

MARIAPOLIS

9-10 2018

NEWSLETTER OF THE FOCOLARE MOVEMENT

YEAR XXXV SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER

Posta elettronica | Spediz. in abb. post. DL 353/2003 (conv. in L. 27/02/2004 n. 46) art. 1 comma 2 e 3 | Aut. G.P.A./C.R.M./33/2012 | taxe perçue | tassa riscossa Roma



Temporary
focolares
**Gifts
of reciprocity**

Delegates 2018/1
New inventiveness
new potentialities

**20 years of
«Inundations»**
Creating a critical mass

Becoming holy as Church

The meeting of the Movement's delegates marked the beginning of the 2018-2019 Ideal year, with the theme "The Holy Spirit, soul of the Church and of the world". On the 16th of July, Emmaus invited us to go on "living with Mary" seeing the Church and the Holy Spirit as Mary sees them "and to ask her help in living the whole year like that". This reflection by Chiara Lubich, written in 1970, is a good way of starting.

2 march 1975. Together with the youth participants to the Genfest, Chiara Lubich met Paolo VI (on 14 october, 2018. Pope Montini was canonized, during the Synod of the youth)



It is obvious that the way people considered holiness in the past is no longer understood or appreciated today, especially by the laity, and is even seen as outdated. People today want a style of reaching holiness that is beyond that of perfection sought as individuals. In fact, they often express it by saying, "We want to become holy together, we desire a collective sanctity." (...)

The countenance of the Church, with its areas of transparent light and also of clouds and shadows, should be reflected in every Christian, in every group of Christians. This means that we have to feel as our own not only the Church's joys, her hopes, the constant blossoming of new life, her victories. Above all, we should feel as our own all her pain, due to the lack of full unity among the Churches, or because of so many harmful disputes, or the risk that age-old treasures are undermined, or the anguish that so many people deny or refuse to accept the message God speaks to the world for its salvation.

In all these struggles, above all in the spiritual ones, the suffering Church seems to be like the crucified Christ of today who cries out: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Mt 27:46).

Not long ago I visited La Verna¹, and while there I meditated on the exceptional gift of the stigmata that God gave St. Francis as a seal on his imitation of Christ, of his life as a Christian.

I was thinking that all true Christians should be stigmatics, not in an extraordinary, outward sense, but spiritually.

I seemed to understand that the stigmata of today's Christians are the mysterious, but real, sufferings of the contemporary Church.

If the love for Christ has not enlarged our hearts enough for us to feel the pain of these wounds, we are not what God calls us to be today.

In these times, becoming holy as an individual is not enough, and neither is aiming as sanctity as a community that is, however, closed in on itself.

We must feel within ourselves the sorrows and also the joys that Christ experiences today in his Spouse, the Church.

We need to become holy "as Church."²

Chiara Lubich

Taken from *Chiara Lubich – La Chiesa*, prepared by Brendan Leahy and Hubertus Blaumeiser, Città Nuova, Rome 2018

1 The Sanctuary of La Verna, located in Tuscany, central Italy, is the place where St. Francis of Assisi received the "stigmata," a manifestation of the same wounds as the crucified Christ in hands, feet and side.

2 *Essential Writings*, pp. 117-118 (US version).

New publications

Two books to accompany the deepening this year of the themes on the Holy Spirit and the Church



The Holy Spirit

«This collection has been prepared first of all to fill a gap. In fact among the numerous publications of Chiara Lubich, there is no specific book dedicated to the Holy Spirit. [...] Maybe precisely because of the direct knowledge that she had on the presence of the Holy Spirit and His actions, she felt that she was in front of an abyss, in front of the immense, the unimaginable: "It is up to the Church, she said, to speak about the Holy Spirit".

Instead, gathering the writings and texts about Him we realized how many they were and of such quality! [...] The pages of this collection would therefore like to be a song, a hymn, that Chiara raises up posthumously to Him who was the great director of her life and the architect of the Movement she founded».

from the preface of Florence Gillet, Raul Silva

The Church

Since the beginning, Chiara Lubich «has had an approach that was anything but passive, rather it was participatory and generative to the Church. [...] To use a happy expression of pope Francis: it is like a "love story". [...] The writings collected in this volume will allow us to encounter an understanding and an experience of Church that is robust, vital, dynamic, relational. It is markedly *charismatic* [...].

"We have meaning only in the Church, with the Church", Chiara reaffirmed in 1999 during a meeting in Malta. "*Lut omnes unum sint* [that all may be one; Jn 17,21] is entrusted to the Church by Jesus [...] and this charism serves to reinforce this quality of the Church. So we must walk with the soul totally united with the Church"»

from the Preface of Brendan Leahy, Hubertus Blaumeiser

Meeting of delegates 2018/1

New inventiveness new potentialities

At Castel Gandolfo the first meeting of persons responsible for the Focolare Movement all over the world has ended.

