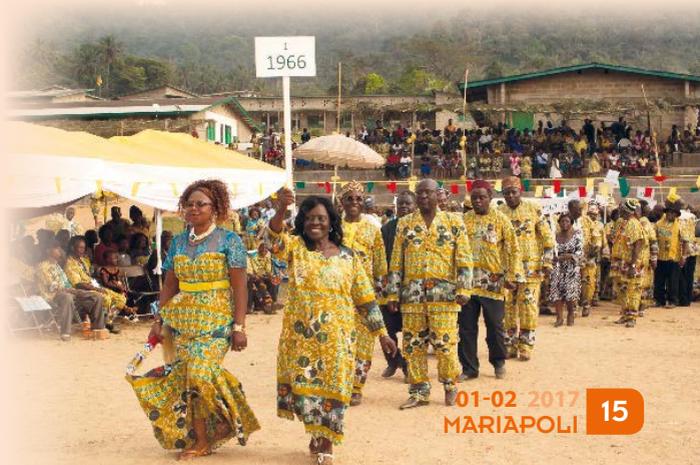


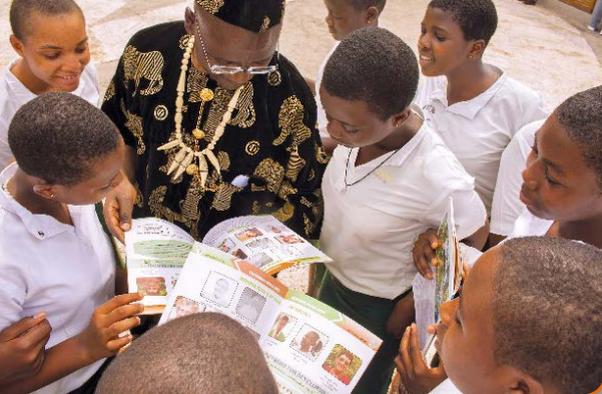
Jesús Morán con il vescovo di Mamfe, Andrew Nkea

© Gábor Papp

the people of the place united together without any distinction. The following day, dedicated to experiences and testimonies what emerged was how, over and beyond the difference of culture and race, working side by side in the hospital or in the College, a true unity was between the foreigners and the local people.

Friday, December 16, the Thanksgiving Mass was held in the parish of St. Clare with the attendance of the local administrators and the Fon aside from the more than 2,500 people belonging to the





deepened in the form of studies in the school of inculturation at he mariapolis Piero (Kenya) and which is also a fruit of the faithfulness to and love for Jesus Forsaken of the first focolarini and focolarine which has been transformed into «resurrection».

Marilen Nkafu, a Bangwa focolarina, vice-directress of the College, explained how for the past fifty years the relationship of the Bangwa,

Bangwa and Mundani tribes, among whom were some priests and nuns, many Bangwa catechists linked in some way to the Movement. Just as in the pure African tradition, lunch was served to all the participants. The love and hard work of many people, above all the mothers, especially in the days and nights before this event, created this small miracle.

Saturday, december 17 began with a parade of the former students of the College, coming from the various cities of Camroun or even from abroad, some of whom practice professions of high prestige or who have important responsibilities in the government. Their interventions underlined the good things thatthey received through the Movement that has encouraged them to be also the bearers of this light. In their shar- ing Jesús saw inculturation in action that is



the members of the Movement and the representatives of the local Church has been purified by moments of trials that have led to a unity that has never been experienced before. A unity that is a gift and a commitment for the future.

Charles Tasong, married focolarino , among the first to welcome the ideal of unity, said that now this commitment consists in working together with new enthusiasm: white and black, members of the Movement and former students, people of the Movement and those involved in the parish or in the diocese, so as to build a model of

a new Church and a new humanity, that will be a source of hope for the youth and for society.

Here are the planned prospects: to work together so that more people of the Bangwa tribe will become the protagonists in the life of the Little Town and to re-launch and extend the «new evangelization» promoted by Chiara Lubich in 2000. Some actions in this regard have involved more than 700 students from dif-



Religious men

The first panasian meeting

In Tagaytay the project to give rise to a coordinating body at the service of all the religious men of Asia

Five religious families, four Countries of origin, three Asian Zones: this was the composition of the first panasian meeting of religious men of the Focolare Movement, held at the Mariapolis Peace of Tagaytay (Philippines) from January 15 to 20. We came from the Philippines, Hong Kong and Indonesia, together with Fr. Theo Jansen OFM Cap., who came from Loppiano to repre-

ferent district schools and the surrounding areas. The «New Families» Movement has been

working with the parishes and with other Movements. In 2017 the event «Chiara and the family», which will be celebrated all over the world on March 14, will have here an inter-

diocesan characteristic and will involve other ecclesial communities and groups. Last December 17, a group of former students of the Collega in collaboration with the Focolare Movement and the diocese of Mamfe launched the «Mafua Ndem Chiara Lubich Foundation», that proposes fund-raising for the integral promotion of the Bangwa and Mundani people especially those who are disadvantaged in particular in the field of education and sanitation. It will be managed by a foundation council that will activate a ten-year strategic plan.

Biagio Sparapano



sent the Center of the Religious Men. We were from different religious Orders and Congregations: Franciscan Conventuals and Capuchins, PIME, Saverian Missionaries and four Filipino Religious belonging to a recently founded Institution, the Opifices Christi. Among them was the founder, Fr. Aaron Bamba. The last day was an Open Day held in the Little Town, where we were joined by men and women Religious coming from around Tagaytay and from Manila.

The title of the meeting, «Jesus Forsaken: window to God and window to humanity», was printed on a big poster together with the image of Mary who united all the religious families of different Charisms under her mantle: which reminded us of Her presence as the background of our meeting.

With the religious present we already knew each other through our email exchanges, but for the first time we were meeting face to face: an occasion to share our stories, highlighting how God acted in our life by loving us personally and calling us to be apostles of unity among the Religious. Everyday after the meditation, we went to the chapel for a moment of personal reflection in front of the tabernacle, followed by moments of dialogue and sharing. Our small number allowed facilitated our communion.

The meeting with the inhabitants of the Little Town allowed us to get to know the reality of the Religious in Work of Mary in Asia. We discovered that many of them came in contact with the spirituality of unity not through other Religious but through people of other vocations of the Movement. This gave us much

hope and joy. Among the surprises, was the possibility of visiting Casa Micor, the house destined for the Religious: we are hoping with a more stable presence of the Religious in Tagaytay, a center of spirituality for consecrated life may be born, a central point of connection and irradiation for the Religious of Asia. At the conclusion of the meeting we signed together a poster: a symbol of the new unity that we wanted to start among the Religious of Asia. A slice of panettone and a cup of rose tea sealed the event.

We then prepared for the Open Day. There were 59 participants. Among them were two Irish priests of the SMA who live in Manila and some seminarians belonging to a new Philippine congregation. The presence of some representatives of the Little Town coming from different parts of Asia and Europe was very beautiful: to be together as the «family of the Focolare» bore a visible witness of «*That all may be one*».

At the conclusion we expressed the desire to meet again and committed ourselves to remain in contact continuing the communion of life and of experiences. And also to create a coordination for now among the religious men of the Philippines, Hong Kong and Indonesia at the service of all the religious in Asia.

«I can sense that the meeting was an important step in the journey of the Movement in Asia – Fr. Salvo D’Orto OMI, central delegate for the Religious men wrote; where before there were individual religious who gave their lives for the spread of the Ideal of unity, today they it is the presence of Jesus among a group of Religious who is doing it. This is a good step forward».

Fr. Matteo Rebecchi Sx and Fr. Theo Jansen OFM Cap



A very special Congress was held from January 10 to 15 in the international Mariapolis Centre! In reality it was a retreat/Congress of the priest and deacon focolarini and Volunteers, gens and animators of the parish (PM) and diocesan (DM) Movements, who met for the first time together after 50 years of existence of the Parish Movement. But it was not really a celebration but rather a desire for communion and for sharing.

As we know, the Parish Movement was born from the parish priests who were living the Ideal of unity and who wanted to give it generously to their own parishes. Its first Mariapolis was held in Rocca di Papa in 1967 and from there the Movement spread rapidly in the five continents. Through the years there have also been many lay people who brought it ahead in the parishes, even where there were no priests of the Movement, but where Jesus in the midst – engine of the community - attracts and converts.

The in 1973, the Diocesan Movement was around the priests’ focolare in Ascoli, Italy. The presence of many young people around the two priest focolarini encouraged the then bishop Mons. Marcello Morgante, to ask Chiara for the first Regulations. Today the committed lay people are several hundreds in six dioceses where the Diocesan Movement is present, in more than 50 parishes.

Thus there are many reasons to meet and to share what is happening in the two



Seeds of communion... that grow into fruits!

