

YEAR XXXIV N 05-06 MAY JUNE 2017

# MARIAPOLI

Newsletter of the focolare movement

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*Ecumenical Week*  
**Walking  
together  
our steps  
are faster**

**Malta**  
A bridge  
beyond Europe

**On a journey**  
Centuries-old cultures  
for Unity today

1920-2020

# «Here there is the hand of God»

As we go towards the centennial celebration of Chiara Lubich, a book recreates the relationship with the Archbishop of Trent Carlo de Ferrari, which is fundamental in the history of the Work of Mary

On May 1, 1947 the Focolare Movement received the first Diocesan approval from the Archbishop of Trent, Mons. Carlo de Ferrari. Seventy years after that fundamental step in the journey of grafting this new ecclesial reality into the body of the Church, a book *Qui c'è il dito di Dio* (Here there is the hand of God), has come to life which is part of the Studies and Document Series promoted by the Chiara Lubich Center, edited by Città Nuova.

Making use of a substantial reservoir of sources, much of which have never been published before, the text sheds light on significant and unknown details of the story of the Work of Mary, thus setting up a new reference point with regards to its history. Lucia Abignente delineates the historical context and the social and cultural environment in which Chiara Lubich lived, and the first steps of the Movement during the tragic conditions caused by the war. In the extraordinary exchange of letters between Chiara and the

Archbishop of Trent, which also included Fr. Tomasi who was given the task of following the nascent Movement, Iginio Giordani and Pasquale Foresi, we find pages of rare spiritual intensity and of a profound human depth.

The published passages allow us to enter into a rich and lively relationship wherein Chiara's adamant faith in «her» Archbishop, based on the Word «Who listens to you listens to me» (Lk 10,16), is expressed in a constant and confident filial communion in all its details. With his sharp and paternal gaze the Archbishop immediately recognized the essence of what was happening in his Diocese and affirmed: «Here there is the hand of God». This certainty, with which Mons. de Ferrari would recognize the action of grace, allowed him to accompany Chiara and the Movement with wisdom, perseverance and love during the delicate and complex years when the Church of Rome was studying it, up to the threshold of its Pontifical approval.

«In today's perspective – the author writes – we cannot but express gratitude to God for that keen and visionary gaze of the Archbishop who recognized the divine action, when he approved and blessed the nascent Movement, allowing a glimpse of the fecundity of the charism thanks to its ecclesiality».

Alba Sgariglia,  
João Manoel Motta



100 ANNI 1920-2020

Centro Chiara Lubich

SOCIETÀ DI STUDI TARENTINI DI SCIENZE STORICHE

UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI TRENTO

Stiamo lieti di invitarLa all'incontro

## Chiara Lubich e Carlo de Ferrari

### IL DISCERNIMENTO DI UN CARISMA

Presentazione del libro di Lucia Abignente

Città Nuova (in coedizione con il Centro Chiara Lubich), Roma 2017

che si terrà venerdì 9 giugno 2017 alle ore 16.30 a Trento

Aula grande della Fondazione Bruno Kessler - Via S. Croce, 77 - con il seguente programma:

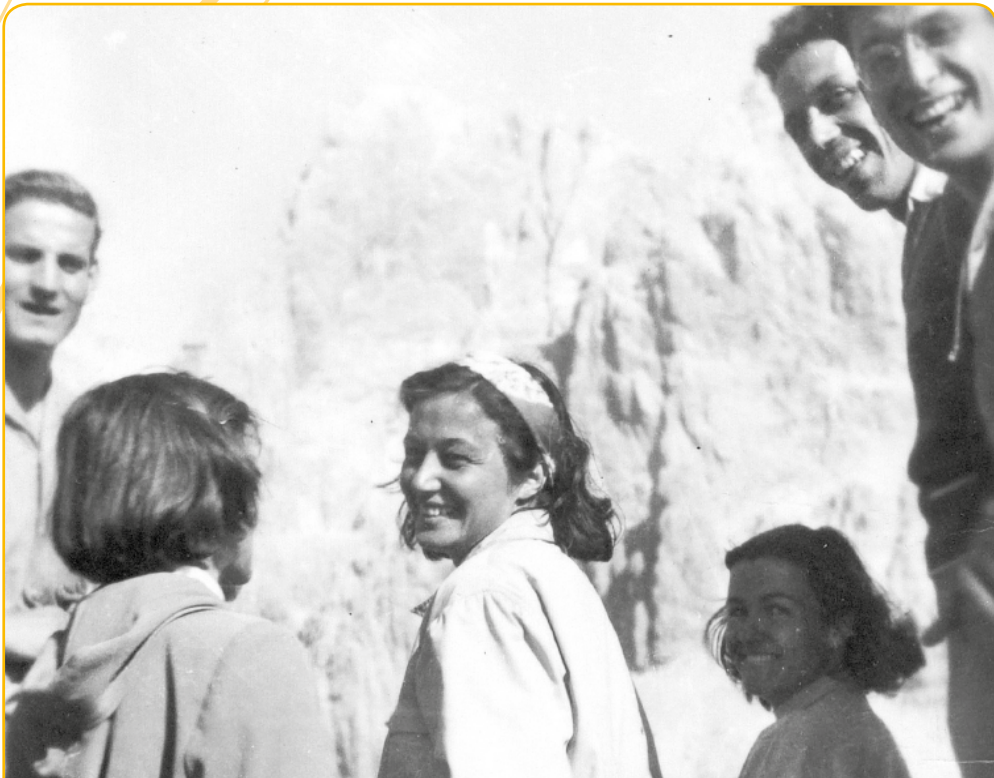
ore 16.30: Saluto di **Marcello Bonazza** Società di Studi Trentini di Scienze Storiche  
Introduce e presiede: **Emanuele Curzal** Università degli Studi di Trento

Intervengono: **Paolo Marangon** Università degli Studi di Trento - **Ilaria Pedrini** Centro Studi Judicaria  
**Severino Vareschi** Studio Teologico Accademico di Trento - **Maurizio Gentilini** Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche

Letture di testi: **Maria Bertolini** - **Augusto Faggioli** ore 19.00 Conclusione

INFO: Società di Studi Trentini di Scienze Storiche | Tel. 0461 314208 | segreteria@studitrentini.it | www.studitrentini.it

In Trent June 9, during the presentation of the book, going towards the centennial celebration of Chiara Lubich 1920-2020



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## The precious pearl is Wisdom

«**T**he precious pearl of the Gospel, that to acquire it one had to sell everything (cf. Mt 13, 45-46), is Wisdom. In fact whoever possesses Wisdom is one who lives Jesus Forsaken and someone who has given everything and does not depend on any human support, but only in Jesus Forsaken, if God too can renege on us ( or , to say it better, if even God seems to abandon us), Jesus Forsaken will never abandon us».

*Chiara Lubich*

(Scritto di Chiara Lubich, 14 dicembre 1949)

# 59° Ecumenical Week

## Walking together

**700 Christians from 69 Churches and ecclesial Communities, of 42 Countries**

«The Focolare Movement creates venues in which the Holy Spirit can act and wherein Christians can meet». With these words the Lutheran Bishop-emeritus Christian Krause, president of the World Lutheran Federation, expressed the experience of the 59th Ecumenical Week that was held at the Mariapolis Center of Castel

Gandolfo from May 9 to 13. Maria Voce, in a long interview with the journalists present explained the reason for the event: «Ecumenism serves to build and broaden the unity of hearts

and, therefore, it serves to bring peace, it has a great contribution to peace. If Christians then show the others that they

are united, surely they will have a greater influence. And if they are united they can help to take those steps necessary so that peace can be realized».

**It has been two years that the «Uno (One)» Center** for Christian Unity (founded by Chiara Lubich in 1961, even before the Second Vatican Council) has been preparing for this meeting together with a group of eight focolarine and focolarini of various Churches. They themselves were the animators and moderators. The theme that was chosen: «Walking together – Christians on the road towards unity». A Word of Scripture, was offered everyday to be lived, and the themes on the charism of unity given through the meditations of Chiara



The Metropolitan Gennadios Zervos of the Ecumenical Patriarchate with Maria Voce. On the sides, Maria Wienken and Diego Goller of the «Uno (One)» Center

– centered on Jesus crucified and Forsaken – encouraged an exchange of experiences among the participants, a profound listening, a reciprocal giving of spiritual wealth. In the different Eucharistic celebrations the suffering of still not being able to celebrate it together, intensified the prayer for unity. «Here we experienced what it is like to live in the Kingdom of Heaven – one of the participants from Egypt said. Theological difficulties still exist among our Churches, but the reciprocal love among the Christians of 69 Churches, made us discover our common foundation, Christ crucified and Risen». A participant from Ireland said: «The reality that we have experienced is that because of baptism we are already the mystical Body of Christ which we live as the one Church».

**The choir made up of** Orthodox youth from the Romanian Patriarchate, guided by the dean of the Faculty of Orthodox Theology of Cluj, Prof. Vasile Stanciu, an ecumenical choir from Hungary and other artistic contributions, gave an atmosphere of solemnity during the meeting.