We should not speak of conclusion at the end of the first meeting of the delegates of the Movement in the zones. The correct expression should most probably be «interim or mid-term balance sheet». Because what ended on Sunday September 23 was not even the first half of the annual meeting of the delegates if the Movement all over the world. While the participants of the first meeting were the represent-



Some of the gen participants with Emmaus Maria Voce, Jesús Morán, Friederike Koller, Angel Bártol

atives from Asia, Latin America, North America and Oceania, from October 3 to 14 – when this issue of *Mariapolis* will already be in circulation – the second «chapter» regarding Africa, the Middle East and Europe will be ongoing (we will talk about it in the next issue).

A «Mini-Assembly»: this was the title that someone – jokingly – gave to this meeting because, for the first time, the delegates of the Movement in the world are accompanied by some members of their zone Council. The programme – prepared by an international commission – is more or less the same for the two meetings: in the first week there will be the deepening of the theme that will guide the Movement during 2018/19: «The Holy Spirit, soul of the Church». In the second week some priority objectives of the Movement will be tackled. Of great importance are the meetings by geographical areas with the President and the Co-president.



«Which Church are we talking about?» This question with which Maria Voce began her programmatic talk «The Holy Spirit: soul of the Church and of the world», is not a rhetorical one. She was explicitly referring to the ecumenical question. Those present in the hall of the Mariapolis Center could understand this question in another sense: “Which Church are we talking about?” – we could ask the focolarina from Venezuela, where the Church is almost paralyzed in the face of the dramatic political situation there and can do nothing except to be beside the people who often are struggling to survive. “Which Church are we talking about?”, we could also ask a married focolarino from the USA, where the same Catholic Church – which used to be an icon of an almost monolithic faith – is now visibly divided by the political events and by the attacks against the Pope due to the scandals of the abuses. And “Which Church are we talking about?” – could also be asked, almost with irony, to the one representing the Movement in Japan, where Christians are just 0.1 percent of the population.

Even if all the above is legitimate this is not the view of the Church that Maria Voce offers us. From her approach of the theme, what emerges is a view “from above”. It is the Church who discovers itself, living the Word: as a mother Church, a Church which is the body of Christ, a people of God and therefore a family. It is the Church animated by the Holy Spirit but which finds in the Holy Spirit the freedom to act, where Christians practice reciprocal love.

Jesús Morán focused on the Movement inasmuch as it is a filial reality of the Church, but also called to make visible that which the Church could be. The Co-president offered a theological-sapiential deepening of the visit of Pope Francis to Loppiano on May 10, whose talk represents for us an “encyclical”,

a teaching with strong repercussions for the path of the Movement. «In the “epochal change”, which humanity finds itself living today, the Pope proposed to us to contribute in building the “global civilization of the alliance”», Jesús Moran said. «We have a great responsibility but also all the graces to answer to this ulterior call of God».

The archbishop of Aquila, mons. Pino Petrocchi, was given the task of explaining how the charism of unity could be incarnated even more in the articulations of the local Church. This is not optional, the new Cardinal reiterated. “The Church asks for it!” What can we do? «Serve the Church for the Church, freely and with the style of Mary: mother, teacher and model of communion».

“It is a fascinating vision”, commented a nun summarizing the feelings of many after these first two days. To look at the Church from above, from the “One”, from the perspective of God, is most probably the first thing to be done in this most delicate moment of its journey.



14 september. The meeting with the zones of the Americas

After the days of spiritual deepening what followed were the meetings of the different zones with the President and the Co-president, during which they tried to evaluate the work done in the past year and from there to come up with the indications for the future. These were not “closed-door” meetings. All the interested parties – between 60 and 90 persons – were seated in the first group of chairs, behind them – almost like a silent backdrop – the members

of the General Council and the participants from the other zones.

The discussions dealt with transversal topics: for example, formation, the role of the little towns, the profile and composition of the zone councils, ecumenical and interreligious dialogue. In this was there was a colloquio among the different zones with Maria Voce and Jesús Morán, made up of questions, examples, advice. This style of dialogue highlighted the many advantages that have matured during the course of the «new set-up» these past few years: a new openness, new forms of collaboration and synergy going beyond regional, zonal and national boundaries.

The first week was concluded with a look at the ecumenical journey of the Movement. In the presence of the Lutheran bishop Christian Krause, former president of the Lutheran World Federation, the participants discussed a specific question: «How can we enlarge the circle of bishops of different Churches who take their inspiration from the Ideal of unity? ». Bishop Krause made an interesting and very concrete proposal that is suitable to revive the ecumenical commitment of the whole Movement. It will be a topic that will eventually be deepened in the different zones ...

In the second week the meeting entered into the working phase. Friederike Koller and Ángel Bartol, the two central delegates, offered a substantial and realistic analysis of the present state of the Movement: including the steps taken in the zones and at the Center, the challenges to face and the prospects that are opening up.