At Castel Gandolfo 1,500 participants from more than 40 Nations, priests and laity, in an atmosphere of family and celebration

priestly branches fully in tune with the work done by the two Movements to which they had given life. The presence of the genS, an integral part of these realities, could also not be missing.

While the priest and deacon focolarini already arrived on the 10th of January for their retreat, the animators of the PARish and Diocesan Movements arrived on the 12th. They were two days of joy and reciprocal acquaintance, through the many experiences of lay people and priests on how this life continues to fascinate and to spread. In Rumania for example, where around six Greco-Catholic priests, a very lively parish community is starting, or in Hungary where the arrival of the parish priest who is a focolarino more than ten years ago, has renewed the parish completely. There were many experiences with the youth who were attracted by the reciprocal love lived in the parish.



The theme of Fr. Hubertus Blaumeiser on the meditation of Chiara on the «Resurrection of Rome» was very much appreciated: the «Resurrection of Rome» as a way of life in order to discover the «mystique of living together»

to which Pope Francis calls us (*Evangelii Gaudium*, 87) and also Mons. Pino Petrocchi in his talk «Church and Charism in the light of the recent document of the Congregation for the Faith, *Iuvenescit Ecclesia*».

The presence of Emmaus and Jesús was a much awaited moment, when they came to answer some of the questions that ranged from the commitment of priests to be «generative» and that of the laity in committing them-



selves to the building of a Church communion through the two mass Movements to which they belong. It is precisely *Iuvenescit Ecclesia* that provided the inspiration to understand better the ecclesial genius of Chiara which gave life to these two branches, called to work in total harmony between the charismatic and hierarchical Church. An important topic was that regarding the commitment for the new generations that calls for everyone, priests and laity, to be involved in their formation in the parishes or dioceses where they are.

In the midst of the contagious joy, one could see a people journeying together, with a new enthusiasm to continue along the path of making the Church and humanity more beautiful.

With the Movement towards “that all may be one”

The 450 priest and deacon focolarini from all over Europe and with a significant participation from South America, Asia and Africa, experienced the joy multiplied in this meeting, not only among us but also with the committed members of the Parish and Diocesan Movements, and even before that with the 300 priest and deacon Volunteers. With them, in fact, we were able to live together the first two days, in the rediscovery of the beauty of every vocation that shines even brighter when we are united among us and with the entire Movement.

The theme «Jesus Forsaken: window of God – window of humanity», as presented by Emmaus in August 2016 to the Schools of Montet (Switzerland), opened up our vision of the Church and humanity, during this week spent with the Movement. During the second afternoon, the two hours spent in a lively exchange of experiences, reflections and updating: the stage and the sala became just «one body» in the reciprocity of communion. Friederike Koller and Ángel Bartol, central delegates of the Center of the Movement, Donna Kempt and Severin Schmidt, councillors for Europe, Andrew Camilleri and Vania Cheng, councillors for Oceania, offered us a precious contribution of this vision «with the Movement towards “That all may be one”», making us experience firsthand the grace of the service that they render as the Center of the Movement.

The separate moments gave us the possibility of consolidating or starting the journey of the branch in the new Zones and to address some of the faces of Jesus Forsaken in the life of priests today.

«Jesus Forsaken, author of every reform», was the theme presented by Renata Simon

and Francisco Canzani, councillors for the aspect of «Wisdom and studies». They started from the texts of *Paradise '49* and offered to us the best background for the meeting with Jesús, the co-president. Referring to the previous interventions, he showed us a new stage in the journey of accepting and welcoming «our identity and vocation».



During the Mass on the same day, presided by Jesús and in the presence of Emmaus, we accepted the promises of the new priest and deacon focolarini and the commitment of the new priest and deacon Volunteers, thus renewing in this way our commitment to live for «That all may be one»

An open field

The meeting of the Parish and Diocesan Movements continued in the succeeding days still with the presence of some priests. The meditation prepared by Fr. Fabio Ciardi on «Jesus Forsaken and the pact», for many a new and concrete discovery of the actualization of the Pact of '49 in daily life, hit the nail on the head.

We became strongly aware that we are in an open field in our parishes where we must bring the ideal of unity through the various means that we have as a Movement, striving to be always more formed and prepared. For this reason, a new center of higher education was born: «Evangelii Gaudium» linked to the Sophia University Institute,



which has generated a great interest. The first courses on the various realities that are contained in it are being prepared in view of the Synod for the youth in 2018.

The Congress was followed by a school with around 60 participants, priests and laity, from six nations of Europe and Latin America. The topics: formation of the formators, in line with what is being done at the Center together with the gen3 and gen4 Centers after the meeting «On the way» held last February 2016.

The topics ranged from the learning of the evolutionary steps of a child to his accompaniment, from integral formation to group management and conflict resolution. Everything originated from the «art of loving» of Chiara Lubich taken as «the» pedagogy of the Movement and the various deepening in this regard.

The contributions of the gen2, gen3 and gen4 Centers who came to show us the material and methodology for the workshops that was very much participated, were very important.

The meeting concluded with an immense joy because of the certainty that the Movement, as an educative community, has much to offer to our local Churches precisely in this journey of synodality to which Pope Francis calls us.

*prepared by the secretariats
of the Parish and Diocesan Movements
and the Priests' Centers*



Laity, family, life

Visit of Maria Voce and Jesús Morán to card. Farrell, prefect of the new dicastery created by Pope Francis

A new dicastery to better provide answers «to the situations of our times» adapting itself to «the needs of the universal Church». This is how Pope Francis, in August last year, expressed himself announcing the creation of the Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life.

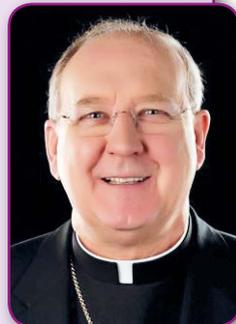
From the first of September this dicastery – which replaced the Pontifical Council for the Laity and the Pontifical Council for the Family - became operational. Card. Kevin Joseph Farrell, of Irish origin, came Dallas (USA) to head this Dicastery.

On January 25, Emmaus and Jesús went to visit him. They were received warmly and with simplicity and began by getting to know each other and sharing each one's life journey. Card. Farrell then shared the first steps of the new dicastery where the laity can carry out an always greater role and assume positions of responsibility at the service of the families, life and the laity themselves.

With regards to the Movements, he underlined that it is no longer the time to look at each one in order to showcase them. but rather it was now the time to work together with them to serve the Church and, therefore, to also be a guide for the other laity, ready to collaborate among themselves and with the hierarchy. A commitment that goes beyond the borders of the Church and which extends to society.

Emmaus and Jesús were able to update him about the future commitments of the Movement, in particular for the family, to which Card. Farrell showed a great interest.

prepared by the editorial board





Charisms in communion Franciscanism and the focolare

The «question» of the Franciscan origins of the Focolare Movement. A seminar in Paris

In the ambit of the work that we are doing in the Chiara Lubich Center to document, study and promote the historical figure of Chiara, we were invited by the Franciscans in Paris to animate a Seminar held on the 16th of December, 2016, on «The question of the Franciscan origins of the Focolare Movement. An analysis based on historical data and documents».

L'Ecole Franciscaine de Paris, born in 2011, is a small entity, which hopes to find its place in the long tradition of Franciscan studies and research inaugurated in Paris in the XIII century. Every month it conducts a three-hour Seminar on an aspect of Franciscanism.

It was Fr. Claude Coulot, who lives in Strasbourg and who knows the focolarine there well, who thought of inviting us. Knowing that the first focolarine belonged to the Franciscan Third Order, he wanted us to prepare an intervention for the academic year 2016-2017 on the topic «Female Franciscanism».

We had to clarify what type of Franciscan «origin» we were dealing with: was it only the initial moment, the place where the «Focolare» phenomenon first appeared, the primitive phase of a reality which later evolved? Or that which provoked the appearance of the charism of unity?

Our Seminar was done as a team: Florence Gillet from the Chiara Lubich Center presented the historical and cultural aspect, while Anne-Claire Motte, a doctor in canon law, presented the juridical aspect.

For the historical aspect, basing ourselves not only on the testimony of Chiara and her first companions, but also on the testimonies of

the Franciscans, it was noted that the charism of unity, born in a Franciscan cradle, eventually distinguished itself allowing the Movement to find its own specific identity. What was highlighted was the Franciscan contribution in this process of distinction, as well as how, through the charism of unity, the Spirit wanted to give the Franciscans aspects of Francis which may be fundamental but have remained in the margins. A story, therefore, marked by reciprocal gifts, which has opened a season of communion among the charisms that can prove to be very fertile.

Anne-Claire first analyzed the regulations of the Franciscan Capuchin Third Order of August 1946, highlighting the contribution of Chiara and of her charism in its drafting. She then presented the Statutes of the «Focolare of charity» dated May 1, 1947, underlining its novelty for that era and showing how it contains the principal characteristics of the emerging charism. She then gave a rapid view of the similarities and differences between the life regulations of Francis of Assisi and that of Chiara Lubich.