The «Ecumenical Week 2017» was the occasion to offer, as Focolare Movement, a contribution to the journey towards unity during this year that will celebrate the 500 years of the Reformation. Messages came from the Patriarch Bartholomew



Jesús Morán with Annette Gerlach, Evangelical focolarina



Lutheran Bishop-emeritus C. Krause  
with the Catholic  
Bishop B. Farrell

l, from the secretary general of the Ecumenical Council of Churches, Eev. Olav Fykse Tveit, and from the president of the Pontifical Council for christian unity, Card. Kurt Koch.

A recognition of the **charism** of unity on an institutional level was expressed by the Metropolitan Gennadios Zervos, of the ecumenical Patriarchate of Italy and Malta, recalling the 50 years that have passed since the first meeting of Chiara Lubich with Patriarch Athenagoras. In a masterful discourse he described them as two figures who «have changed the situation and the atmosphere between the two Churches, the Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church», «protagonists and initiators of a new ecumenical era». The Metropolitan then gave a medal to Emmaus as a sign of gratitude for what «the Charism of love and unity of Chiara has done in history and what it continues to do today to open ways to reconciliation and dialogue among the Churches and in the world».

«**To think of the Church as communion** (*koinonia*) means to see the inseparableness of ecclesiology and spirituality. Chiara was a great teacher of this» – underlined Bishop Brian Farrell,

the communion with those who don't belong to the same Church, has grown, not as a theory, but rather through the true and living experiences of evangelical love lived without measure».

A **substantial contribution to the central theme** was offered by Prof. Martin Robra from the Ecumenical Council of Churches, drawing from his touching personal experience in contact with Chiara, and he said: «Jesus Forsaken is not a doctrine or a theological concept. Jesus Forsaken goes back to amazing experiences and intuitions and at the same time also illuminating». «It is here, in Jesus Forsaken – he continued - that the union with God and with our sisters and brothers becomes a reality. Jesus Forsaken in our midst is the link of love that unites God to all of us ».

**Wednesday May 10 in St. Peter's Square**, some of the participants wanted to greet the bishop of Rome personally, and Pope Francis shared with them words of encouragement «to go ahead in this common journey towards unity». The prayer in the catacomb of



An Armenian-Apostolic nun

secretary of the Pontifical Council for the promotion of christian unity. In her, he continued, «the spirituality of communion, including





# Week for a United World

## Change the heart to change the world

**Youth and teens, together with adults and entire local communities, involved in more than 100 initiatives to bear witness to a journey of unity already in action**

St. Sebastian in Rome, the place of the first Christians and martyrs, with the Pact of Reciprocal Love made together, was defined by some as the «highest point»: to forgive and to heal the wounds of the past, to bring «this witness lived among us in our communities, in our Countries, in our society».

**«Something happened here** – Jesús Morán said referring to the Ecumenical Week. I saw in action that “ecumenical catholicity” which Card. W. Kasper spoke of. It was a rediscovery of the power of the Charism, a reality that must be shared and passed on to the whole Movement».

Emmaus also said in her interview: «We have built much together. Now we must accelerate the pace so that our communion will become full and visible. We must go ahead».

*Maria Wienken, Diego Goller, Lesley Ellison*

Alle catacombe  
di San Sebastiano



A network that extends throughout the world, that is tightening the knots, that reinforces ties and creates new ones, that unites bunches of threads that have already been woven. Maybe this is the image that best describes the Week for a United World 2017 (WFUW), the annual appointment, promoted by the youth and teens of the Focolare, that involves the whole Movement. To show a network of concrete projects in the world where fraternity is already in action or in the process of becoming a reality, is one of the objectives of this Week. This year there were 110 events which from May 1 to 7, have involved the same number of localities in the five continents. It began with, among other things, the event of May 1, which saw the participation of 3,500 youth in Loppiano (see [www.focolare.org](http://www.focolare.org)) and ended with the worldwide relay race Run4unity on May 7, a 24-hour sports event for peace by the Teens for unity. And precisely to encourage the formation of just one big network among the many events, it was decided to have just one title for the Week of a United World («Change your heart, change the world») and to launch just one hashtag for its diffusion in social media (#4peace), aside from common platforms for updates and news.

**«Create a network» and «to feel part of a network»** were the key elements of this edition. «Become a network» above all among the different generations.







In various Countries it was the gen2 who promoted and supported the initiatives of the Run4unity. In Penang (Malaysia) a small group of youth, with the help of friends, colleagues and local organizations, gave life to an 8-kilometer walk for peace participated in by 1,300 people of all ages, of many ethnic groups, cultures and religions: Muslims, Hindu, Buddhists, Sikh, Christians. Also present was Chief Minister of Penang, Lim Guan Eng, and other civil and religious authorities.



of weapons to Countries at war which is being promoted also on a national level. In fact, in the city there is a factory producing weapons of war. The programme also included the promotion of bars who choose not to sell products linked to gambling. And to «create networks» in the territory with enterprises, associations, organizations, sportive and otherwise, working with teens and youth or on the frontline in building unity on an ecumenical and interreligious level, was another characteristic of the many events. In Buenos Aires (Argentina) in 100 (Jews, Muslims, Buddhists, Christians and people who do not have any religious beliefs) they participated in a

«Walk for peace» that passed by the various places of worship; in each one the representatives of the different religions encouraged everyone to adhere to the journey of unity that is ongoing and to «continue to work together united - they said - having peace as the goal, working towards a world of hope, love and solidarity».

**The worldwide network was strengthens** uniting itself with other networks working for the same objectives. Just like the schools that adhere to the project of peace education «Living Peace International»: 83 schools are involved all over the world in 22 events of Run4unity.

And «to feel part of a network» made the small and big actions have the same importance. Many in the world, were able to feel that



**Often the events were born** from the collaboration among adults, youth and teens, involving entire communities and they highlighted the steps to fraternity that are already in action in both the local and national levels. In Iglesias (Italy) New Humanity together with Teens for Unity and in collaboration with a network of associations, organized a programme for the sensibilization on disarmament «Run for Unity – Peace ... let's talk about it». The initiative was linked to the campaign against the sale





they are part of a worldwide action even if locally they were just few. Everyone was able «participate» also in the activities that were being held several hundred kilometers away. In the Pacific, where it seems that the winds of war are blowing, a group in Japan made a telephone call to their peers in Korea: «Let's run hand in hand with Korea – they wrote – and let us show that unity is possible in Asia»; fifty teens from Mexicali (Mexico) and fifty from Calexico (Usa) ran simultaneously on both sides of the wall that defines the boundary between the two Countries, «we are divided by a wall – they said – but we are together in building a united world»; in New Caledonia, where there is rivalry with the tribe of Saint-Louis, the youth decided to organize there, with courage, precisely the Run4unity to bring the winds of peace.

**Even the web helped in «creating a network».** The news, both of the preparation and the events themselves, spread through brief presentations and radio transmissions, published by internet in three languages, were prepared by a single communications team at the Center made up of the Secretariats of the Youth for a United world and the Teens for Unity. The website United World Project ([www.unitedworldproject.org](http://www.unitedworldproject.org)),



## Genfest 2018

During the Week for a United World the next Genfest to be held in Manila from July 6 to 8, 2018 was officially launched. Objective: to bear witness that universal brotherhood is an ideal worth living for, a project for which many young people are already working, a goal to reach even going beyond difficulties and barriers, as the title expresses: BEYOND ALL BORDERS.

Registration will begin on October 2017, but you can already register to attend the event through the email address: [info@y4uw.org](mailto:info@y4uw.org). For all information go to: [www.y4uw.org/genfest](http://www.y4uw.org/genfest) and social media: [www.facebook.com/genfest](https://www.facebook.com/genfest) - [twitter.com/genfest\\_en](https://twitter.com/genfest_en) - [www.instagram.com/genfest.official](https://www.instagram.com/genfest.official) - [www.flickr.com/photos/y4uw\\_official](https://www.flickr.com/photos/y4uw_official).

**- GEN  
FEST**

BEYOND ALL BORDERS

MANILA, PHILIPPINES 2018

The logo can be explained in one word: essentiality. In a world with too much information we want to value simplicity and the power that every word brings to the world.

Therefore just words and, as the only design, a clear, precise and endless line underlining the title. To highlight the essential things: going beyond borders, going towards everyone, attaining universal brotherhood.

[www.unitedworldproject.org](http://www.unitedworldproject.org)), Rin4unity ([www.run4unity.net](http://www.run4unity.net)) and the spaces in social media dedicated to the events offered updates and photos in real time published from all over the world. Attracted by the originality of the initiative «Radio Immaginaria», a European web radio made by teens for teens dedicated an hour of the programme to the event for a radio marathon for peace.

*prepared by Annalisa Innocenti with the international centers of theTfU and YFUW*





Secondo da dx, mons. Vincenzo Zani, segretario della Congregazione per l'Educazione Cattolica

## Consultation of experts The challenge of Emmaus

«How come we are no longer effective?»

*From April 6-7 around eighty people, experts in various disciplines gathered at the international Center of the Focolare Movement to study, as what has been happening for the past few years, certain topics of importance in today's culture. A space for reflection, a discussion among experts from various continents, promoted by the magazines Gen's, Unity and Charisms and New Humanity, wherein this time they reflected on charisms and evangelization of culture, interculturality and - in view of the forthcoming Synod of Bishops - on the new generations (see article in [www.focolare.org](http://www.focolare.org)). Emmaus opened the sessions, and in her warm greeting she confided a question that she has been carrying in her heart: a challenge that she launched to all those present but also to the whole Movement in the world.*

«This morning at Mass I prayed that this your "think tank" will take place in the light of Wisdom, and so I asked the Holy Spirit to assist you in a special way. And I thought of challenging you with a question that was passing through my soul: how come we are no longer effective? Why is this when there are so many good things in the Movement?