For three days the participants deepened three priority themes for the coming years. In the morning dedicated to the «new sowing» what emerged in a particular way were the different ways to realize the novelty of the proclamation of our message: to sow in new fields which means in new territories, or to identify new ways of sowing in fields that are already cultivated. The request of a Gen2 directed at the adults was a powerful moment during the discussion about the “new generations”: “We need you, we need your help, your guidance. Even if at times we give the impression that we don’t want to accept it!” And the three hours dedicated to incarnation through the «Mass Movements» refocused once again on the big goal to achieve: «to lift up humanity, to make it one, a family» (Maria Voce).

Even if it too early to draw a final balance sheet we can say that in this first meeting some interesting things were highlighted: the uneasiness that the «new set-up» has caused

here and there with the mergings and the rotations in the governing structures are turning out to be sources of potentialities; everywhere one can see a new creativity in facing challenges,



15 september. The meeting with the zones of Asia and Oceania

a greater involvement of the local communities, new forms of collaboration among the different organs of the Movement and with experts who often are not its members. The contributions of the parish and diocesan Movements are splendid. There is greater value given to the presence of «committed members» in the mass Movements and their consideration as authentic vocations.



©foto JSchwind

The interventions of the gen2

What emerged during the last morning of the first meeting in Castel Gandolfo was remarkable. To set the tone once again was Chiara through a talk given in Loppiano in 1966, entitled «The passion for the Church». This talk seemed to be precisely suitable for today wherein she invites the Movement to move on from a love of the Church to the passion for her, from the drive to «become saints together» to «sanctifying ourselves as Church», which means to make our own the joys of the Church, her sufferings and errors, her separations, her wounds and «to love, without measure, without expecting anything in return, ... to love God in the others».

It is not by chance – Emmaus underlined – that it is precisely in this historical moment that is so difficult for the Church, that the Holy Spirit inspired us to deepen the theme on the Church of which He is the soul. It is Him who invites us – said Jesús Morán – to look at her (the Church) with the «eyes of resurrection».

Joachim Schwind

Formation The «box sets»

For the formation of the communities of the Focolare Movement the «box set» *Chiara Lubich on the Church and the Holy Spirit*, has been prepared; realities and points of the spirituality that will be deepened during 2019. It contains: 4 DVDs, 1 CD audio and 1 with the relative texts, in various languages.

A set prepared precisely for the gen and the youth of the Movement was also produced. The 2 DVDs contains a collection of 12 passages of Chiara Lubich who – in different years and occasions – powerfully and passionately offered answers and in-depth thoughts on the Church and the Holy Spirit.

A set has also been prepared for the littlest ones with the DVD *An extraordinary gift of the Holy Spirit – the Church: a big family!* to help them discover together this reality through some episodes in the life of Jesus and the first christians, a selection of answers given by Chiara to the gen4 and some experiences of gen4 from all over the world.

cscmedia@focolare.org





17 september 1948-2018 Towards a new humanity, politics as a vocation

70 years after the encounter between Chiara Lubich and Iginò Giordani, a meeting in Rome commemorates this so as to bring their message up to date for the challenges of today

«Towards a new humanity, politics as a vocation» – is the title of the article written in *Avvenire* on the event held last September 8 in the library of the House of Representatives in Palazzo San Macuto.

Maria Voce underlined how Chiara «has shown us the way to be builders of a new humanity” together, which already concretely reveals that universal brotherhood is not just a dream¹, but a utopia that becomes history and is realized also through us. Iginò Giordani believed in this utopia up until his first meeting with Chiara Lubich on September



Maria Voce greets hon. Rosa Russo Iervolino

were many important interventions given. The honourable Rosa Russo Iervolino, a family friend of Giordani, besides her emotion-filled memories, she also brought all the depth of a woman who has intensely lived her vocation in politics.

She especially highlighted the modernity of the actions of Chiara Lubich, who challenged the stereotypes of her era among other things, as she also recalled the personality of Giordani. She concluded by recalling the ongoing process of their canonization: «We are sure that the sanctity of Foco and of Chiara are total».

The words of Giordani opened the meeting, which underlined the love for every neighbour, even those belonging to political parties considered as the «enemy». The hall was filled with people committed in the most diverse fields of politics often from opposing factions. Their presence gave new hope that unity is possible even in politics.

prepared by the Iginò Giordani Center and the Chiara Lubich Center

17, 1948. He profoundly understood and accepted this way, this new culture, and he became – in deep unity with Chiara — its promoter on all levels».