The participants, scholars of Francis, were very impressed and saw that numerous interesting pathways for study and ulterior deepening were opened up.

Anne-Claire Motte and Florence Gillet





Journalism in dialogue

Stop the sale of weapons

Beirut was the host last November 24 to 26, of the Congress «Journalism and Migration», organized by NetOne

In the opening greeting, Roland Poupon, focalarino, who has been in the Middle East for forty six years, explained the reason why a group of operators in the field of mass media decided to meet: «In the Middle East every peoples suffer. Without the sensitivity to these tribulations there will never be a solution». Together with the journalists there were also political representatives and social workers; around forty people in all.

They reflected on the situation of one of the Countries which is the source and origin of the influx of refugees.

The reports, the round-table discussions and the visits to the refugee camps, revealed the complexity of the problem. There are no quick solutions in sight and, when these have been formulated, often they are diametrically contradicted. There is only one unanimous and urgent appeal: «Stop selling weapons to this Region!».

Lebanon is the most affectedhaving gone through a civil war, the Syrian occupation, the interventions of the Usa and Israel. «If we are to be realistic, there is no hope - said the Maronite

bishop emeritus Simon Atallah - since the superpowers have destabilized the Region. We must urgently find a way so that the people are not forced to leave».

At present Lebanon has around four million



inhabitants and is bearing the burden of almost two million refugees. It is doing so not without apprehension, but nevertheless it continues to help these people with great generosity. The Focolare community is also concretely supporting some families coming from Syria; first they were housed in the Mariapolis Center and then in apartments purposely rented for them.

The evening spent with some members of the Movement who had escaped from Aleppo amd from other high-risk regions was very moving. They shared their painful stories, the destruction of their territory, the loss of friends. With tears, shared, they showed us the spiritual strength of their faith.



Fady Noun, a journalist for the French language newspaper *Orient le jour*, explained that Lebanon is the only Arab nation where Islam is not the State religion. A small Country in the Mediterranean Sea, it has achieved an exemplary co-existence, with a democracy finely coordinated among the different sectors of the population: Sunni and Shi'ite Muslims, Christians, including those confessions descended directly from the first Christians in that territory. It is also considered «holy land», because according to a tradition, the historical

Dal 2015 un gruppo di giornalisti della rete «NetOne» di diverse nazioni dell'Europa (Italia, Ungheria, Germania, Slovenia) ha incominciato un percorso di dialogo e si è incontrato in piccoli simposi in punti cruciali legati alla questione dei rifugiati: a Budapest (Ungheria), Atene (Grecia), Man (Costa d'Avorio), Lublino (Polonia) e ultimamente in novembre a Beirut.

Scopo di questo progetto «Giornalismo in dialogo»: mettere insieme operatori di *media*, esperti di comunicazione, persone attive e interessate alla politica, rappresentanti di opere sociali e ONG per iniziare colloqui, vedere fatti e situazioni sul posto, parlare con persone colpite, scoprire la veduta dell' «altro» e saperla comprendere. I prodotti mediali, che sorgono da questi incontri, respirano questa nuova ampiezza e sono poi, da parte loro, chiavi di lettura e costruttori di ponti per un pubblico più vasto.

Cana, where Jesus changed water into wine, is found in Lebanon.

Ibrahim Chamseddine, ex-minister for administrative reform, welcomed the participants to the Congress in his school. As president of the non-profit organization «Association for Charity & Culture», he forms young people to a vision of Islam that trains them for dialogue



and the commitment to peace. With him and with sheik Mohammed Al Noukkari, the group visited the Boubis Mosque in Beirut. Both of them explained how Islamic wisdom reaches the point where unity among religions is tangible. «The Cristian Arabs of Lebanon are skin of my skin - Chamseddine said - they are my friends, they are part of my people».

The programme of the Congress also allowed for a tour of the shrine of Our Lady of Lebanon, which is visited not only by Christians of all confessions, but also by numerous Muslims. Mary has a place both in the Bible and in the Qur'an and therefore she is the the hearts of all Lebanese. This has encouraged Ibrahim Chamseddine and sheik Mohammed Al Noukkari to present to the Lebanese State, in agreement with the Jesuit Religious, the request to declare March 25, the feast of Mary's Annunciation, as a holiday in the State of Lebanon. Since 2009, therefore, March 25 is officially a holiday.

The Congress was made possible thanks to the relationship that the Focolare Movement has maintained with the civil and political society of the Country. The expression of a

In the Holy Land

Designing fraternity in Bethlehem

From November 20 to 24, a delegation of the «Cities for Fraternity Association» and of the Amu (Azione Mondo Unito/Action for a United World) were in Bethlehem to «design» a project together

The idea for this project was born during the meeting of the «Cities for Fraternity Association» with the mayor of Bethlehem, Vera Baboun last March 6, 2016. This meeting set the ball rolling with the representatives of Amu and of the above-mentioned Association last November, to do something for this Jewish city which is the

participant summarizes the common sentiment: «Thanks to the dialogue established I can see our situation in a new light. It gives me the strength to fight against fear». Encouraged by the ex-minister of Finance of Lebanon, Damian Katar, the group of journalists wrote a letter to the new secretary general of the UN, António Guterres, expressing their hope for courageous action on the international stage against the misery experienced by many refugees.

Palko Toth, responsible for the network of journalists of NetOne, said: «The power of such a meeting lies in the atmosphere that is built and which allows one to be open. This makes it possible to discuss things even with regards to conflicts and difficulties. Only in this way the paths to finding solutions can be opened».

Andrea Fleming, responsible for the media of the Focolare Movement in Germany added: «We realized that in Europe there is a great need to catch up with regards to our knowledge and familiarity with Islam». This is why NetOne is planning different initiatives of dialogue for operators in media on Islam-Christian themes.

Beatrix Ledergerber-Baumer

emblem of fraternity. «Paradoxically – the mayor said – the land of Jesus, the land where the message of “a greater love” was launched, has continually been a place of division, war and suffering. The Holy Land, and the city of Bethlehem, are nevertheless not without peace: living witnesses are those who today work to build peace, and who are in need of concrete actions».

When we arrived in Bethlehem during the period before Christmas, we met Vera Baboun and her *staff* who were busy organizing the event. With her we set the framework and gathered the material useful for the objective of re-launching the «Bethlehem Peace Center», for which Mayor Baboun foresees the contribution that the Associazione and Amu can give for her «mission».

The visit and conversation we had with the directress of the «Bethlehem Peace Center», Rania Malki highlighted all the qualities of the place: dimensions, significance, strategic and symbolic location, being situated in the Manger Square, in front of the Basilica of the Nativity, adjacent to the headquarters of the City Council and the Mosque of Omar, in the social and commercial





center of Bethlehem. Spacious and modern, the «Bethlehem Peace Center», is beneath a panoramic balcony, as it encloses within its walls an Multidimensional Interactive Museum that is still being completed, after the discovery of mosaics and other archeological artifacts. It is here that they will try to implement the workshops and initiatives that were suspended for sometime now, hoping to involve mostly women, youth and children as protagonists.

It was in the beginning of 1970, when the Focolare Movement began its first steps in these lands. Both in Bethlehem and in Jerusalem, there are now communities of the Focolare present, who with generosity, enrich the stay of the pilgrims through their testimonies of how Christians live in these sacred places; there is also a felt need to contribute to a more constructive dialogue. The moments spent in the focolare centers, with the persons in-charge and some members of the Movement, were important to our delegation because it helped us to acquire, in the midst of the globality of our contacts during those days, the measure of the complex politico-social-religious situation. The meeting with Nasri, one of the administrators of Beit Sahour (Shepherd's Camp), a town three kilometers from Bethlehem, his wife Randa (both Volunteers) and their three daughters, gave us the chance to come closer to the life of the Palestinian populace, especially with the youth.

In those same days, Aletta Salizzoni, among the first to come to these lands of the

Middle East, was leaving for the Heavenly Mariapolis: it was immediate for us to entrust this trip and all that will develop from it, to her.

As a consequence of the many meetings and appointments made, different proposals for initiatives in favour of the local Palestinians were expressed: leadership training (see <https://bethlehem.edu/institutes/CMLI>); the emancipation of Palestine through culture and art; the «Caritas Baby Hospital» (see www.aiuto-bambinibetlemme.it) which has opened its doors to children and their mothers, without distinction of religion and social standing. Women, mothers, youth and children will be the primary recipients of the educational plans, a very important subject in order to achieve results.

The divisions seen in the life in the Palestinian territories is more than evident, but in Bethlehem it is even more glaring,

showing the suffering face of a difficult co-existence. These are rather the signs that are read in the territory, noisier than the turmoils and quite difficult to remove. From the Basilica of the Nativity, which is almost completely integrated with the residence of the Franciscan brothers who with centuries-old dedication, take care of the Christian venues, our gaze opens up and looks upward at a large part of the territory: the Wall which marks the boundary between Bethlehem and Jerusalem, an obligatory passageway to travel between the two cities with the relative controls at the *checkpoints*; the setting-up of Jewish settlements beyond the Israeli territory and encroaching into Palestinian land.