Yesterday a representative of UNICEF said: «In the end, only the Pope talks about peace». And I thought: what about us? What are we doing? We also talk about a culture of peace, a culture of resurrection, a culture of the Risen One. We are also doing action of peace.... I have the impression that we do not have any influence because this culture has not yet emerged. There is good, there are actions, there is the life everywhere, it can be seen, but it is still not able to exert enough influence, it is not able to be a means in those instances that could truly bring something different.



Rightly so this representative of UNICEF said that it doesn't mean that we have to choose sides for one or the other, but we must recognize that we are all responsible. The fact that there are wars that are never resolved, violence that cannot be stopped, means that we are still not able to replace hatred with love, violence with meekness, war with peace.

It is true that we love Jesus Forsaken in all these painful situations, that we have the winning card to find God where there is no peace, but - as Chiara has always told us - Jesus Forsaken must be a passage. We have to arrive at the resurrection!

We have to find the way. And maybe it is only Jesus in the midst who can offer us this way, only this culture that is born from Wisdom. It is a challenge therefore, a wish, a prayer: all of this for you».

*prepared by the editorial board*



# Remembering Foco Igino and Mya

**In this year rich with events dedicated to the family, a portrait of the relationship between Igino Giordani and his wife Mya Salvati**



very few material possessions to start their family. Igino came from a humble family, Mya from a good middle-class family but, having lost her parents at an early age, she was also faced with many difficulties. Maybe because of this, their way of facing financial difficulties was also very different from each other: Igino was less anxious, while Mya wanted to recover the lifestyle she had to give up as a small child. For this reason she was always very sensitive

We know many things about the life of Foco. On a professional level, he was a great journalist, an interesting writer, an original man of politics; in the Focolare Movement he was the co-founder, the first married focolarino, the one who accompanied Chiara Lubich in the first years of the nascent Movement.

In comparison, we know very little about his married life. How come? There are no hidden secrets. It is simply because his wife Mya was not a member of the Focolare Movement, the sources where we can get to know her come from the writings published by the same protagonists, in particular Igino and their sons Mario and Sergio.

Their stories tell us that the relationship between Igino and Mya was beautiful and spontaneous. They married young and had

to the well-being of the family: she couldn't understand how Igino could dedicate much of his time to doing work for the Church and religious orders for free. On the other hand, it was the first half of the Twentieth century and the role of the laity on the Church was marginal and Mya could not understand why it always had to be Igino to solve problems, manage magazines, write articles, teach in Catholic schools.

The same thing happened in politics. The coherence of Igino, impermeable to any compromise, especially under fascism, but not only, often led to his losing his job, or renouncing his career, or to live under surveillance of the police, etc. The fact is, in the eyes of Mya, the successes of Igino in public life and in the Church did not always bring economic gain for the family, which in the meantime

was growing, enriched by four children (Mario, Sergio, Brando and Bonizza). The poverty endured during the Second World War, together with serious health problems of some of the children and the frequent absence of Igino due to political problems, created misunderstandings between Igino and Mya that grew as they got older. Igino, too, was always in search for a religious life that would be able to answer to his vocation to be a totalitarian Christian, even if he was married and this was way before the Second Vatican Council. This was such a novelty that it was not easily understood, even by his wife. She in fact, saw how Igino worked for the foundation of the Daughters of the Church together with Mother Olivia Bonaldo, and then how he entered in the nascent Focolare Movement, without being able to explain it to her. To Mya, this was time and love taken from the family, even if Igino explained to her that, since love is like a fire, in order to burn it needs to be continually fed and, for this reason love is always increased and never decreased. When her health was affected, on a psychological level, due to

sudden and unexpected deaths in her family and due to the courageous choices made by some of their children, Igino remained beside her with love, in spite of the fact that the misbehaviours of Mya caused him great suffering. Their story concluded in the sublimation of their relationship as he sat next to her hospital bed in a clinic in Rome.

Foco wrote: «She confessed to me the love she had for me: no one has ever loved her as much as I did. She confided in me so that I would return home, this being her greatest desire. Not only this: but in physical torment, between injections and various medication, she began to receive daily Communion every morning; and, even in the most atrocious moments, you could see that she thought of God. [...] On May 1, 1974, she died in her bed at home, in peace. [...] My sorrow ended with the sweet certainty that she was already in Paradise. She was heroic, pure, good, an exceptional mother »<sup>1</sup>.

*Alberto Lo Presti*

1 Igino Giordani, *La famiglia ricordi e pensieri* (The family memories and thoughts), Città Nuova, Rome 1994

**Tito Stagno, well-known journalist of RAI**, friend and colleague of the son Brando, in January 1995 in an article in *L'Eco di Bergamo*, with a few wise brushstrokes he makes us understand profoundly not only the person of Giordani but also his family: «In the final instances drawn from memory there is Igino husband and sweet father: those quick and light pats – I was fortunate to have received one – given to Ildebrando («Brando, for short for reasons of space»); the amused glances at Sergio [...]; his gaze at his wife, Mya [...] full of love, and also of an almost childlike awe, because this wife “delightful, all joy, in love with music, exploding with vitality, with

a very beautiful and light soprano voice”, enchanted him.

The lady, Mya Giordani was truly an explosion of vitality. When I happened to meet her – which usually happened in the stores in our neighbourhood – I, a professional of news and of the word, was regularly swept away by that raging torrent. But how could the professor hold back such exuberance, and so much unstoppable energy? With love, only with love.

No one – Mya confessed to her husband before she died – has ever loved me the way you do».

Taken from <http://www.iginogiordani.info/it/igino-giordani/dicono-di-lui/600-la-saggezza-infinita-del-professore-ingenuo.html>



## Malta

## A bridge beyond Europe

Simultaneously with the opening of the Week for a United World, the community of the Focolare in Malta welcomed Maria Voce

It was a 360o visit with precious moments of dialogue with the community and at the same time strong moments of going out towards the Church and civil society.

It was the Diocese of Malta who invited the President of the Focolare Movement, through the Ecumenical Commission, for the 40th anniversary of its founding. Precisely in the period in which the small island state is holding the chairmanship of the European Council and is at the same time in the midst of an electoral campaign.

Her visit – they wrote from Malta – came in a moment of apprehension for the political situation of the Country, precisely when the anticipated elections was announced. During the preparation we encouraged participation that involved many of us, helping us to interact with love and openness, sharing difficulties, points of view, sensitivities and different needs. And so when Emmaus arrived we were ready to “let ourselves be surprised by what God would do” – just as she told us immediately, at the Shrine dedicated to the Madonna di Mellieha, the oldest on the island: “We could not start if not in the house of our Mother, of our Queen, the only one who can give Jesus, who can see to it that the Risen Jesus truly walks with us”.

With each of the realities of the Movement

that she met, Emmaus was able to grasp its beauty and power offering that key word in order to go ahead. To the focolarini and the focolarine: generate the Work of Mary, do not be afraid to go out in order to give and to share our life even with words; to the priests: live for the Church who is living for humanity; to the men and women Volunteers: be open to all of humanity; to the youth: hope!; to the communities: be “strongholds” – which defends and protects but is also open – of Europe. To be a bridge also beyond Europe».



4 May, 2017. Mario Falzon, the President Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca, Maria Voce, Marisa Calleja, at the presidential Palace

### Three prominent public appointments

On May 2 at the presidential Palace for the Seminar of «Communion and Law» entitled «Law as an instrument of integration in a multi-cultural society», opened by the President of the Republic, Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca. Around 70 qualified people were present, members of organizations involved in assistance to migrants and exponent in the field of education and jurisprudence. In that same place two days later, Emmaus

2 May, 2017. Seminar of «Communion and Law»





5 May, 2017. Archbishop Charles Scicluna with Maria Voce

with Marisa Calleja, Mario Falzon and some representatives of the community, introduce to the President the various expressions and activities of the Focolare Movement in Malta.

**The second appointment, on May 5,** at the celebration of the fortieth anniversary of the Diocesan Ecumenical Commission with the Archbishop of Malta, Mons. Charles Scicluna. The «Declaration of Ottmaring» was presented to the 300 Maltese audience participants: to assist us in thinking ecumenically. «Ecumenism is a need of our times, it must go ahead because it answers to the need for God that everyone has, even unknowingly. Only if we are united among us Christians, the world will be able to encounter God. Otherwise we commit a serious omission».

«Stay with us» are the words which the Archbishop of Malta directed to Emmaus, said with a sense of humour, but with great affection.

**And the last appointment, on May 7** at the Forum «Towards a Europe of Hope, Healing and Hospitality» which the Schuman Centre for European Studies organizes every year in the nation that holds the chairmanship, with the aim of promoting a dialogue inspired by the vision of the founder Robert Schuman. It is an occasion to reaffirm the Christian roots of Europe.