In the presence of parliamentarians, ambassadors, mayors and local administrators, there

1 Cf. *The dream of our times, at the Voluntaryfest* (Budapest 2006), in *Acts*, Città Nuova, Rome 2007, p. 153.

Other news and videos can be viewed in:
www.focolare.org • www.centrochiaralubich.org
www.iginogiordani.info • www.mppu.org
www.facebook.com/IginòGiordaniFoco

Dublin 2018

A new beginning of hope

The world meeting of families held in august welcomed Pope Francis in an event that brought vigour to the family and courage to the Church of Ireland



«Extraordinary days, with a powerful presence of the Holy Spirit who illuminated every step over and beyond ourselves». This is what many members of the Movement affirmed of their contribution to the realization of the IX World Meeting of the families, held in the capital of Ireland from August 21 to 26.

The World Meeting is a tradition that is repeated every three years to celebrate the family – each time in a different place in the world – in the concreteness of daily life, with its values and great potentialities. In the preparation of this IXth edition, that brought the Pope to Dublin, one could feel something particular in the air, a general

suffering that could not be concealed: the scandals that in these recent times have caused an outcry among the people generating disappointment and abandonment by many of the Church.

In his meetings in Ireland Pope Bergoglio, with great humility and profound understanding, took upon himself this suffering, not only by personally meeting eight victims of abuses, but also by publicly asking for forgiveness during the concluding Mass of the event. The words of mons. Brendan Leahy, bishop of Limerick and friend of the Movement, were important wherein he underlined in a radio interview that, «even if it will take time to heal

from this situation, the World Meeting of Families was an occasion to celebrate the faith, in this gathering of families which has not happened in Ireland for many years. A moment of positive reform that had a good effect: I think all of these mark a new beginning of hope».





Dublin, 25 august. The celebration in Croke Park, with two families who shared their experience, from India on the left and from Canada on the right.

The Congress

Held from August 22 to 24 at the Royal Dublin Society, a vast area with wide spaces for meetings, the Congress had more than 30,000 participants, the majority of whom were Irish and with numerous persons from all over the world. Three intense and joyful days wherein one could touch the beauty and importance of the family. Suitable programmes were prepared especially for children and teens, planned and animated also with the collaboration of the people of the Movement. They also collaborated in a series of roundtable discussions for adults on the most diverse topics regarding the family: from the primacy of love in the life of a couple to the problems of domestic violence; from the use of social media to how to sanctify celebration; from the reason behind a Church wedding to the educational responsibility of parents and the precious support of grandparents; from relationship crises to rekindling that initial spark. And so on. An event that was fully booked (1,200 participants) dealt with the topic of welcoming members of the LGBT (persons with different sex-

ual orientations) community in the family and in the parish.

Among the speakers in the different panels were also persons of the Movement: Declan O'Brian with his wife Susan Gately (Ireland); Maria and Gianni Salerno, Anna and Alberto Friso (Italy); Munir Farag (Egitto); Lorna Gold (Scotland); John Mundell (Usa); Luigino Bruni (Italy).

The arrival of the Pope

On August 25 four persons of the Focolare Movement were present to welcome the Pope in the garden of the Nunciature, profoundly touched by the attention that he gave to each person, as if no one else existed in the world. During the various official and non-official visits, Pope Francis was able to capture the hearts of everyone, even of those Catholics who had drifted away from the Church. The *media*, two days before had concentrated on the scandals, surprisingly spoke of the more than 400.000 people who came to see the Pope in person, thousands of whom had to travel in the middle of the night

concentrated on the scandals, surprisingly spoke of the more than 400.000 people who came to see the Pope in person, thousands of whom had to travel in the middle of the night



The intervention during the Congress of the Salerno couple, in-charge of New Families.

from all points of the island, bearing credible witness that the Catholic faith is still alive in Ireland.

The Festival of the Families

Held in Croke Park, the biggest stadium in Ireland, on the evening of the August 25, the images of 70,000 people rebounded all over the world in various TV stations. The Festival was a powerful moment of growth and of joy. The richness of Irish culture and art served as the background: an incomparable performance with the simple participation of children and teens from some dance schools, international artists, families. Three experiences from around the world were offered by the families of the Movement coming from Burkina Faso, India and Canada, which served as the common thread that linked the beautiful talk of the Pope.

«Croke Park that Saturday evening was sensational! an Irish couple commented. Pope Francis arrived as they were singing that there is a crack in everything, but it is there that the light can enter. We remembered Jesus Forsaken present in this “dark night” of the family and of the Church, but the Holy Spirit always finds a way to let the Light enter». «Pope Francis with his beautiful smile, so full of love and compassion – added a father – brought us all to God. His words were just right and could be understood by everyone! I liked it when he said: “no one says that family life is easy. It is like preparing tea: it is easy to boil water, but a good cup of tea requires time and patience to steep! And it is in this way that everyday Jesus warms us with his love and penetrates our entire being...».



The services given by the people of the Focolare Movement were varied.

