

Rocca di Papa, 9<sup>th</sup> November 2021

## **Statement by the Focolare Movement on the publication of the book "La setta divina" [The Divine Sect] by Ferruccio Pinotti (PIEMME Editions)**

The Focolare Movement has learned of the publication of the book "La setta divina" (The Divine Sect) by the journalist Ferruccio Pinotti (PIEMME Ed.), released today in Italian bookstores.

The book comes at a difficult and crucial time in the history of the Focolare Movement: the transition from the founding period to the post-foundational phase. Throughout the history of the Church, this is a time that has often put to the test religious orders, movements and communities born of charismatic inspiration.

Ferruccio Pinotti's book wants to show that, even in the Focolare Movement, the initial zeal has sometimes led to misinterpretations of Chiara Lubich's charism and/or to misleading actions. From the documents that Pinotti has obtained and published in the book regarding some of the internal debates within the Focolare Movement, there emerges, nevertheless, a growing awareness among the members of these and other inconsistencies in its history and the need to remedy them.

However, the book does not seem to offer an objective and well-considered presentation of this charism, which is recognised by the Catholic Church. It does not take into account the commitment of many thousands of people who, inspired by the life and teachings of the foundress, devote themselves daily and generously throughout the world to creating relationships, healing wounds and overcoming rifts in every sphere of ecclesial and social life, in order to build a more fraternal and united world.

We consider beyond dispute the pain of the people that, in these pages, tell their stories of great suffering, disappointment, deception and abuse endured, and of those who did not wish to make their testimonies public. The Focolare Movement, in the persons of President Margaret Karram and Co-President Jesús Morán, expresses once again its shame and sorrow towards the victims and all those who have felt wronged, its closeness and its desire to continue or begin a path of dialogue with them. It reaffirms its commitment to combat all forms of abuse and continue prevention and formation of members and leaders. It repeats its invitation to all those who have facts or stories of abuse to report them to the Commission for the Welfare and Protection of Minors and Vulnerable Adults (CO.BE.TU.) or to their respective Church bodies.

Despite the partial, one-sided, sometimes inaccurate or reductive reading of the history, spirituality and activity of the Movement, we see this book as a further incentive in continuing the ongoing processes of conversion and renewal, remaining faithful to the founding charism and to the development of an open, free and critical dialogue within the Movement and with anyone who wishes to fully understand its actual reality and collaborate with it.

Stefania Tanesini

Focolare Movement Press Officer - +39 338 5658244