## A vocation rediscovered

Emmaus, in an interview given on May 12, in answer to a question about what Christians aim for in order to give back a spiritual soul to Europe, referred to her trip saying: «It seems to me that Malta must become the stronghold of Europe, because it has not yet completely lost the values... those values that Christianity has brought to Europe», which means the concept of person, human rights, the value of democracy, the freedom of the individual, conviviality, the fact that it was formed by many people and thus to learn how to live together... Values that Europe is starting to lose, with the resurgence of nationalism, putting up of walls at the borders. But «if there is a point where these values are still respected then we must defend it» as a possibility of giving back to Europe its essence.



«Emmaus – they said from Malta - made us see our nation with new eyes, she made us rediscover the vocation of Malta and we found ourselves like in an oasis, with courage and enthusiasm in living the testament of Jesus “That all may be one”. We felt that we are in the heart of the Work of Mary, from where together we will try to be concrete witnesses of the infinite love of the Father. We will try to understand, through the communion within the Zone of Western Europe and the Big Zone, how we can be the “stronghold” for Europe».

*prepared by the editorial board*

In [www.focolare.org/notiziariomariapoli](http://www.focolare.org/notiziariomariapoli)  
you can find news of the entire trip to Malta

# Trip to Southeast Asia

## Cornerstones

**The trip to Thailand, Myanmar, Indonesia and Vietnam of Agnes van Zeeland and Flávio Roveré, central delegates respectively for the focolarine and the focolarini**

Thousands of kilometers travelled, many flight hours, more than seven hours time difference, many languages that are not well-known in the western world. Centuries-old cultures rich in values, essentiality of things, a living religiosity in its various expressions and the harmonious co-existence among people of various faiths. Nature is even more beautiful than what is known, exuberant in its fruits, flowers, seas and... enveloped by a very hot climate!

This is a bit of the panorama of our trip in the zone of Southeast Asia: Thailand, Myanmar, Indonesia and Vietnam, from March 23 to May 8, 2017, or 2560, in the Buddhist calendar.

**We went there** with the desire to get to know up close the reality wherein the focolarine and focolarini are immersed, to share their daily life, to get to know the challenges that they encounter day after day, the concrete difficulties, the condition of their life. And also to discover and to learn the novelties that are manifested in transmitting and sharing the Charism, the fundamental building blocks for *«That all may be one»*,

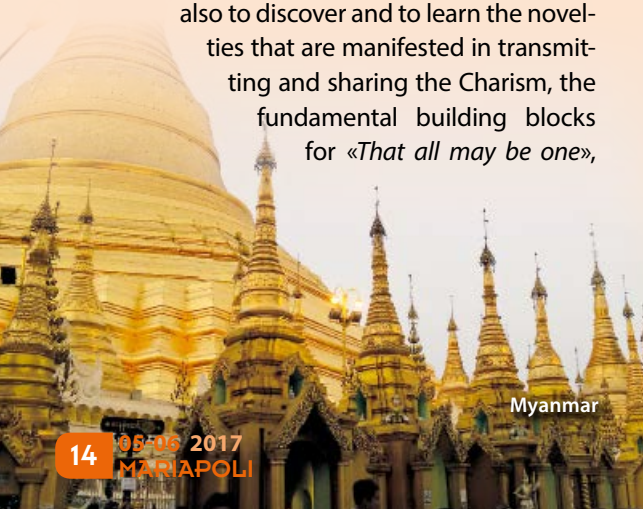
which only they can put in place. It was a great gift and an enrichment for all of us. With us there were also Tecris Noronha and Alberto Kim, from Centro Foco and Casa Vita and for a short period Adriana and Salvatore Lamagna, married focolarini, and Irma Del Valle Sosa. The two persons responsible of the Zone, Veronika Semmler and Glauco Venuti accompanied us for the entire trip.

**The programme began**, for the focolarine, in Thailand with a School for those Responsible of the focolare and the Delegates of the Zone of the whole Asia: days of profound communion, updates on the life of the Movement at the Center and all over the world, formation and dialogue among the generations.

Then, the much-awaited Annual Retreat for the focolarine

and the focolarini of the whole Zone, 80 in all. We experienced the same sacredness that is created everywhere because of the strong presence of Chiara, in addition to the solemnity which is characteristic of Asia. Our «yes» to Jesus Forsaken and the centrality of the focolare, had a strong resonance in the soul of each one. Of course there was also a feast to celebrate the presence of Jesus in the midst with song and dances from all over.

**In the different stop=overs**, what was important were the opportunities to get to know the local communities, quite varied even within the same Country; to discover their activities, the social projects. The presence of the youth, the vivacity of the Movement that is still in formation and the expansion in many places were the occasions to help us understand







During the retreat in Thailand

together where the presence of the focolare centers is most necessary.

**While Agnes and Tecris** continued their visit to the women's focolare center in Medan, Flavio and Alberto held meetings in Malaysia with the youth and married couples who were interested in the life of the focolare. Moments of joy experienced in a family were not lacking such as the inauguration of the new house of the men's focolare in Yogyakarta, with the presence of around 170 people of the community, neighbours, friends, even with some Muslims among them. The visits to Bishop Francis Xavier Vira Arpondratana, of Chiang Mai, and to the Cardinal of Thailand, Francis Xavier Kriengsak Kovithavanij were very enriching.

**To visit the very beautiful monuments** mostly religious in nature, and very important for the populace, often built with the donations and offerings of the people; travelling with the public means of transportation used by everyone; the simplicity of the focolare that is very close to the communities where they are inserted; the fact of belonging to the religious minority with all the challenges that this entails... was like opening a fan and getting to know at least a little, the culture of those peoples, to see with our own eyes how the focolarine and focolarini live in these situations. The most beautiful thing is to see that they are happy there where they are, and to be able to correspond to the grace of God so as to be able to bring the Ideal of unity to the ends of the earth.

**Leaving, we felt a great joy** and gratitude for the presence of the Center among them and the certainty in everyone that we are all walking together in whatever latitude we find ourselves in, wherever we are.

*Agnes van Zeeland, Flávio Roveré*

# Latin America and the Caribbean

## Centuries-old cultures for Unity today

**A trip of over two months to meet the communities of the Southern Cone and the Andine Zone**

It is really difficult to summarize briefly the enormous wealth of the life that we touched with our hands in this trip that lasted for more than two months (March 13 - May 15) with stop-overs in Chile, Uruguay, Argentina (with a «chapter» also at the Mariapolis Lia), Bolivia, Ecuador, Perú, the nations that make up two important Latin American Zones: the Southern Cone and the Andine Zone. We started our trip by preparing our souls to listen and with the mutual desire to share the journey of the past three years towards the New Set-Up. In each of the different stop-overs, it was precisely the communities that made us participate in the most congenial way - through communion and celebration - in their journey, generous and enlightened, in their desire to always conform to the Work of Mary and to the design of God on them.

Just to give you an idea of what happened, this time we will only talk about two realities: the Andine Zone and the meeting with the men and women of the Zones within the Big Zone, even if in each of the different stop-overs we experienced moments that were truly special, like for example in Chile, where with

With the afro-ecuadorian community of Esmeraldas





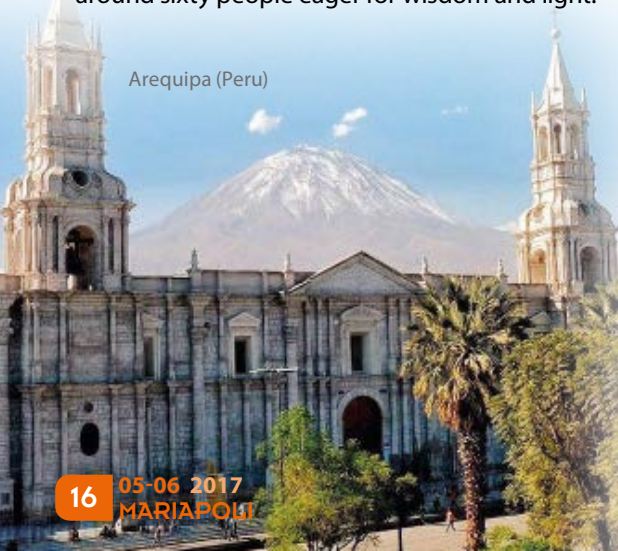
Bolivia

the community and the Archbishop of Santiago, Card. Ricardo Ezzati, we celebrated the 50<sup>o</sup> anniversary of the arrival of the Focolare Movement.

### Andine Zone

The week (April 14-21) spent in Cochabamba, Bolivia, saw a series of meetings one after another with youth, families, men and women Volunteers, leaders of the different local communities and the Council of the Zonetta. The sounds and colours of the celebration, wherein the story of the Movement in this marvelous Country, expressed the joy of its diverse ethnic groups that form just one family. From there we went to Arequipa, the cradle of the Ideal of unity in Perú, and then we went to Quito, in Ecuador (April 25 - May 1), where the populace full of vitality, was waiting for us. The visit to the Mariapolis Center Concordia was very interesting, and then we travelled down the coastline to the very lively Afro-ecuadorian community of Esmeraldas, with a week-end dedicated to the Council of the Zonetta and to the leaders of the different local communities: around sixty people eager for wisdom and light.