The final Mass

The solemn conclusion of the whole event was celebrated in Phoenix Park, a splendid green background typically Irish, on Sunday, August 26. The request for forgiveness spoken by Pope Francis in his native language, with which he took upon himself all the wrongdoings committed by priests, bishops, religious men and women on minors and on single-mothers under their care, was like a balm for the 300.000 present and for the millions of viewers in Ireland and in the world.

«In Phoenix Park – a participant said – I was touched by the good humour, joy and openness towards everyone as he walked for several kilometers to reach the venue for

the Mass». «Even during Jesus’ time many did not believe in Him and went away. I felt – a young woman confided – that Jesus was asking me personally “Would you also leave me?”. And

like St. Peter, I understood that I had nowhere else to go! I want to remain with all my heart».

All of us of the Movement are grateful to Mary for having prepared us for this event, in the year dedicated to her, by teaching us her «knowing how to lose everything», so as to find ourselves like in a big Mariapolis-Church, immersed in the crowd with the joy of being able to offer Jesus in the midst to everyone and, together with other organizations, to generate a new face of the Church.

Catherine Burke, David Hickey

Mariapolis 2018

A variegated mosaic

An audacious step of the «new sowing», an intelligent and effective search for new ways, an engaging protagonism of the new generations ...

The phenomenon called «Mariapolis», came to life too in 2018 in all the corners of the world. If we were to find a symbol for them, a mosaic would be the most appropriate: made up of thousands of variegated tiles, each one with its value and importance in order to compose the whole mosaic.

The Mariapolises were many this year, often smaller in number of participants, in a conscious effort to immerse itself in the local reality and to open the doors of «city of Mary» to as many people as possible: new territories, responsible communities who are committed in the various aspects of its organization and preparation of its contents ...

It is impossible to share even if just briefly something about each one¹.

A characteristic note was the massive presence of the new generations. Like in Egypt, with its 460 mariapolites, they were able to harmonize four different programmes according to



age group, with the youth and the very young. «It was a very beautiful perspective for our community – they wrote – to see the very numerous gen5».

The Mariapolis of Bolivia, concluded with the first national Genfest with 500 participants: «A big hope for the youth here». Those from the Ivory Coast, in the region of Indiéné-Djuablin, and in Serbia focused their attention on the

«Only Mary is the true Head of this unique city» we sang during the early times. And maybe now more than ever in the Mariapolises this year, space and a voice were given to her maternal Presence, as an opportunity to discover a little more the personal love of Mary for each one and her role in the life of the family of the Movement.



¹ In www.focolare.org you will find the summaries of some Mariapolises.



Brazil - Rio de Janeiro

topic of the «borders to overcome» (Beyond all borders). A young 18 year old girl from Serbia said: «When we met with the youth to prepare the Mariapolis, we wanted to focus on the reason why we have the Mariapolis every year. I said that for me it was not a matter of attending the Mariapolis every year: the Mariapolis is my way of life which I must share with others».

In Haiti too, of the 400 participants 80% were young people. The local bishop strongly encouraged them to continue to work for the youth, who feel abandoned and left to themselves.

In India, one of the Mariapolises was held in a new place in Kerala, in close collaboration for its organization with Fr. Shinto of the group «For you», inspired by the life of Chiara Luce, and his team of youth who, with great apostolic zeal for the ideal, invited personally one by one all those who attended. «We were around eighty – they wrote – with many young people and children, a good number of nuns from various orders, a complete family. From Bangalore and from Goa we came with a team of 16 people from the various vocations of the Movement, among whom was our official translator of the local language called *malayalam*. After a just few hours of the programme we felt that we were already at the end of the mariapolis because of the atmosphere that we experienced».

In the Mariapolis of Almaty (Kazakhstan) there was a temporary focolare made up of two focolarine and a focolarino from Moscow and a focolarina who came from the Czech Republic. Thanks to the personal relationship with Fr. Luca, 35 people came, some returning to the Church only a short while ago. «The people who knew us even if just for a few years were active in sharing the ideal through their experiences. among them was genia, who belonged to the evangelical Church of

Taldykorgan, who, in spite of an illness that hampers her everyday life, she gave a concrete testimony of what it means to “give one’s life”.