The work for our project has already begun and will move forward in the direction of peace, the only way that will open up a scenarios of hope.

prepared by Amu and Ass. Città per la Fraternità



Syria Together inspite of everything

A week-end of formation for the intern members. 55 participants coming from different areas

The idea for such a meeting, held at the end of last November, was born from the fact of the many difficulties brought by the war, which has already been going on for six years, and which has prevented the visits to the various communities in order to bring to them formation material in Arabic. The intern members present, mostly young people, were the leaders of the local Communities, members of the New families Movement or assistants to the new generations: gen2, gen3, gen4, Youth for a United World and Teens for Unity. It was a great joy for everyone to be entrusted with the various realities of the Movement.

Rådast Karioty and Pascal Bédros updated them of the meeting of the Delegates held in Rome during the month of September and presented the theme on «Jesus Forsaken: window of God – window of humanity». Everyone was profoundly touched and they all felt the push to continue to love unceasingly because in Jesus Forsaken is the key to understand all the sufferings that they were experiencing in Syria. This love for Him would mark their steps in order to walk together with the whole Movement and with the Church.

The topics of formation that were tackled one after the other were, the protection of minors and children, presented by Christy, an expert in this field, and by Freddy. Many concrete examples made everyone reflect, in the light of our spirituality lived, on their responsibility towards all minors. The topic generated a notable interest and the desire to continue deepening it in the future.

In the afternoon, time was spent in working groups which included questions, experiences and analyses on the programme prepare for the year. In

everyone there was the desire to do something for the others, especially during the Christmas season. It was impressive to see the intern members who did not think of themselves and their own difficulties, but rather with the great desire to spread the love of God, the fire of the Ideal to everyone. So much so that we realized that it is the presence of Jesus in the midst that is bringing ahead each community.

Through the family of Rosanna and Emanuele from Milan, much providence arrived which was distributed at Christmas time to 600 children and their families suffering from the ravages of war, thus giving them a sign of hope amidst the darkness the Syria is passing through.

One can experience in a particular way the attention that the whole Movement all over the world is giving, to the difficult situation in Syria. Aletta from Heaven, who loved this land very much, will certainly help to bring ahead the Work of God that was born here.

prepared by the editorial board

Middle East The long road to «making one»

Gianni Ricci, focalinarino priest, lived for 23 years in the Middle east and North Africa. This book - prepared together with the writer Delfina Ducci - gathers the history of the development of the Focolare Movement through his memories of the time spent in Turkey, Greece, Lebanon, Syria, Jerusalem, Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco, Jordan, Iraq, Egypt. It is a story with many protagonists, in which Gianni remains as the amazed observer of a Work of God.



In Kazakhstan Amidst the steppes and snow covered mountains

The trip from Russia to a multi-ethnic
Country to meet the small community
of the Focolare

Racchiuso tra Europa ed Asia, al confine tra Russia e Cina, il Kazakistan è il più grande stato del mondo senza sbocco al mare. E proprio qui, nella città di Taldykorgan, un religioso francescano che conosce la spiritualità dei Focolari è parroco della parrocchia cattolica. Raccogliendo il suo invito a conoscere le persone che hanno conosciuto la spiritualità dell'unità, due focolarine, Agnieszka e Anna Gloria, ed un focolarino, Serghey, dalla Russia hanno fatto in novembre un viaggio attraverso questo bellissimo Paese.

«La prima tappa è stata ad Almaty - raccontano - dove abbiamo conosciuto le suore e i frati francescani e visitato il Centro Sociale fondato e gestito dalla comunità di "Comunione e Liberazione" con cui fra' Luca ha un rapporto di amicizia e collaborazione. Un momento semplice e familiare per uno scambio di esperienze». Un altro momento gioioso è stato l'incontro



con il vescovo cattolico della città, José Luis Mumbiela Sierra, che li ha invitati per la Messa e la cena insieme ad alcuni giovani che hanno incominciato a vivere la Parola di vita animati da fra' Luca e d. Paolo Miki, un sacerdote coreano del Movimento che da qualche mese vive ad Almaty. «Il Vescovo ci ha incoraggiati ad andare avanti e impegnarci per sostenere il Movimento nella città, dandoci la sua benedizione».

La seconda tappa del viaggio è stata la piccola città di Jarkent, a 35 chilometri dal confine con la Cina. «Tra steppe bellissime e montagne innevate - continuano - abbiamo fatto otto ore di viaggio e, passando attraverso il canion "Charyn", siamo arrivati a Jarkent dove abbiamo visitato famiglia di un giovane che vive la spiritualità dei Focolari. Poi, con sei ore di macchina sotto un meraviglioso cielo stellato, siamo arrivati a Taldykorgan dove vive fra' Luca. Qui la comunità del Movimento sta crescendo formata dalla Parola di vita e dalla partecipazione alle Mariapoli». In questa città forte è il rapporto di amicizia, portato avanti da fra' Luca, con il Pastore riformato ed alcuni della sua comunità che hanno invitato i focolarini a partecipare alla riunione di tre comunità riformate locali offrendo la loro testimonianza.

In India

Kerala terra di Dio

Una giornata dedicata a Chiara Luce Badano realizzata da un gruppo di giovani alla quale hanno partecipato anche tre focolarini arrivati da Bangalore

Enclosed between Europe and Asia, located along the border between Russia and China, Kazakhstan is the biggest state in the world that does not have an opening to the sea. It is precisely here, in the city of Taldykorgan, that a Franciscan Religious who knows the spirituality of the Focolare Movement, serves as the parish priest in the Catholic parish. Accepting his invitation to meet the people who have come to know the spirituality of unity, two focolarine, Agnieszka and Anna Gloria, and a focolarino, Serghey, from Russia, made a trip last November to this beautiful Country.

«The first stop-over was in Almaty - they shared - where we met the Franciscan sisters and brothers and visited the Social Center founded and managed by the community of "Communion and Liberation" with whom Bro. Lucas has a relationship of friendship and collaboration. A simple and familiar moment to share experiences». Another jitous moment

was the meeting with the Catholic bishop of the city, José Luis Mumbiela Sierra, who invited them for Mass and dinner together with some young people who have started to live the Word of life, animated by Bro. Luca and Fr. Paolo Miki, a Korean priest of the Movement who has been living in Almaty for the past few months. «The Bishop encouraged us to go ahead and to commit ourselves to supporting the Movement in the city, giving us his blessing ».

The second stop-over of our trip was the small city of Jarkent, which is 35 kilometers from the border of China. «Amidst the very beautiful steppes and snow covered mountains - they continued - we travelled for eight hours and, passing through the "Charyn" canyon, we arrived in Jarkent where we visited the family of a young man who were living the spirituality of the Focolare. Then, travelling for another six hours by car under a marvelous starry sky, we reached Taldykorgan where Bro. Luca lives. Here the community of the Movement is growing formed by the Word of life and by their participation in the Mariapolises». In this city the relationship of friendship is strong brought ahead by Bro. Luca, together with the Pastor of the Reformed Church and some members of his community, who invited the three focolarine to participate in the gathering of three local Reformed communities, sharing with them their experiences.

«With this trip - concluded Agnieszka, Anna Gloria and Serghey - we were able to experience the "miracles" that the Ideal lived can do in this very beautiful Country, that is welcoming, rich in various ethnic groups, cultures and religions who live peacefully together. Here, where the Charism is beginning to penetrate, we realized all the more how much the people are aware of the gift that the focalre can be for them».

a cura di Anna Lisa Innocenti

prepared by Anna Lisa Innocenti



«Con il nostro viaggio - concludono Agnieszka, Anna Gloria e Serghey - abbiamo potuto sperimentare i "miracoli" che può operare l'Ideale vissuto in questo bellissimo Paese accogliente, ricco di etnie, culture e religioni che convivono pacificamente. Qui, dove il Carisma comincia a penetrare, ci accorgiamo ancora di più quanto le persone siano coscienti del dono che il focolare può essere per loro».

Ada (Vitt) Schweitzer

*Since Piazza Capuccini
with Chiara*

Born in 1925 in Rovereto (Trent), Ada was an auxiliary radio telephone operator in an Anti-aircraft headquarters during the war, where Gis (Gisella Calliari) also went to work. She invited her to the first focolare. It was Chiara herself who welcomed her: «When we go to Paradise – he said - Jesus will come to meet us with the crown of virginity which he will place on our head». Ada, who even as a small child, already felt the call of God, understood that this was her way. Since she was still a minor she went to see her bishop, Mons. Carlo De Ferrari, to ask for his advice, in order to obtain the permission of her father, a convinced communist, to go and live in Piazza Cappuccini. The «casetta (little house)», as the focolare was called then, is really very small, so Ada slept in the same room as Aletta Salizzoni which was in that of Chiara. She then took over the task of preparing the meals from Chiara. From that moment on, Ada remained with Chiara for more than 40 years, until her health allowed it. And when she had to leave her, Chiara's words remained as a light for her: «who loses me is another me».