Arequipa (Peru)



We returned to Lima (May 1-15), where we met the Council of the Zonetta together with the leaders of the communities in the north of Perú. The experiences of the survivors of the violent typhoon last March and of the community that ran to bring them aid, even

from the surrounding Countries was very moving, bearing witness to how solidarity that is born from reciprocal love makes everyone grow.

The intense and profound communion during the meeting with the Zone Council (because of the great distances some of the members participated only through *skype*), generated in everyone a certainty: to be able to give life, in this land in the heart of the Andes, to an «Andine» Jesus in the midst, expression of the wealth of its cultures, according to «dream» of Chiara. It will be Mary who will grant this, the «Andine» Mother who will live again in the Work of Mary.



In Lima with the Delegates of the Zone

### Meeting of the women and men Delegates of the Zone

The final appointment (May 7-13) was held in Lima with all the women and men Delegates of the Zones that make up the Big Zone of Latin America. It was in Lima with all the Delegates of the Zones that make up the Big Zone of Latin America that this year in a process brought ahead with great maturity by the communities, the Big Zone was enriched by the addition of the Caribbean. It was a meeting characterized by precious meditations on *Paradise '49*, that



helped in looking at the reality with the eyes from Above. The great communion on the life of the Movement in the different Zones made the sufferings, conquests, fruits and challenges truly belong to everyone. The dialogue on the vocations of the Work of Mary was very interesting, understanding together that to reach the new generations we must first of all have a conversion of the soul: yes, to find new strategies, but to find them in the Gospel. We realized that the youth are attracted by life, and so we need to continue to create occasions to be with them, to keep the focolare centers open, working together, making them experience the presence of Jesus in the midst: He is the one who conquers hearts. In these times when there is a lack of points of reference, we also saw that over and beyond our age and limitations, the youth trust the persons who live with radicalness and faithfulness up to the end.

The weak points were not ignored, such as the limited numerical resources to reach the places where young people go, or the difficulty of some communities to sustain themselves independently. We also asked ourselves whether the focolare centers in the Big Zone are deployed according to the aims of the Movement «going out», just as the critical socio-political situations in some Countries were also discussed.

We went back to the Center enriched and grateful for the new unity that was built.

*Gabriela Melo, Augusto Parody*

## Women and men Volunteers in Mexico

# A window open to humanity

**Prepared for almost a year, sustained with prayers and actions, and above all by life, the meeting of around 400 men and women Volunteers of Mesoamerica was held in the Little Town El Diamante**

At three years since the New Set-up of the Zone, a school for those responsible for a nucleo was held from April 23 to 26, followed by a Congress for the men and women Volunteers entitled: «The Volunteers of God today, a window open to Humanity».

The persons responsible, who were meeting for the first time as a Zone, came from the zonette of Panama, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador and Mexico. The joy was great and from the first moment the sharing of difficulties and the results obtained was intense.

Themes such as the role of a person responsible for a nucleo, the instruments and the aspects, were given with the words of Chiara and explained in the conversations with the Volunteers from the Center: Paolo Mottironi, Michela Tasca, Roberto Borri and Eva Tomico, were very important for the formation. The communion of soul, which followed the meditations on the union with God, Jesus Forsaken and *Paradise '49*, were what linked every moment.

The school continued with the arrival of around 350 women and men Volunteers, who immediately felt that they were part of one family, children of Chiara.







## Diocesan Movement At the service of the Church as communion

**The Copresident defined it as an instrument of incarnation of the Charism in the Church**

The Congress was an *expo* of joy and of life. The numerous experiences, actions and projects from all over the Zone including nations with serious economic and social problems highlighted the value of like of our people. Being inside the wounds of every territory, to try with an intense and profound will to love the numerous difficulties (at times true dramas) made the Volunteers real heroes, strongly embracing that Jesus who had given his life for these situations.

The reflections following the videos of Emmaus and Jesús to the persons responsible for a nucleo last April 1, highlighted the importance of not falling into the logic of the world in the process of incarnation, and the will to live fully, with new enthusiasm, this phase of the Movement.

It will be difficult to forget the faces and the gazes of many women and men Volunteers, that remained engraved in the hearts Paolo, Michela, Roberto and Eva during their trip to Mexico! People who with tenacity continue to walk together to build new and more humane social environments, in the family and at work.

*prepared by the centers of the men and women Volunteers*



The visit of Jesús Moran to the Marches (a region in Central Italy) in the beginning of April (see box) brought to light a beauty which, at least in these dimensions, does not exist in other regions: the presence in four of the dioceses – Ascoli Piceno, Fermo, Macerata, Pesaro – of the Diocesan Movement (DM). «What favoured such a concentration – explained Fr. Mario Cataldi of the priests' focolare of Ascoli – was the surprising adhesion to the Ideal of many seminarians coming from the Marches and Abruzzo in the beginning of the '70s who later became priest focolarini or Volunteers». From the start they felt the need to bring this life of the Ideal within the structures of the local Church where they worked.

**But what are the peculiarities of the DM?** «First and foremost – Fr. Mario said – an evangelization in the perspective of the unity that Jesus asked the Father: "That all may be one", which developed month by month through the practice of the word of life and the points of the spirituality of unity». «We priests



then – added Fr. Giuseppe Caponi, who also belongs to the priests' focolare of Ascoli – we must have the honesty to feel that we are the servants of everyone, giving the right space for all the



by themselves or by the whole Movement: interventions in the territory, job hunting, *flash-mob* in the town or city squares, the

ecclesial realities, to build unity in variety and in distinction loving each group. movement, association as if they were ours». «A formative experience that is characteristic of the DM – shared Fr. Paolo Canale from Fermo – are the summer Formation Courses or camps. From its preparation, each group, coming from the different parishes of the diocese, gives the best of itself and a strong spirit of communion is created among everyone which encourages a growth in the faith in the youth and, often leads to the discovery of their vocation: gen, committed member, Volunteers, focolarine and focolarini. Others, like me, felt the call to the priesthood and some were eventually consecrated as Bishops».

“*fagotto* (bundle)”, the Week for a United World that has become a part of civil manifestations, etc., or welcoming the proposals of the Bishop in every pastoral field. Another example is Pesaro where the Bishop has entrusted the ecumenical dialogue to Fr. Giorgio Paolini, the main animator of the DM of that diocese, and which he brings ahead along the line of the experience of the Movement, developing around the DM a pilot ecumenical pastoral programme for the entire region.

**To better understand** how a DM is present and works in a diocese, let's take the example of the diocese of Ascoli: with 120.000 inhabitants distributed in 70 parishes. The DM is active in 23. Totally there are around 600 people who attend the meetings of the Word of life and who are behind the social and ecclesial activities in the diocese, whether those promoted

**Such ecclesial vitality** has awoken in the Copresident the desire to get to know it in person. «For the past three years – confided Thérèse Henderson, who with Alessandro Cappella follows the zonetta of the Marche – I have been a part of the focolare of Ancona and the first goal that we set for ourselves with the women and men focolarini and with the priests' focolare was to consider ourselves as just one focolare». «We began first of all to meet among those responsible for the focolare centers – continued Alessandro – (in the Marche there are at present three priests' focolare centers aside from the other focolare centers in the zonetta); then we “committed” the date of June 2 of every year for a retreat with everyone: focolarine, focolarini, priests; then to still take advantage of every occasion to grow in communion and sharing the life of the Movement, also in the various cities».

«When, some time ago – continued Fr. Giuseppe – one of our priests was brought to



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the hospital in Ancona due to a serious illness, focolarine and focolarini went there everyday to assist him and to give him moral support, as if he were a part of their focolares».

«In this new unity – Thérèse declared – the Movement in the zonetta lives that reciprocity which is truly an exchange of gifts. Among other things, the DM brings with it a great formative function, even in the theological field, a concrete impact on the structures of the local



Church together with the whole Movement, but also with a specific contribution for the realization of that Church-communion that is precisely of the Vatican II».

*prepared by Anna Friso*

## **We asked Jesús Morán for an impression of his trip to the Marches**

### ***How did the idea for this trip come about?***

«From a conversation I had with the two persons responsible for the focolare centers of Ancona and of the priests' focolare of Ascoli, I came to know about the journey of unity that they have undertaken lately: an experience that they felt was confirmed by a talk I gave during the meeting of the priest focolarini on the need for a new unity among the men and women focolare centers with the priests' focolares. And so I felt the desire to make this experience first-hand within the context of the zonetta of the Marches where the Diocesan Movement first blossomed».

### ***It was the first time that you entered in direct contact with the reality of the DM.***

### ***What was your impression?***

«To go to know this reality up close, which I also had to take care of as the Copresident, encouraged me to share with Emmaus the desire to go there, even in an almost informal way. It was a real discovery. I saw an Ideal life that was dynamic, committed and multi-faceted. I was staying in the priests' focolare of Ascoli,

beautiful, centrally located, and I really felt at home. For me it was the confirmation that the DM is one of the most innovative fruits of the ecclesial genius of Chiara. We are dealing with a reality that is fully Work of Mary and fully Church».