Special mention must be given to the Mariapolis held in Tuscany (Italy): «Each day was spent going on hikes to the mountain and tours of the different cities of Umbria, rich in spirituality, history and culture. Fr. Francesco, sr. Carla, Fr. Matteo, Franciscan religious and the Augustian nuns of Montefalco made us see the beauty of the charisms in the light of the ideal. The fullness of joy, freedom, welcome, experienced and expressed by each one, were the fruits of the work of unity of the whole Movement. At the conclusion, it seemed as if we were reliving the atmosphere of the first Mariapolises: “Mariapolis... no one directed you, no one built you: only brothers and sisters from all the countries gave their hearts to God so that the Kingdom of Heaven would shine among them”».

prepared by Umberta Fabris



Kazakhstan

Post-genfest in Tagaytay

Deeper and ...beyond

The Post-Genfest took place from July 8-14, 2018, and was a sequel to the pre-genfest in different parts of Asia and the Genfest at the World Trade Center in Manila (Philippines)

«There will be many moments that darkness will seize you, even your friends whom you admire in the work of unity might have abandoned the cause, you might even be criticized, you might even be scandalized. But the question is, will you continue to go ahead for the united world. Again think of your moment of 2018, think of the poor and continue to follow your path to make a difference. Every one of you will be called to do something, small or big does not matter. Every effort counts so long as you do out of love. Your generation can be the generation that go beyond these walls and come up with solutions that make poverty history». This is the encouraging experience shared by Lawrence Chong¹ at the conclusion of the Post-Genfest to the one thousand youth



from 55 Nations gathered at the Center for Community Transformation of Tagaytay, a city in the Philippines where the Mariapolis Peace, little city of the Focolare Movement is found.

A marching band typical of Filipino hospitality festively welcomed the participants, as well as our greeting: «We are here with one common goal: to continue our



journey together, making a profound experience of going beyond all borders so as to transform all of humanity into a family. Let us not waste time: instead let's take advantage of each moment to build new relationships of unity, rooted in love, respect and openness with one another».

The Post Genfest offered the participants 7 parallel workshops: 1. Global Citizenship: Education to Peace Amidst the Challenges of Going Against the Current; 2. Life Directions: Open Your Heart; 3. Wired for Unity: Social Media Beyond



world. These workshops aimed to facilitate a platform for the continuation of the reality of the GenFest. Some workshops have established a Facebook page for their participants to continue the experience and communicate to each other the ongoing results of putting this in practice worldwide!



The workshop which had the biggest number of participants was on «Life Directions» a programme of discernment conducted by the Center of Focolarino/as in Rome, Italy. Out of the 1,000 participants, coming from various countries, speaking 16 languages, 250 had joined this workshop. At the heart of the programme were the concrete experiences. There was a “daily motto: a thought to be put into practice during the day that served as the guide for each day. The first motto was «Open your heart»: an invitation to open one’s heart to true happiness, trying to remove what could be an impediment to living those present moments intensely. «In these four days – several adults observed – we saw youths thirsting for a relationship with God, in a profound quest, with simplicity and serenity. We felt that something new had come about: an experience of light that opened a new path of dialogue with the youth about the calling to a radical vocation». Some of those

Borders; 4. Religions in Harmony: Inter-religious Dialogue; 5. Ecology: One Earth: Re-imagining Environmental Stewardship; 6. Economy of Communion: Changing the Rules of the Game, and 7. Reciprocity: Framework for Social Renewal.

The workshops were facilitated by experts coming from different parts of the world. Each workshop provided tools for the international participants so that they can implement the ideal of a more united

1 Volunteer of Singapore who collaborated as an expert in the workshop of “Economy of Communion: Changing the Rules of the Game”, Lawrence is the managing director of “Consulus” an innovative international consultancy firm

present said: “«It was exactly what I needed at this point of my life. Living the present moment, opening my doors, and taking radical steps beyond ourselves, are some ideas that I am bringing home with me». The youth who spoke about their choice to follow God in a total way gave me courage to make choices only out of love.” «For me it was important to understand how to answer the call: understand (that God loves me), listen



(to the voice within) and decide (to follow Jesus). I am so happy about this experience».

Also present were youth of different religions and cultures, like Saurabh from India, who belonged to a community that is quite active in doing social work whose members strive to work for the common God in their search for God. The Focolare Movement in India has often participated in their projects and Saurabh's community members came to the Genfest precisely to reciprocate this collaboration. Saurabh shared his thoughts on building a united world in the context of a highly globalized world, influenced by technology, and on how to overcome the physical and language barriers. He affirmed that a united world will be possible if each one is ready to open him or herself up and

to go beyond oneself in order to communicate with others in truth and honesty.

The cultural and recreative presentations of the nations present through colourful dances, songs, games all contributed towards getting to know each other more profoundly.

Ms. Lila Ramos Shahani, secretary-general of UNESCO in the Philippines, present on the last day, summarized her impression like this: «... we in the United Nations talk of peace. We never talk about love. And you talk about love. This is what I realized while listening to you, this is the missing link».

*Chun Boc Tay, Nar Parlas
co-responsibles Mariapolis Peace*



From Fontem

A heartfelt appeal for peace

The Fon sent an urgent request for prayers for his people, overwhelmed by the unrest that continue to devastate the region.

The wave of violence that is covering the South West of Cameroun where the little city of Fontem is found, shows no signs of ending. The Cameroun bishops too have had their voices heard many times for the deteriorating situation of safety and security in the Anglophone region, asking for political mediation so that this «senseless civil war» will end.