Chiara gave her the name «Vitt»: «I thought – she explained - that Jesus-Eucharist is the Victim, but I can't call you this way. If they ask you what your name means, just say "vitamin" because you take care of the kitchen!». Vitt also works in the preparation of the very first documentaries of the Movement and while waiting for Eli Folonari to return from Belgium, Chiara entrusted her with the birth of what would later become the St. Clare Center (Centro Santa Chiara).

In '57 Chiara was unable to move due to an accident. «All my time was spent taking care of her – Vitt shared - and since she always had to wear pajamas, and she didn't have many sets, I would wash them everyday. Once when she saw me coming with a newly ironed set, she told me: "I can see that you not only ironed them with love... You were love!". On that very same day Chiara wrote that meditation: «There are those who do things



out of love. And those who do things trying to be Love».

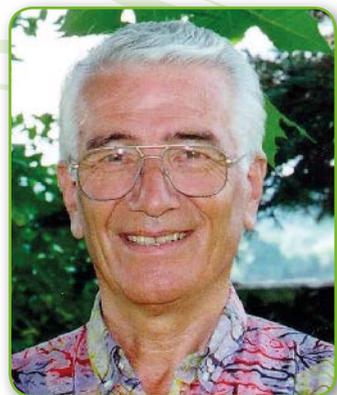
In January 2008 Chiara, even she already almost no strength left, went to visit the focolarine who were sick, Vitt was one of them, and she shared: «We were together for quite some time, looking at each other in the eyes. Without saying a word we told each other many

things. I seem to have grasped in her the "That all may be one". It was a very strong moment. This was the last time I saw her». She continued: «Now I continue to feel that those eyes are still looking at me».

She reached the Heavenly Mariapolis on December 21, 2016 surrounded by her focolare as they recited the *Te Deum*. Emmaus, when she shared this news to the focolare centers all over the world wrote: «Her life beside Chiara was truly a hymn of glory to God, her life was reserved and discreet, all spent in loving and for "That all may be one"».

Aldo Baima

*Yes, Father, because
you it is pleasing to
You» (Mt 11,26)*



«I was born in a small town 1000 meters above sea level in the Pre-Alpine region of Piedmont», Aldo

one of the first focolarini of the '50s, shared. He grew up in a simple environment which from his infancy predisposed him to an authentic relationship with Jesus. An elementary school teacher, he once replied to a tourist who saw him reading a book on Theology and asked why he didn't instead read romances, he said: «But this is a very beautiful story of love!».

He attended courses on education and philosophy at the University of Turin and there he met a former classmate who told him about the

first focolare center in Trent. They had such a profound conversation that Aldo felt the desire to put the Gospel as the foundation of his life, starting with the sentence: «Whatever you do to the least of my brothers, you did it to me» (Mt 25,40). In the summer of 1952 Aldo spent a week in the focolare in Trent, then he went to Tonadico where the Mariapolis was ongoing. «I had the intuition – he confided – that only as a member of that family would I be able to have that light and that life which I could not do without». He left his fiancée and decided to enter the focolare.

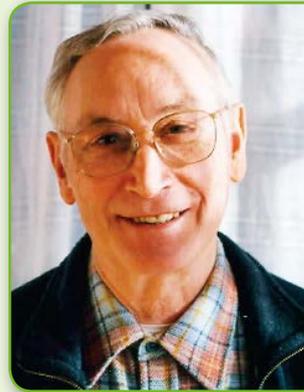
Years of generous giving of himself followed, first in Turin, then in Sassari, Rome and from '61 in France. Because of his moral and spiritual rectitude, many youth and adults found in him a sure guide who would lead them to God. In front of difficult situations his attitude was similar to that of Mary, at the foot of the cross, who even without speaking, converted. In '66 he became co-responsible for the ZOne of France and in '75 he was ordained a priest..

In '84 he was called to the Center of the Movement to assist in the formation and accompaniment of the focolarini for 12 years. Successively he would be in the focolare of Istanbul from where he would then move to the school for future focolarini in Montet (Switzerland). From 2001 he is back at the Center at the service of the Section of the focolarini. It was here that his health began to decline in which – in his words – «the Father wants to prepare me to finally enter into the mystery of the Abandonment and the Resurrection that follows». In 2005 he wrote to Chiara: «A certainty is reborn in me that this year dedicated to Jesus Forsaken can also be for me the moment to answer to this new call. A time of salvation that comes from Him, a time of grace that pulls me into His wound, so as to bring me into the bosom of the Father...». A grace which, even if mysteriously, envelopes and accompanies him in his condition of almost total paralysis that he has borne for several years. Until the morning of January 12, 2017, when at 90 years old, he peacefully left for Heaven.

Marziano Quintili

«I thank You Father because you have hidden these things from the powerful and the wise and revealed them to the little ones» (Mt 11,25)

Marziano had a happy and exciting childhood, made up of sports and studies. As soon as he became a lawyer, he met the spirituality of unity and he entered the focolare, going to work in the office of Vittorio Sabbione, a well-known lawyer in Turin. After a year of quite intense work, Marziano is called for a short period in Rome and in 1958, he moves to Grenoble (France), with the prospect of opening the focolare there and the promise of a good job as a lawyer. The focolare center was opened but the job did not materialize. Marziano found a job working in a poultry farm. Then he spent a few years in Paris, this time working in a prestigious job at the Italian cultural agency. In '61 he is once again in Rome to work for Città Nuova. In '72 he moved to the Roman Mariapolis to take care of the Pension funds of the focolarini.



His health had been quite fragile for several years, but in 2013 his driver's licence was no longer renewed. Being an independent person, Marziano now had to ask for help from the other focolarini to go to Mass, to go shopping, to visit the doctor, etc. In exchange for this concrete love, he shared with them the most precious things he had: his interiority, his culture, which ranged from Theology (he had written several books) to art. His typical characteristic was that of constantly entrusting himself to the Madonna. He wrote to Chiara from Grenoble in '59: «...From the time that Jesus, at least this is what I believe, brought me too, inside the reality of Mary, the same desires of Mary... also grew in my soul! Up to the point of feeling myself completely conditioned by Her, who truly became the nourishment and sustenance for my soul. The other day during a difficult moment it came spontaneously to me to tell the Madonna "But look, if I really have to suffer,

I am ready, but you have to help me because I am so insecure of myself; but please, explain to me one thing: what's the use of having Baby Jesus without the Madonna?». And so it became logical to me to ask her for a unity with Her that is strong and stable. I felt within me the push that was stronger than ever, to bring her to humanity...».

His health declined rapidly and to be able to assist him better, he went to live in the focolare of the "Casa Verde" in Rocca di Papa. He immediately felt at home and continued to build relationships, meeting old companions of the focolare once again and they exchange memories and anecdotes about their apostolate and work. He was truly a gift for Jesus in the midst. On January 23, he concluded his Holy Journey at the age of 85.

Lillian Mazalewski

«For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ, and him crucified». (1Cor 2,2)



Originally from New Jersey (USA), Lillian married Joe and they had a son Michael. In 1967 she participated in a Mariapolis in Chicago and soon after she felt the call of God to follow him. She became one of the first married focolarine of North America. She wrote of that period: «Since my youth I had a particular

disposition towards those who suffer. Now Chiara has shown me Jesus in His abandonment and I cannot but love Him more and more». This characteristic of hers remained up to the end: to look for His face in the poorest of the poor, in the sick, the lonely, the marginalized, in order to bring to them the love and the caress of God. Her simplicity and her sense of humour, helped Lillian to build the «family» in focolare and everywhere she went. In «making herself profoundly one» with the others allowed her to enter into relationships with people of all ages and religious convictions.

In 2001 she was diagnosed with a serious illness. She wrote to Chiara: «I think that Jesus Forsaken is profoundly penetrating my soul with His truth. It is a period of suffering, even if some "flashes" of His light are and a strong faith in His live are not lacking».

In 2005, on the occasion of Emmaus' visit to the UN, assuring her of her unity and prayers, Lillian wrote: «I feel a great desire in my soul to become more and more like Mary. I hope to be able to express my gratitude for this life, by keeping alive the presence of Jesus in the midst among us through reciprocal love». As he age advanced her health also continued to decline. Lillian also passed through moments of spiritual trial, which she constantly shared with her focolare, burning everything in the fire of Jesus in the midst: «I have to give Him everything – she wrote - not even my health belongs to me».