### ***Is there something in particular that you have understood being in Ascoli?***

«I came back convinced that the birth of the DM in a Zone or zonetta must become something normal rather than exceptional (for now it exists only in a small part of the Movement). The Work of Mary has the vocation to bring the Charism of unity to all the civil and ecclesial realities and God, because of this task, has given it special structures, one of which, for the ecclesial world, is the DM. We are dealing therefore with an instrument of incarnation of the Charism in the Church that by its very nature must flourish. When this is verified, the Movement in that particular place acquires a special fullness because the Charism has been incarnated fully. Certainly this requires a special commitment to unity and much foresight and vision. In the zonetta of Ancona this unity is tangible».

*prepared by the editorial board*



# Inundations

## In twelve just one Dialogue

At the appointment with the Center of the Movement

That 9th of May, was a much awaited date by all the members of the Center for Dialogue with Culture, because it was the day in which their heart's desire was realized: to be in communion with the whole Work of Mary through its Center.

Nothing was taken for granted: for a complex reality and structured like that of the Dialogue with Cultures – the so-called Inundations – a considerable effort was needed to offer the life, the journey travelled and the most profound reality of this Dialogue.

**The preparation**, a real game of unity (!) among all the Inundations, which made the reality of being one body stand out even more: 12 but just one Dialogue. And as Inundations that are presently existing (architecture, art, communication, law, ecology, economy, medicine, education, politics, psychology, sociology, sports) they presented themselves to the Center of the Movement and, as such, they were perceived. Therefore, a single reality and at the same time variegated, wherein the life runs in a continuous and rich dynamic of unity and distinction.

**The meeting unfolded** through some titles that were projected on the large screen: synergies within the Movement, relationships with the Church and with the academic world, counterculture of waste. Thus it was seen, with a certain awe and surprise, not only the growth in many

synergies realized and lived in the different ambits of the Movement [above all (and not only) with New Humanity] in this last period, but also the notable increase in relationships built in the most varied fields, from the academic to the political, to the ecclesial, social etc. And it is thanks to these relationships that we are able to find the true shortcuts to reach those so-called «difficult» areas and to «illuminate» them with that light that comes from the charism of unity, dressed as culture, thought, practical science.

**Importance was also given** to the so-called «counterculture of waste» (cf. Pope Francis), which means that involvement directed to the more urgent and often disregarded social and worldwide realities, such as the involvement for example in the earthquake damaged zones in several Countries by the Inundation of architecture in synergy with AMU and other realities; the EoC has collaborated with enterprises affected by the earthquake and has also started a «monitoring center» on poverty. Aside from this, the Inundation of medicine is giving particular attention to the problem of the end of life; Net-One has started a project on journalism, migration, Islam; Social-One has organized meetings with social workers on poverty and migration. Contacts



and collaboration with Christians of other Churches (MPPU), with Buddhists (EcoOne) are not lacking, with particular attention given to themes on peace (education and psychology), on the environment (EcoOne and also law), and to areas that seem far in the sense of cultural and also spiritual updates (sports and art).

All commitments that tell us how the Inundations, by getting involved, using the language that helps to meet people wherever they are, are going ahead decisively along one of the «highways» that Chiara had foreseen as privileged instruments for «*That all may be one*».

*Caterina Mulatero, João Manoel Motta*

## Women and men Volunteers With a turn of the **boa**

850 persons responsible for a nucleo from all over the world with Maria Voce and Jesús Morán



With joy and gratitude the 850 persons responsible for a nucleo from all over the world present at Castel Gandolfo from March 30 to April 2, welcomed the commitment to be co-responsible for the Movement, proactive and authentic witnesses there where God calls them.

The constant presence of the President and the Copresident throughout these years was for the branch of the women and men Volunteers, an unceasing prod and encouragement to realize fully our vocation. This time too Emmaus e Jesús strongly invited each one to reflect on the role of the Volunteers in the Work of Mary today (see box).

«When the Spirit blows he makes things tremble a bit – Emmaus said – but at the same time he widens, he branches off and ranges, he destroys borders and barriers, he makes us see

further, bringing us always more above, and from above we can see better. I feel that we must adhere to the Holy Spirit and to run after this wind».

A variety of experiences but just one soul united everyone. Decisions were made born from the unity experienced and lived during those days and shared with joy in the heart, without falling into the logic of the world, ready to begin the «new processes»: «We made a total inversion in the pure Ideal... a return to the radicalness of our origins with the awareness that we are the Work of Mary and that we must walk along the roads of the world without ever taking our gaze from that beacon which is Jesus Forsaken». «We went up a mountain and we know that we must go back to the valley, but with Jesus Forsaken we are sure that we will find paradise in this world that is full of suffering».

*prepared by the international centers  
of the women and men Volunteers*





## The consignment

**Emmaus:** «[...] The typical vocation of a Volunteer is that of bringing the Ideal in the world. Through you we come into contact with the world, it is our vocation, it is *“That all may be one”*».

[...] Together we are responsible for the whole Movement, with everything that this entails: fatigue, joys, successes, failures of the whole Movement and also of all your nuclei. And so all of us together are co-responsible for all this.

[...] in the local communities it is necessary to have not only Volunteers, but good and capable Volunteers, which means authentic Volunteers ... and these good Volunteers become even better in the local communities. In a certain sense it is a two-way relationship. The local community

certainly helps in formation. We can say: a Volunteer is certainly formed through the life in the nucleo, he or she is formed in the formation meetings which are necessary, which are needed, because you have to go to the local communities as authentic Volunteers, as Volunteers who are aware of who they are, what their vocation is, what is the commitment they must have at work, in the family, everywhere, not only during the moments they meet with the local community. You need all this formation».

**Jesús:** «[...] If you ask me how this actualization is I can say that we must always remain within these two poles: on one side to deepen more and more the fundamental core of the Charism, especially you who have a particular vocation in the Movement. [...] To someone who has the vocation to become involved as a protagonist of the Work of Mary we have to ask something more, not a formal consciousness, or just simple knowledge, but a deepening of the spirituality that falls and settles into all aspects of life, even more so in a branch such as yours, it must inform your way of thinking and acting».





# Consecrated women and religious men

## Youth in the city of Francis

**Assisi. There everything speaks of peace, of spirituality, of the choice of God. The perfect place for the meeting of young consecrated men and women religious, held from April 20 to 23**

Present in 33, from 13 Institutes and religious Families of 12 nations. Some were participating for the first time. They had the joy of celebrating a Mass in the Monastery of the Colettine Clarisse and one in the Basilica on the tomb of St. Francis, presided by the Bishop of the place, Mons. Domenico Sorrentino.

**A letter from Emmaus** placed the meeting in the heart of the Work of Mary: «The choice to love Him, putting Him at the center of her life, was for Chiara Lubich and for the entire Focolare Movement, the way to realize the unity that Jesus asked the Father».

«Jesus crucified and Risen the way to communion with God and among us» was the topic that was discussed deepening the theme of the year on Jesus Forsaken, with a collage of questions and answers of Chiara, a biblical explanation of the cry of abandonment of Jesus on the cross made by Fr. Andrea Wodka, and the theme «Where does the Risen One live today? The interior castle and the exterior castle» presented by Fr. Piero Coda.

**The search for the «tracks»** of Jesus Forsaken in the different Charisms was important.



The starting point was this text of Chiara: «The spirituality that flourished from the suffering of Jesus Forsaken, born in the XX century, is distinctive, but also has universal characteristics. It is for this reason that it is very useful to revive, for example, the other special spiritualities that were born in the Church...»<sup>1</sup>. An affirmation that gave an incentive to identify in the writings of various founders the similar points and the points of reciprocal enlightenment.

The film on the story of Blessed Chiara Luce Badana had a strong impact and what was particularly moving was the testimony of Chiara Menestrina who, in spite of her precarious physical condition, made the trip from Trent to Assisi to share the very harsh story of her illness. Stories of «resurrected» lives made so by embracing the Abandoned One.

<sup>1</sup> Da Chiara Lubich *Il grido*, Città Nuova, Roma, febbraio 2008, pag. 103



**The ample space given** to the exchange of experiences encouraged communion that was profound and enlightening: «In these days, because of the intensity of the experiences lived, I breathed the air of a Church that is not heavy guided by the Spirit that is not closed up in one Charism but lives in the communion among Charisms enriching the Church herself and allowing herself to be “eaten up by the world”». «My heart has grown wider. The most beautiful thing was not so much the sharing of ideas, of theology, but of life». «The time spent together is like a recharged battery of love that I will bring back to my community».

*prepared by the centers of the consecrated women and religious men*

## Retreat of the Consecrated women

**From March 16 to 19, 2017 the annual Meeting of the Consecrated women was held in Sassone with 80 participants coming from Italy, Lithuania, Rumania, France, Burundi, Mexico, the Philippines, Kenya**



Sr. Antonia Moioli and Fr. Salvo D'Orto



Reinforce «that spiritual maternity which characterizes being His spouses and which is manifested in giving life to Jesus in the midst in and among communities» was the wish that Emmaus sent to them through a message which welcomed them all.

There was a discussion on the life of the branch, on the challenges and the projects for the new set-up. Through their interventions, the Central Delegates of the Movement, Friederike Koller and Ángel Bartol clarified some aspects indicating concrete ways to continue journeying in a faster and more dynamic way. The theme of Fr. Salvo D'Orto, OMI, «The

paradigm of reference for the movement of the religious» presented a reality, open also to the laity who are part of the charismatic families, to be realized in synergy. The desire was born to establish a stable link between the consecrated women and religious men with special attention given to the youth.