The little city of the Focolare Movement is located in an access zone of armed conflict, and was forced to close its school Complex, but continues to run the hospital so as to offer assistance to those in need.

On August 28 the Fon, the highest authority of the place, wrote a letter to Emmaus Maria Voce where, among other things, he expressed «profound and sincere gratitude to the members of the entire Focolare Movement and above all to those who are working in Fontem». With heartfelt words he continued: «As human beings, we have tried in several ways to restore the peace which once existed and bring the people to live the life Mama Chiara — “Mafua Ndem” taught us but most if not all of our efforts proved futile. Many of my people and even members of the Movement have been victims of the crisis. It pierces my heart to think that the people who brought life, hope, love, togetherness and the light of God to Fontem are being subjected to in-



Trip of Chiara to Fontem, 11 May, 2000.
The «pact of reciprocal love» between
the Fon of Fontem and of Fonjumetaw

humane treatment. My heart bleeds when I think of the efforts at development and infrastructures brought by the Focolare Movement being destroyed and we cannot do much to rescue them». He continued: « In the current crisis, thousands who fled their homes have found refuge at the Mariapolis Centre in Fontem. My gratitude is limitless because the focolarini in Fontem chose to remain with my people [...] The Focolare Movement is like the back bone of Fontem, without which we are nothing».

With this letter the Fon hoped to «ask the entire Focolare Movement all over the world to pray in a special way for Fontem and for Cameroun so that peace may return to the Country. It is our greatest desire to live the words of Mama Chiara “that all may be one”».

prepared by the editorial board

In Mariapoli online there is the complete text of the
Fon's letter



Gen3 At the Center of the... Colours



«The experience of living in the Casetta has “recharged” us to face the new ideal year and... also the new school year.

We deepened the reality of the Colours, the seven aspects that characterize our life and which Chiara Lubich had drawn from the colours of the rainbow. And just like in the rainbow, where the white contains all the colours within itself, we too took turns to be the “white”. He was the one who proposed the topic for our meditation each day.



We stayed in a small attic where we cooked, slept, cleaned, played ...

We went to work doing various tasks at the gen3 Center: some drafted a letter to promote the Communion of Goods and to update the others of the activities during the year, others documented the Heavenly Mariapolis and created a game to make the younger gen aware of the project “Zero Hunger”; one of us worked at

Some gen3 boys from Italy organized a week, in september, spent at one of the Casetta gen3 at the Center. Here are some excerpts of their diary

the gen4 Center, another adapted the succeeding Words of life for teens. We remembered in a special way Rodrigo, a gen3 from Brazil who is sick and to whom we also wrote a letter.

On the first day we were invited to dinner in the focalare center of Casa Vita, the center of the focalarinini. Il primo giorno siamo stati invitati a cena in focalare a Casa Vita, il centro dei focalarini. It was very interesting to get to know them and to spend some time with them.

At the Center of the Movement many welcomed us and “pampered” us, even Jesús and Emmaus who surprised us with a box of very delicious chocolates!

We committed ourselves for “Prophetic Economy”, the event that will be held in november (www.propheticconomy.org) and where we teens are invited as special guests, or rather as the protagonists.

We were also the protagonists in the annual meeting of the *Teens* magazine together with other gen3 and the editorial board of Panama linked up through *skype*.

Our proposal: that this experience of living in the casetta can be repeated for all the gen3, an experience which helps us to deepen the Colours and studies through the gen3 Marian School. It would also be beautiful if we could improve our relationship and commitment with the gen4 and the gen2!».

Elia, Lorenzo, Marco, Matteo, Samuele, Vincenzo

Venezuela

25 Bishops in focolare

During the meeting of the Bishops' Conference of Venezuelana in July, a numerous group of Bishops spent an evening in the focolare center of Caracas

«What you said when you presented yourselves – that you are happy to be here – goes straight to our hearts as Venezuelans. There are many people who don't want to come, who are fleeing the Country, but you remain inspite of the serious difficulties. This incarnatio, diving into the life of every happy or sad or hopeful situation is what distinguishes the life of a christian, which is the "culture of encounter", as Pope Francis says». This is what the 25 Bishops said when they were welcomed in the women's focolare center on the evening of July 9, also with the presence of the Peretti family who were visiting from the Center.

During the dinner, many questions were asked about our life. Talking about Mary, as the point of the spirituality that the Focolare Movement is deepening this year, the experience of Chiara Lubich during the bombardment in Trent was recalled and her meditation on «I want to see her again in you...». The video of Pope Francis' visit to Loppiano was incisive.

Among those present were the president of the Bishops' Conference, Josè Luis

Azuaje, bishop of Maracaibo, and the cardinal of Merida, Baltzar Enrique Porras, apostolic administrator of Caracas. the relationship established with the Bishops of the dioceses of the east, where there are no communities of the Focolare yet, was rich in promise: we foresee a Mariapolis in the diocese of Carúpano in 2019. The Bishop of El Tigre, which we had visited during the year to meet the community, expressed the hope that there a «home of unity» could be opened.