Shortly before her «departure», which was on January 14, 2017 at the age of 89, she shared that she received a special grace: «My fear has become consolation, the weakness became a guarantee that I will make it. I realize that Jesus is attracted to the weak, to those in need. Now I am happy for my defects because they are my guarantee».

Paolo Gravante

«I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever remains in me and I in him will bear much fruit, because without me you can do nothing» (Jn 15,5)

Married focolarino of Caserta (Italy) he reached Heaven on January 14 at the age of 70 years old.

In 1980 he participated with his wife Teresa in their first Mariapolis: «We are fascinated by the proposal of Chiara to live the Gospel in our daily life – they shared about those days - and we say our yes to God. A new adventure begins, our whole life changes and this Ideal fills up all its aspects. Our relationship



as a couple is renewed and we discover that each one is a gift to the other. But our greatest joy is feeling within us that certainty that God wants us to become saints together».

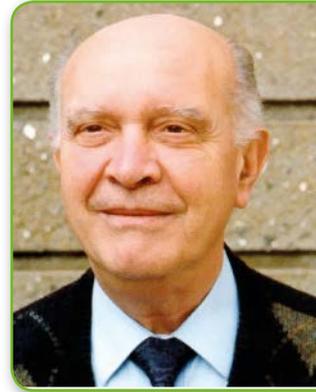
Both Paolo and Teresa answer with generosity to the call of God. In '90, they were asked if they could move together with their children Pompeo and Antonella to the Central African Republic where Paolo taught mechanics, forming the local people in this field of work. They lived in the missionary station of Bouar, in a house with barely the essentials, abandoning themselves to Divine Providence. The Country was just emerging from the war, with AIDS reaping its victims and with the addition of the danger of malaria. After some months, Paolo and Teresa had to return to Italy in order to safeguard the health of the children. During Christmas, Chiara thanked them saying: «I followed you during your beautiful experience in Africa. Baby Jesus will reward you with his gifts for all the love that you gave».

Together with Teresa, they get involved in family pastoral work in the diocese and in '98 Paolo is invited to be a member of the national Council of the Forum of Family Associations, and as the regional coordinator for the region of Campania. In 2002 he became the regional consultant of AFNonlus, following, together with Teresa the process for adoption of more than 200 couples who welcomed into their homes the same number of children coming from various parts of the world.

In 2005 he is struck by a serious illness, from which Paolo emerges apparently healed. But around two years later the disease recurs, bringing with it physical, moral and spiritual suffering which he welcomes with readiness together with Teresa. His patience, meekness and his smile of Paradise are what impress all those whom he encountered. Ten days before he left this world he wrote to the members of his focolare: «My days are characterized by an always greater love for Jesus Forsaken, especially in my physical limitations. These are intense moments wherein my heart expands and I experience the joy of unity. Together with Teresa we pray for the whole Movement, the Church and humanity».

Virgilio Mastrosanti

«My soul rests in God alone» [Ps 62 (61),2]



Married focolarino of Roma, he reached the home of the Father on January 7 at the age of 91. His encounter with the Movement - at 24 years old while he was vacationing in Tonadico - marked his entire life. He wrote in 2000: «The explosion of graces in that far off '49 (I was providentially present towards the end of that July), was also for me the source of countless graces».

Married to Lidia, together with other family-focolares they gave life to the New Families Movement in Rome that generated countless fruits. What impressed was his profound relationship with Lidia, their reciprocal trust, their love for one another and the fullness of warmth that surrounded their children and relatives, their ability to be amazed which they have retained throughout the years. A married couple wrote: «In March '73, a few days after we met the Movement, Virgilio e\and Lidia came to visit us and spoke to us about the focolare and the reality of the married focolarini, making fall in love at first sight, up to the point of clearly feeling that we were being called precisely to this way».

Gradually his health deteriorated, but Virgilio continued to welcome everyone as if he or she were the most important person. His spiritual life is refined, His «conversations with Heaven», became always more continuous and his nourishing himself with the Eucharist daily strengthened him during the most difficult moments. Virgilio seemed to be already living in that Paradise which he savoured in July '49. In the last period of his life it became more and more difficult for him to speak, but the phrase that he was still able to pronounce distinctly up to the end was: «I have only One Spouse on earth». Accompanied by the constant presence of Jesus in the midst with Lidia and the children, including Paola who is in the focolare in Rome, Virgilio took his flight to God, leaving behind a luminous example of a child of the Gospel all given to God and open to «That all may be one».

Annamaria Cimmino



«Listen to my voice!» (Jer 7,23)

Married focolarina of Naples, at 22 years old Annamaria welcomed the Ideal of unity as the precious pearl of her life. She was just newly married to Tonino, who shared with her the same thirst for

justice. The new life of the Gospel developed her many talents and without fear of getting her hands dirty she entered into the wounds of the society in her area. Her heart burned with love that knew how to make each person feel special and unique: for her husband and four children, the grandchildren, her students, whom she followed with love and creativity. With simplicity and innocence she knew how to give hope to the many people who felt that they could count on her: she had in fact the ability to multiply her energies, especially in front of difficult situations. She committed herself to giving birth to and taking care of the gen4 in her city and to build the local community, ready to do even the part of the other to overcome criticisms, finding in Jesus Forsaken the key to face all this. In January 2011, after a retreat in Castel Gandolfo, she confided to Emmaus: «I feel that God is working on me to be more docile to His will and to be detached from everything ... Holding on tightly to the Spouse, trying to unify my will to His, I saw my yes once again with docility, so that the Father can do with me as he pleases and to make me an instrument of love to console, relieve, to wipe away tears and to give back joy and certainty of His love to those who don't have it».

Annamaria left suddenly for Heaven on December 28, 2016 at the age of 61, leaving as a gift the witness of a generous and passionate faithfulness to Jesus Forsaken.

Ségolène d'Harambure

«We know that we have passed from death to life because we love our brothers» (1Jn 3,14)

Married focolarina of Paris, went to the final Encounter on December 24, 2016 at the age of 58. She was of aristocratic origin, but chose to work as a pediatrician among the poor and the vulnerable. With her husband Ludovic she began to attend the meetings of the Movement when she the fourth of her six children was born. During a School for the families, she was attracted by the person of Foco, and Ségolène felt the call to give herself to God. She wrote to Chiara: «I want to become a saint with you. I also feel responsible for the sanctity of the others in the focolare and in my family ... join ourselves to your charism invades us and brings us to Paradise».

Of a simple and reserved nature, she was also a lover of nature and was inclined towards the protection of the environment; her life spoke louder than words. Her ability to listen profoundly to the other brought peace and offered enlightening answers to all those she met. Another of her characteristics was how she could freely renounce to all material things, attentive to seeing the intervention of divine Providence and immediately distributing to others what she had received. Sure of the power of unity she committed herself generously in the initiatives of the Movement in the protection of minors.

In this last period she shared with her focolare her desire to lose her ideas and plans more and more so as to make her own those of God. And so when she learned of her illness - which in a matter of three months would bring her home to the Father - she began a real and true journey of detachment, made up of moments of suspense, urgent operations, continuous complications with acute pain that was difficult to attenuate and which made her similar to Jesus Forsaken.

«Your unity sustains me - she wrote to those who came with messages and visits - and the prayers link us to all those who are suffering». And still: «I embrace Jesus Forsaken and I live for the Movement and for the world». «Your coming is a real gift. I was in a moment of darkness, I was being clouded by Jesus Forsaken, and then



sr. Leopolda Blasi

«But goodness, like eternity, will never be cut off, and righteousness endures forever. (Sir 40,17)



Roman, coming from a prestigious family, she finished her studies with the Daughters of the Immaculate Conception of Buenos Aires. Impressed by the figure of the foundress whom she knew personally, the desire to consecrate herself to God grew in her. Opposed by her parents, she escaped from her home twice, until she was finally able to realize her dream. In the '70s she met the spirituality of unity. Sr. Leopolda recognised in it a sign of the times for the Church and with enthusiasm she made it her own. The life of the Ideal enhanced the value of her moral attributes, her vast culture, her great love for the Congregation, which was gradually entrusting her with more important responsibilities until - from 1983 to 1995 - she was tasked with guiding it as the Mother General.

In '89 Chiara, whom she knew personally, called her to be a member of the general Council of the Movement to represent the Movement of the Women Religious. With great joy and a sense of humour that was typically hers, Sr. Leopolda was able to develop an authentic current of love among the consecrated of different charism, promoting a profound communion among all. She organized and prepared annual meetings at the Center for the Consecrated women and for the Mother Generals. In '90 she participated in the General Assembly of the Movement.