After listening to the video of Chiara on «Jesus Forsaken and the *via crucis* (way of the cross) of the Work of Mary» it was followed by the testimonies of religious women who, following His example, were able to overcome trials and persecutions becoming sources of light.

Reciprocal love made up of listening and words, in plenary session or in small groups, encouraged the sharing their life during the year. The start of the *Evangelii Gaudium* Center located within the Sophia University Institute was an interesting event. One of the consecrated women who had participated in a course of the Center shared about the outstanding richness of the contents of the programme and the innovative ways used in the communion among the professors and the students, all protagonists in the formative journey.

A meditation presented by Renata Simon, councillor for the Indigo, on «Jesus Forsaken author of every reform» marked in the soul the experience of light made by Chiara in *Paradise '49*. «It is an experience that heals you from within, it doesn't make you a fragmented person, but it unifies you», a religious said. And another said: «We elave with the certainty of having contributed in these days to realize unity, bringing in our heart the consignment of Chiara: the love for Jesus Forsaken».

*prepared by the center of consecrated women*

## Abbà School «To live Paradise»

There are more meetings being held by the members of the Abbà School to transmit the extraordinary reality of light that emerged from the Pact of unity between Chiara Lubich and Igino Giordani during the summer of 1949



Callan Slipper, Lucia Abignente

«The year of Jesus Forsaken is really the year of "entering into Paradise", the year in which we are trying to see how to transmit this to everyone»: the thought expressed by Emmaus is slowly being realized in many places and in various forms, sometimes through a day-meeting, as what happened in Brescia or in the Mariapolis Lieta (Ireland), at times through week-end meetings such as what took place in five cities in the Zone of Central Europe (DACH) with around 700 participants among whom were three Bishops. It began with the aim of «introducing» the special experience of light of summer '49, these moments produced fruits beyond all expectation: conversions to a radical life based on the Word, a new choice of Jesus Forsaken so as to be in the «Soul (Anima)», a strong push to incarnate this experience so as to bring it to the world, etc. In the meantime, the work of deepening and reflection of the text of Paradise continues in the groups of members of the Abbà School according to disciplines, and the results are then shared with everyone.

The commitment in transmission of this extraordinary experience are in full swing in the life of the Abbà School. Almost everyday it's not unusual to receive a *WhatsApp* or an email with news about it. There is usually a talk given by one or the other to the General Council, or during a meeting in Castel Gandolfo, Loppiano or Montet, or in the dif-



ferent corners of the world (Albania, Algeria, Belgium, Brazil...) or, other times, we choose to go «two by two», as in the Gospel, with Him among us, to different places, like Loreto in these past few months or during the trips to India, Spain, Czech Republic, etc. In either case we are aware of being an expression of the whole body of this school «willed by God» to give the light of the Charism to all.

**A proposal was made to us** to go to the Little Town Castello esteriore (Spain). The title of the meeting was «To live Paradise» and this became the reality during the extraordinary days lived during the Holy Week, with 145 members of the Movement from the different vocation,



coming from all over Spain: the people of Chiara, with the typical characteristic of this nation, a land of great mystics. It began with the Pact of unity on Holy Thursday, and accompanied by a general introduction to the text of Paradise '49 and to the historical context that served as the backdrop, the reading of the passages of Chiara was concentrated on the themes of the Easter Triduum: the Eucharist, Jesus Forsaken, his descent into Hell, Maria, the Risen One... allowing everyone to penetrate these and to live them with a particular intensity. In the year of Jesus Forsaken, the kissing of the cross preceded by the reading of that page written on September 20, '49 I have only one Spouse on earth gave it a special solemnity, marking a new choice of Him.

«I remembered a song of Alejandro Sanz Looking for paradise – Dolo, a young girl said – and maybe we should compose one too: We found it». Yes, yes, we «entered Paradise» through our communion with the Eucharist and with the Word. The different moments of sharing were important, whether in the hall or in small groups, just as the time reserved for «tête-à-tête with God», renewing one's commitment with Him, which was then also shared to everyone.

Montse, focolarina: «I came to this meeting afraid of not being worthy. I felt that we were all the people of Chiara without any difference among us. Chiara shared what she saw with her companions: we are "her companions" and we are all walking with her. I hope that all of this can reach humanity, but this texts can only be understood if there is Jesus in the midst. So my commitment? To create small cells, like small points of Paradise so that whoever reads these passages can see realized that which is written there». Luis, Volunteer:

«I met the Ideal in 1974 and I was a gen. I discovered how in the things that Chiara gave us throughout these years, Paradise was always in all of them». Fernando, Volunteer: «When Chiara, Foco, and many of the first focolarini "departed" I asked myself: what will happen now? They shared to us the life of Chiara in ways that no one will ever do again in history. Then I remembered the words of Jesus: "you will do even greater things that what I did". This meeting was the confirmation of this: beyond our limitations, the presence of Jesus in the midst in the Movement, that Chiara had entrusted to us, is alive now more than ever». Juan Carlos, gen 2: «What remains in me is the greatness of God who has everyone, all of us in his heart, who forgives us day after day, who takes our wretchedness and imperfections as his own: this is really a great fortune! When I was invited to this meeting I had just gotten up from the couch after my nap. The commitment that I made here is "to get up off the couch": to go out – as the Pope said – in the street, to go against the current in this society and to be strong. To go back home dead tired, but satisfied because I had given my all». Petri, Volunteer: «This meeting has marked the end of my mourning for the death of Chiara, because she is very much alive, and it is also a decisive moment for my commitment in the Movement: the passing from adolescence to maturity». Meritxel, adherent: «When Chiara died I was not yet part of the Movement. When I heard the news I was sad that I had never met her. Here all of you have given me the chance to get to know her».

*Callan Slipper, Lucia Abignente*





# In Panama and San Salvador Teens and children present and future

The participation in the Forum «#EndChildViolence» in Panama is the occasion for a rich and intense exchange with educators and the gen3 of Central America.

«#EndChildViolence» is the title of the 5° Forum GNRC (The Global Network of Religions for Children) promoted by the Buddhist foundation Arigato from May 9 to 11, 2017, where we participated representing Emmaus. Present were 500 religious leaders. The presence of 60 adolescents coming from various Nations was fundamental.

We took the occasion of this trip to hold **two courses of EduxEdu** (educate ourselves in order to educate others) and **two meetings with the gen3 boys, in Panama and in San Salvador**. Those involved were educators who worked in the accompaniment of the new generations, coming from Mexico, Guatemala, Costa Rica, Honduras, Nicaragua.

«Promote unity and universal brotherhood. Group work and group dynamics were experienced during the workshops. It was impressive to listen to the teens develop themes such as love of neighbour, justice, forgiveness and care for the environment, the value of respect, welcome and service to others. Since

During the Forum GNRC and the sharing with the members of the Movement helped us to enter into their reality, sometimes crude and raw, where the children and teens live in this area of the world. The sharing of one of those present bears witness to this: «Some teens are playing in the street. "Run before the ball falls". But Martin, suddenly stops after noticing a group lurking next to the canal. It is not hard for those who live in the peripheries of Tegucigalpa to recognize them as members of those who recruit teenager for the maras, bands of criminals who dominate the so-called "Northern Triangle": El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras, making it the most violent region in the world».

One of the points of the **final declaration of the Forum GNRC** highlighted the importance of reinforcing the network and the synergies among those who are working for the welfare of children and teens.

The experiences shared by the educators and the gen3, the work in the communities and in schools where the spirituality of unity is lived (which involves around 400 teens and their families) are small seeds that bring hope.

*Agostino Spolti, Encar Javaloyes  
international gen3 center – teens for unity*



they were small they already know well the reality of their peers, what they live and what they need». This is an excerpt from the article published in the most widely read weekly Catholic newspaper in Panama, which dedicated two pages to Run4Unity, Course for Formator and the gen3 Congress.





# EcoOne Eyes

## To learn how to see the relationship person-nature with new eyes

On May 4 in Loppiano the School of EcoOne ended, which was especially directed to the youth and with a zero ecological imprint, thanks to the use of biodegradable materials and to the planting of trees to compensate for the CO2 emissions produced by those who travelled.

The extraordinary joy among the 31 participants, coming from five continents, and the enchantment generated in the very young by the atmosphere in which they were immersed, underlined the success of this laboratory-dialogue.

With Sergio Rondinara they went through the history of this Inundation, and they deepened the message of Chiara Lubich to EcoOne given in May 27, 2005 and the ext on «The Resurrection of Rome»<sup>1</sup>. A Franciscan priest is writing the first Italian thesis on ecological pastoral formation; dazzled by the writings of Chiara he compared them to those of Teresa of Avila, proposing that the environmental question be considered as one of the «peripheries» that the Church should strive to reach.

The dialogue was enriched by a round-table on economy, politics and science, a recycling workshop with Ciro Cipollone, a visit to the Arboretum of Vallombrosa, a meeting with the Sophia University Institute and the exposition of two initiatives of New

1 CHIARA LUBICH, La dottrina spirituale (Spiritual doctrine), Città Nuova, Rome, september 2006, pagg.254-258

Humanity linked to environmental protection. With an expert from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the relationship between environmental imbalance and armed conflict, they are now consolidating a profound and fruitful friendship, a source of reciprocal inspiration.