In '95 the parents of her students, in giving her a Christmas gift, expressed the wish that she «always remains as the sweetest and nicest Directress of all the schools in the world». Then, due to some health problems, she had to give up all her activities so as to enter more and more

I found Him again alive and happy». «Tied to Chiara and totally in unity with each one of you in praying, offering, entrusting each one, I live concentrated on the essential: the encounter with my Spouse».

into communion with her «treasure»: Jesus Forsaken. The doctors and staff of the hospital where she was brought were touched by her witness of serenity and total abandonment to God. She left for Heacen on January 1, at the age of 87.

prepared by the Center of the Women Religious

d. Wim Hulskorte

«As the Father sent me so I am sending you» (Jn 20,21)

It was the year 1961. Wim is one of the first in Holland to meet the Ideal of unity. He was already thirty years old and even if he still didn't know that path God was indicating for him, he strongly committed himself to living and sharing the Ideal. And so he discovered his way to be the priesthood becoming a priest focolarino. His soul was in celebration. After pronouncing his promises he wrote to Chiara in '76: «Even if we are still here on earth we are already in Paradise, in the bosom of the Father. I feel immersed in Him».

Fr. Wim worked in different parishes in his diocese, always following the orders of his Bishop. He opened the rectory to some gen boys and gens who were studying in Nijmegen. With them he formed a community and became like a father to them. Some of them later became focolarini priests. For quite some time he was also responsible in Holland for the priest focolarini and priest Volunteers.

In the years 2002-2004 he obtained the permission to attend the Priests' School in Loppiano.

Returning to the diocese, he continued to do his ministry for another two years in a parish and from 2006 he went to live in community with other priest focolarini and priest Volunteers, until an illness manifested itself which brought him in and out of the hospital. In



July 2016 he had to move to a hospice. When they told him that his illness was incurable, he abandoned himself totally to God, finding strength and support in his faith and in the presence of his focolare. His brother priests were with him when he received the sacrament of the anointing of the sick. «You have always been a part of my life – he said to them - it was God who put us together». Fr. Wim left for the Heavenly Mariapolis on November 25, 2016 at the age of 86.

Fr. Thijs van Zaal



Mother Thérèse Duisit

«...I never stopped believing in Chiara and in the grace of having been able to welcome her Ideal»

Religious of Notre Dame du Rosaire, Pont de Beauvoisin, Isère (France), Mother Thérèse was one of the first Mother Generals to adhere to the spirituality of the Focolare Movement. The youngest of 13 children, she entered the novitiate at 15 years old and at 42 she was elected as the Superior General. Worried about the wave of revolution that was sweeping the young women Religious, in Grenoble she «knocked on the door of the focolare – she shared - hoping that maybe someone could help me». With the focolare a profound relationship began that brought her to Rocca di Papa where she met Graziella De Luca who welcomed her in the focolare. In 1972 she also had the joy of meeting Chiara Lubich personally. With her profound adhesion to unity, lived with her fellow sisters and with the Movement, with her choice of Jesus Forsaken as her only Spouse, Mother Thérèse made a vital contribution to the Focolare Movement, also through the various sisters who thanks to her testimony, also embraced the Ideal of unity. One of the big houses of the Congregation would later become the Mariapolis Center of St. Pierre de Chartreuse.

In '81 Mother Thérèse lived for six months at the Villa Achillia, home of the central Secretariat of the Consecrated Women, which together with Vale Ronchetti they searched for, found and furnished. After 20 years she returned once again to the Center. She wrote to Chiara: «I am moved to see the development of the Movement, all this born from unity. I am full of hope. With the Pope, our bishops, all those who follow you and who are your children, the Church is becoming more beautiful, for the glory of the Trinity, the joy of Mary and ours. Thank you Chiara for your motherly love that pays the highest price».

The years that followed were marked by difficult moments. She confided: «Jesus Forsaken wants me to tell Him truly: I have only one Spouse on earth, happy to be a little like Him». The last three years of her life are spent at the Mother House. She wrote: «... it is no longer the enthusiasm of the beginning, but in spite of the crooked steps, where sometimes I fall, I have never stopped believing in Chiara and in the grace of having received her Ideal of unity. There is only one thing left for me to do before going to Paradise: to love always more, beyond everything else, my daily Jesus Forsaken».

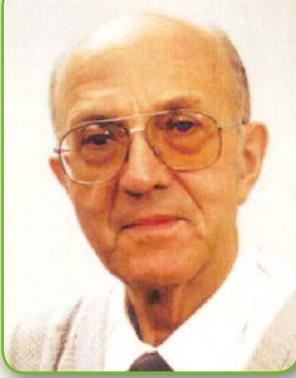
Mother Thérèse reached the Spouse on November 14, 2016 at 98 years old. Emmaus, who knew her personally during one of her trips to France, wrote to her Superior General (one of those young sisters of long ago for whom she went searching for something that led her to the Movement): «I asked Mary to reward her for her faithfulness to the Ideal of unity and to Jesus Forsaken up to the end. I feel a great gratitude to God for her long life lived completely given to Him and to the neighbour ».

Anne Depardon

Fr. Pavel Uršič

«My food is to do the will of the one who sent me and to finish his work » (Jn 4,34)

After the second world war (1945) Pavel, a sixteen year old soldier from Slovenia, found himself among the defeated. With some of his fellow soldiers, they escape to Austria, but they were arrested and turned over to the victors. he remained for two years in a concentration camp and witnessed the killing of many of his companions. He shared about those moments: «For two months, day and



night, we trembled waiting to be tortured or shot. During the darkest moments I would shout to the heavens: "My God, how can you allow such a thing to happen? Why have you

abandoned me? At a certain point I felt that Someone was with me. Much later I understood that the cry of Jesus on the cross "My God, my God why have you abandoned me?" is the answer to all the problems of abandonment in the history of humanity». Pavel understood that the path that God had planned for him was the priesthood and, when he met the ideal of unity, he became a priest focolarino. He wrote: «I discovered something new that will save the world. The greatest revolution in Theology: the Most Holy Trinity seen through Jesus Forsaken».

In his ministry, Fr. Pavel tried to find all the ways to realize the new evangelization (catechism, songs, radio programmes, even a musical band) with the light of the spirituality of unity. He took care of the pastoral formation of the Slovenians in Germany, becoming an integral part of the priest focolare of the place. When he retired, he lived for thirteen years with another priest focolarino. As he began this experience Fr. Pavel felt that he still had to make another step within him: «Up to now I have been living with myself as the center of everything, now I must become always more the "Son" consumed in the "Father" so that this marvelous game of the Trinitarian life can take place». He spent his final month in the Clergy House, always surrounded by many friends. Even if he was already very weak, and in the last days unable to speak, he was always trying to love, offering everything for the Movement and for the Church. He confided: «I have never felt Jesus so close to me as now. He is always beside me. On October 30, 2016 at the age of 87 he went to Him in Heaven.

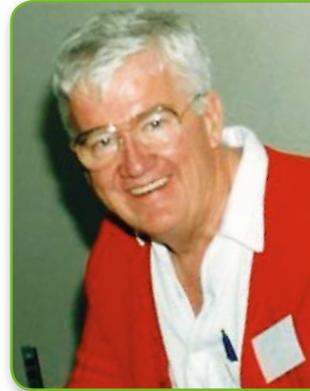
Fr. Lajos Javorka

Ron Bruce

«... every suffering becomes "gold"»

Volunteer of Vancouver (Canada) Ron left for the Heavenly Mariapolis on December 8, 2016 at the age of 89. Formed in one of the most prestigious Universities in Canada, he graduated in Accounting and became involved in politics. After his marriage to Donna he was employed in the Finance Department of the Vancouver General Hospital.

His life was not without difficulties. In 1985 he wrote to Chiara and she encouraged him saying: «What a grace we have in being chosen among many to get to know and to love Jesus Forsaken - right Ron? - and to know that in Him every suffering becomes "gold", a precious possibility to show Him our love». Ron takes



these words to heart and make them his own for the rest of his life. Unable to have their own children, he and Donna adopted Michael and Marianne whom Ron loved unconditionally up to the end.

In spite of his strong commitment in the parish, Ron does not neglect the responsibilities he had in the Movement. He opens his house for the meeting of couples whom he himself invites and also for the meetings of the Volunteers. Even when, due to his age, he could no longer drive, he tried to keep in contact with the others through Skype and he never missed an annual retreat no matter where it was held. When he retired from his job he gladly accepted the responsibility for selling the books of New City as its local representative. In the Mariapolises many remember him sitting behind the table of New City, always ready to give advice to all those who came since he had already read all the books. In his last three years he could no longer have direct contact with the Movement, and yet many people all over Canada had him in their hearts because they had once felt his concrete love. For his serenity, sobriety, humility and love for the others, Ron is remembered by many as a true disciple of the spirituality of unity.

Jacques Maillet

Gianna Ruffo Gillieron

«... (God) the one who began a good work in you will continue to complete it» (cfr Phil 1,6)

A troubled infancy, adolescence spent in a boarding school where, only then Gianna was baptized. On the even of the 20th birthday she wrote in her diary: «why must I always be alone and struggle against loneliness? Lord, never abandon me!». At 25 years old she married Enrico, who is almost 20 years older than her. They had three children but her marriage proved to be difficult, to the point of considering a separation. Someone invited them to a meeting of the New families and what impressed them the most was Jesus Forsaken



as the key to unity. Their relationship improved, and they also involved their children in this new way of life. «How great the love of God is – Gianna would say, who had become a Volunteer of God – since He brought both of us to live the Ideal!». «You are a marvelous mother – one of her daughters wrote. After all that you experienced, you could have become cold and insensitive, and yet you gave us protection and love in such an extraordinary way».

A few years later Enrico is afflicted with Alzheimer's. In front of this new suffering Gianna says her yes once again to Jesus Forsaken, taking care of her husband up to the limits of her strength. After his death and with the children all grown up and independent, Gianna gladly accepted to follow the women Volunteers of Switzerland for 17 years as their delegate. She prepared Congresses, regularly visited the various nuclei, encouraged, supported and shared her experiences that reflected the steps that God led her to make. At the same time she continued to be attentive to all those she encountered everyday, always ready to see Jesus in them.

In the final months of her life she passed through a dark moment. The answer to her tormented question: did I do everything well? does not give her peace, but in spite of this she strived to remain in love. On November 16 she peacefully left this world at the age of 91. Three days before she said: «I miss Jesus very much!».

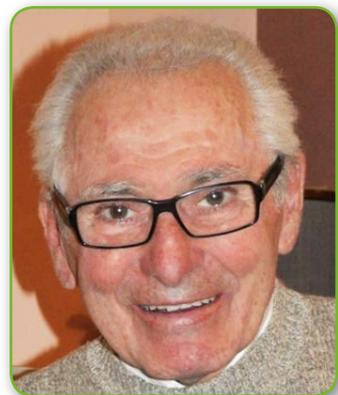
Gaby Matthaei

Umberto Scarpellini

«God tried them and found them worthy of himself. As gold in the furnace, he proved them, and as sacrificial offerings» (Wis 3,5-6)

«Everyone is a candidate to unity». For Umberto, Volunteer of Savignano sul Rubicone (Italy), this affirmation of Chiara is a folgoration. His concrete love for the others is boundless: he committed himself to live the Ideal in his work as a jeweller and pawnbroker, in the community, in the parish, and also where he worked in Caritas. In spite of his many commitments, he is still able to dedicate his time with a special love also for his family, blessed with 12 grandchildren. With his wife Luisa, they took care of a group of families who found in them a sure and stable point of reference. In his work he was particularly attentive to those who were experiencing financial difficulties and who therefore had to sell their family heirlooms, giving them favourable rates.

For Umberto too, trials were not lacking: from a robbery to a kidnapping, the painful death of his wife Luisa, his health that was progressively declining. He lived and offered everything with the faith of one who knows that he is loved immensely by the Father and in the awareness that everything comes from Him. Even in the midst of continuous suffering he continued to live his relationship with the others in an intense and authentic way. He spent the last week of his life in the hospital with dignity and faith, without ever



complaining, bearing witness to his unconditional love for Jesus Forsaken. He was more concerned about the people around him rather than with himself, grateful to all those who were taking care of him and giving proof of his moral integrity and pureness of soul. He left for Heaven on November 16 at the age of 78.

Pino Tasca (Center of the men Volunteers)

Giovanna Leccese

Like the strong woman of the Bible

Married to Damiano and the mother of two children, Giovanna met the Ideal of unity in Gaeta (Italy) from her parish priest, who is a priest focolarino. Touched by the novelty of this life, she shared everything with a great «passion for the Church» that Chiara made her discover in a completely new way. She became a member of the Parish Movement, soon becoming a substantial collaborator of the parish, working tirelessly also in the care and decoration of the Church and the parish premises. She dedicated a special attention to the welcoming of the numerous priests who passed by the rectory, with a service that was generous, attentive and sincere. Jesus Forsaken whom she learned to recognize and embrace, is a constant presence in her life, strengthened by the unity of her companions in the Ideal and by her faithfulness to the Word and to the Eucharist.

On October 19, 2016, after suffering for three years of an invasive and painful illness lived with great courage and awareness, like the strong woman of the Bible, she died peacefully at the age of 67. The church bells rang in celebration as she was welcomed in «her church» accompanied by a multitude of people who knew and loved her.

Franca Mitrano



Our family members

The following passed on to the Next Life: **Simon, brother of Christiane Heinsdorff**, focolarina in Onitsha (Nigeria); **Luigi, father of Gianni Salerno**, married focolarino of the Roman Mariapolis; **Friedrich, father of Gerti Wachmann**, focolarina in Baar (Switzerland); **José, father of Patricia (Paty) Hernández**, focolarina in Cochabamba (Bolivia); **Antonio, father of Dolores (Loli) García Pi**, focolarina in Madrid; **Margarita, mother of Margarita (Marga) Gómez**, focolarina in the Little Town Castello Estero (Spain); **Anunciación, mother of Frances Orian**, focolarina in Manila (Philippines); **Ines, mother of Claudio Zincarini**, focolarino in Rosario (Argentina); **Pierre, father of Pierre André Blanc**, focolarino in Montet; **José Antonio, brother of Tedi Valenca**, focolarino in the Mariapolis Ginetta (Brazil); **Kam-Chan father of Mei-Yee (Cecilia) Yu**, focolarina in Hong Kong; **Miguelina, mother of Hortensia Lopez**, focolarina in Dallas (USA); **Virgilio, father of Paola (Vet) Mastrosanti**, focolarina in Rome (Italy); **Gino, father of Maurizio Cibra**, married focolarino in Loppiano; **Francisco, father of Rosangela (Rosamar) Salazar**, focolarina in the Czech Republic; **Marisa, sister of Pinetta (Donatella) Passera**, focolarina at the Mariapolis Center of Castel Gandolfo; **Gastone, brother of Atalia Floridi**, focolarina in the Roman Mariapolis; **José Antonio, brother of Aparecida (Aida) Ferreira**, focolarina in Washington; **Antonia, mother of Julia Tigges**, focolarina in Rawalpindi (Pakistan); **Igino, father of Giovanna (Vanna)**, focolarina at the Mariapolis Center of Castel Gandolfo and of **Federico Aldrighetti**, focolarino in Bangalore (India); **Maria Josè, mother of Lucia Cardoso**, focolarina in the Little Town Piero (Kenya); **Alice, sister of Aline Uwimana**, focolarina in Loppiano.

Due to space constraints the complete text of the -telegrams sent by Emmaus for the focolarini and the focolarini can be found in www.focolare.org/notiziariomariapoli

Errata corrige: On pag. 34 of the Mariapolis Newsletter n. 12/2016 in the profile of Frantisek Fedor (Ferko) the following sentence: «And then his wife is also struck with a serious illness ...» was inserted by mistake and does not reflect the actual reality. We ask your pardon for an unintentional mistake.

SPIRITUALITY

- 2 March 14, 2017. Chiara and the family
- 4 Family protagonists

EVENTS

- 6 Collective sanctity, sanctity of the people. Two years after the opening of the cause for the beatification of Chiara Lubich
- 8 Gen2. An unstoppable generation. Preparing for Genfest 2018

THE PEOPLE OF CHIARA

- 10 Called by name. At the heart of the focolare
- 13 Gen3. In Croatia towards the «World Person» construction sites
- 15 Fontem. Where inculturation is daily life
- 17 Religious men. First Panasian meeting in Tagaytay

AT THE CENTER

- 19 Ecclesial world. Seeds of communion... that grow into fruits
- 21 Laity, family and life. The meeting with Card. Kevin Joseph Farrell

IN DIALOGUE

- 22 Charisms in communion. Franciscanism and the Focolare Movement
- 23 NetOne. Journalism and Migration in Beirut. A proposal
- 25 Cities for fraternity Association and Amu.
Planning fraternity in Bethlehem

IN ACTION

- 27 From Syria. Together, in spite of everything
- 28 In Kazakhstan. Amidst the steppes and snow covered mountains
- 29 In Kerala. A day dedicated to Chiara Luce Badano

TESTIMONIES

- 30 Ada (Vitt) Schweitzer. Aldo Baima. Marziano Quintili. Lillian Mazalewski. Paolo Gravante. Virgilio Mastrosanti. Annamaria Cimmino. Ségolène d'Harambure. Sr. Leopolda Blasi. Fr. Wim Hulskorte. m. Thérèse Duisit. Fr. Pavel Uršič. Ron Bruce. Gianna Ruffo Gillieron. Umberto Scarpellini. Giovanna Lecce. Our family members

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Ai sensi del D. lgs. N. 196/2003 per la tutela dei dati personali, comunichiamo che gli indirizzi dei nominativi a cui viene inviato Mariapoli fanno parte dell'archivio del Notiziario Mariapoli, gestito da PAFOM, esclusivamente per la finalità dell'invio di tale periodico. I dati possono essere comunicati a terzi incaricati per la spedizione.