«Today I started to live everyday in a new dimension. Everything seems sacred. As a consequence I deal with things with more reverence and I was able to save at least one third of my water consumption by using containers to save water to be re-used» - was one of the many messages we received. Another: «To be in the midst of young people of various nationalities give me hope. And so I continue with my experience that has matured in all these years that I have been working and striving to go against the current, often with some doubts, but to go ahead always».

The passionate work of the preparatory commission was rewarded with a contagious joy: could it be the gift from God for the achievement of the maturity of EcoOne, which was born on May 27, 18 years ago?

Luca Fiorani  
[www.ecoone.org](http://www.ecoone.org)



EcoOne participated in the Buddhist-Christian Symposium in Taiwan (April 26-28, 2017). The Buddhists are very sensitive to the «presence of God beneath all things» which Chiara Lubich speaks of and to the concern of Pope Francis to «take care of our common home». The dialogue with them was based on many points we had in common.



## In the year dedicated to Chiara and the family From «Family Highlights» travelling towards Oceania



Following the trail of «Family Highlights» of Loppiano, an event which in March saw the participation of families from all parts of the globe, with Beatrice and Franco Cardinali – family-focolare of Loppiano – we left for Oceania, where we would participate in three Mariapolis on the theme «family»

«Be a family», is the title of the first Mariapolis (April 6-9) held in Phillip Island, two hours by car from Melbourne. A splendid multi-cultural co-existence with 160 people from various Christian Churches and a Buddhist, who with great interest participated in the programme made up of many creative spaces among which were workshops on education and communication in the family. The sharing of experiences was important and the enthusiasm during the outdoor games was contagious as well as during the parent-children activities.

When the Mariapolis ended we moved to Melbourne, to celebrate Easter together with the focolare centers and the community. With them we participated in the ecumenical procession on Good Friday, with 3,000 people of seven different Churches, as it wound its way in the streets of the city.

The stop-over in Melbourne was a perfect preparation for the Mariapolis (April 20-23) that was waiting for us in Richmond – an hour and a half by car from Sydney – where we arrived together with Lucia Compostella



New Zealand. From left to right: Stefano Serratore, Yob Doronila, Beatrice and Franco Cardinali, Roberta Serratore, Mario Merlo and Vanessa Borg (co-responsible for the zonetta)

and Bruno Carrera from the focolare centers of Melbourne. Here too, among the 105 participants, there were people coming from different Countries: four families from Iraq, a group of Chinese, those from Lebanon... for whom there was very precious work done for the translations made by the people of the community. As the programme gradually unfolded – the same in all three Mariapolises – the dialogue among the participants became always more profound touching the many challenges that families have



Sydney



Melbourne



Philip Island

The «relay» of events on «Chiara and the family» to celebrate the ninth anniversary of her departure already began in January, 26 in Cairo (Egypt) and in Malta, and on February 12 it was Panama's turn. Simultaneously with «Family Highlights» in Loppiano (March 10-12), there were around seventy events all over the world with truly surprising fruits. Up to the present there are still two events remaining: one in Australia (Perth in July) and in September in Zwochau (Germany).

Seei [www.focolare.org/famiglienuove/](http://www.focolare.org/famiglienuove/)

to face, but also highlighting the great chance that the Ideal of unity is for the family. Magical moments were lived with the live streaming of the CH Link-Up, which made everyone feel that we belong to the same family of CHIara spread all over the world. The marvelous venue where the Mariapolis was held – surrounded by forests – was ideal for walks, games, a bonfire with songs in different languages, during which the 50° anniversary of the arrival of the Ideal in Australia was also celebrated. There was a strong commitment, unanimous and declared, to remain united to bring the experience lived during these days there where each one is.

**Another two days with the focolare centers** and the community of Sydney, and then we left for the third stop-over: the Mariapolis (April 26-29) of Rotorua in New Zealand, entitled «To love You I have only this moment». After a four-hour flight, we arrived in Auckland where

we were met by Yob Doronila and Bruno from the focolare center of Melbourne. With them we travelled for another four hours by car to reach the campsite, along the banks of a very beautiful lake. Among the 170 participants, a lively presence of 50 youth, teens and children. Here too the countries of origin was quite varied: the Philippines, India, Korea... Present too was the Bishop of the place who accompanied the unfolding of the programme and who presided in the masses often enriched by prayers in the Maori language, the local ethnic group that represents 20% of the population. There were also ecological activities and a tour of the nearby, enchanting «Middle Earth» where the saga of The Lord of the Rings was filmed. A place that inspired the theme of the evening's celebration on the last day, wonderfully animated by the gen of the three generations. In the touching final impressions, many felt that they could share their most precious personal and family experiences.



New Zealand

As we travelled during this month we met marvelous people. We shared the joys and sufferings of many families, who often live in difficult situations, and they do this with courage and faithfulness to the Charism of unity. With each one of them we take up the challenge of continuing to live and bear witness, there where we are, to this marvelous adventure of unity.

*Roberta and Stefano Serratore  
central secretariat of New Families*



Gen Verde e Gen Rosso

# 50 years of imagination and fidelity

**The Gen Verde** has always maintained a great openness in its artistic style, both in the musical and the professional field, whether facing the other religions and cultures or society with its challenges, uncertainties and potentialities.

And precisely in speaking its language, in the past three years we were able to update ourselves in the various fields related to our work, in an open and profound dialogue among us and with the Center of the Movement. We attended courses of advanced training in music, choreography, scenography, and we gave an pedagogical depth to Start Now.

What is it? It is a cultural, educative-formative project, with repercussions on the social fabric. Its aim? To reach the youth in their own environments, to transmit values such as dialogue, sharing, universal fraternity. How? By making the youth participate in various artistic workshops and after this to present their work on the stage.

Many consider our latest show as a powerful instrument to «go out», wearing a fresh, modern youthful outfit, so as to touch the hearts of the people.

It is difficult to quantify the fruits of our work, because the seed of the Ideal once sown, flies and puts down roots where we cannot even

Who could have said, that on that 23rd of December 1966, that the two bands to whom Chiara Lubich had given a green and a red set of drums respectively would have come this far? Who would ever have imagined all the adventures, persons, stories, impossible undertakings, small and big miracles would have marked their journey? In these 50 years many things have changed: equipment, people, languages, styles... but the soul is always the same.

imagine. On the other hand we also can see a visible change in the life of the youth and of the people who come to our concerts or who work with us.

We can see that everywhere – without considering the differences of belief, culture, race – humanity has an immense thirst for relationship, dialogue, communion. We are aware of having a powerful means in our hands, which is art, music, but above all the witness of our life and unity, to offer the Ideal as an answer to this thirst.

The next occasion to do this will be the Genfest 2018, that will be held in the month of July in Manila (the Philippines): we are invited as Gen Verde and Gen Rosso, and we had a two-day meeting in Loppiano to prepare a proposal for the programme. The challenges are great, but so is the enthusiasm and creativity. Something new is already starting to grow...

*Sally McAllister*



**The Gen Rosso** since its birth is on a journey travelling through the most diverse social contexts with regards to race, religion and culture, also going out of their usual tour routes to promote projects of solidarity, humanitarian associations.

From October 2006 it has realized artistic-educational projects in the field of the youth. The projects are organized in this way: for a few days,



that the world today has to face such as: violence, bullying, the degradation of the environment, the unequal distribution of wealth, terrorism. Other topics different from these are tackled in the project «Italy for» presented at the Sophia University Institute last February 17 of this year with the show entitled: «Campus - the musical» realized in Loppiano with the participation of the students of some schools of the florentine Valdarno, through its workshops offered to the participants and spectators of the cities visited by their «Tour Italy» strong points of reflection through the universal



the youth participate in workshops according to fields: song, dance, theatre, music... finally ending in their involvement onstage with the Gen Rosso. The youth are students, factory workers, prisoners, differently abled people, those undergoing rehabilitation from drugs, artists, etc. who then become the ambassadors of values in their daily environments.

In this way they were able to reach the most varied contexts bringing themes of peace, interculturality, violence and bullying, drug prevention and resolution of conflicts. The projects have specific titles in relation to the specific social realities to which they are proposed: «Hands for Peace», «Rock gegen Gewalt», «Give Peace a Hand», «Sports4 Peace», «Uno per l'altro (one for the other)», «Forti senza violenza (Strong without violence)», «Uniti senza barriere (United without barriers)», etc. They focus on the relevant challenges

language of art.

On April 7 in Rome, together with the Gen Verde, at the auditorium of the Music Park, they held a concert as the starting point of the coming Synod of Bishops on the youth, as Pope Francis called for. At the concert representatives of youth from all the Countries in the world were present and a special invitation was given to the teens and youth of Rome. The show created a great enthusiasm, also because, as Michele Sole - a singer of the Gen Rosso - said in an interview with TV 2000 (see it on Youtube: Gen Verde and Gen Rosso in concert for the worldwide youth pastoral care), the ability of the two groups, present in the artistic field for more than 50 years, to involve the spectators as they perform together in just one concert is even more amplified.

*Valerio Gentile*

work in progress