«Coming to this house is like entering an oasis of peace, of serenity. This moment with you is not a parenthesis, but it is part of the Conference» – they told us, thanking and encouraging us, among other things, to work in the ecumenical field.

We enjoyed the beauty of the Venezuelan hierarchical Church: simple, close to the people, authentic, joyful inspite of the trials! We made an experince of Church: Mary who welcomes the apostles and who is in turn welcomed by them.

*Marquinho Barbosa Oliveira,
Roberta Munegato*



In Castello di Seggau

«I looked for Bishops and I found friends»



This year, the summer meeting of Bishops more committed to the charism of unity was held in the ancient residence of the Bishops of Graz in Austria that has been transformed into a center for meetings.



Where are we?

We recalled at the start of the meeting how the participation of Bishops in the charism of unity was born without any structure and without a name, and how the life among Klaus Hemmerle, Dom Acácio Rodrigues, Josef Stimpfle and others became a true «focolare» life not only during the summer holidays but also at a distance during the year.

Nevertheless, Chiara Lubich in 1984 had proposed to them a «turning point»: recognizing the beauty in fraternal communion and Jesus in the midst, she invited them to work decisively, together with the entire Movement for «*That all may be one*», living for the unity of the Church and the relationship among the religions and with all people of good will. To review our life in this light, made us grasp even more profoundly the design of God which had one day, reached each one of us like a true vocation.





Where is the Movement going?

With Maria Voce and Jesús Morán we entered the second phase. It was touching to listen once again with them the Pope's talk when he visited Loppiano last May 10: it was like a *Vademecum* (handbook) for the journey of the Movement, but also a light for the Church today.

With this as the backdrop, we deepened with Emmaus the theme for the new year: «The Holy Spirit, soul of the Church and of the world».

In an all encompassing dialogue, Emmaus and Jesús pointed out that the relationship among us should be «characterized by unity and not by uniformity». At the question regarding the prospects that they see for the future, they answered: rooted in the life of unity we must bear witness to and bring «a style of Church in line with the pontificate of Francis» aiming at the spirituality of the «we» and at the synodality which «often is a concept, a strategy, but which has not yet become a way of living one's daily life».

Where are we going: ecclesial incarnation of the charism of unity

The third phase began with a writing of Chiara of 1951: «The Order of Mary does not live for itself ... but for the Church». With this soul we asked ourselves about the incarnation of the charism of unity in the local Church. Card. Giuseppe Petrocchi, who, with his rich experience, laid the foundation and underlined some general principles to begin well this undertaking.

Two experiences followed. Rosalba Poli and Andrea Goller, persons responsible for the Italian zone of the Focolare Movement spoke of the first «Pastoral School» held from July 15 to 21 in Loppiano in collaboration with the Movement in Italy and the *Evangelii Gaudium* Center of the *Sophia*¹ University Institute.

Then Brendan Leahy, bishop of Limerick shared. We must not limit ourselves to retouching the classic structures – he said – but to work with a wider vision – a task that must be brought ahead together with the whole Movement: to think together, work together, so as to be a presence of the Charism in one's own territory.

Fraternal life

There were many opportunities for fraternal communion, in the focolares made for the occasion and during walks and tours. Among the visits was one to the benedictine Abbey of Seckau, where they were warmly welcomed by the monks. Thus we also expressed our unity with the ancient Charisms like that of St. Benedict.

Going «back home», the local community of the Movement was there to welcome us. Traditional and modern songs, musical pieces and experiences made us feel the atmosphere of a family and brought much joy, but we also saw a commitment in the Church and in various sectors of society.

Among the many impressions, here is one from a Bishop who came for the first time: «If I had come to search for God within me, I found Him in you, in me and in our midst. In you, because I came looking for Bishops and I found friends ...».

card. Francis X. Kriengsak Kovithavanij

¹ www.focolare.org/news/2018/07/27/operatori-pastorali/

Charisms for unity

Planning the the future together

In a meeting held in Roveré (Verona) from august 2 to 10, 2018, consecrated women and religious men of the Focolare Movement looked at the next steps together of a shared journey

It was in the summer of 1967 when a group of religious who shared the spirituality of the Focolare Movement, met for the first time in mount Bondone, in Trent. In the years that followed, these meetings were repeated bringing fruits of unity in the various religious families. After 51 years from that first meeting, a novelty: this meeting was organized, prepared and lived together by the Religious men and Consecrated women.

The desire for such a meeting was born from the journey of these two branches of the Work of Mary these past few years, that was veering towards a unification of the two mass Movements of the Religious men and Consecrated women, becoming just one project to be

called «Charisms for unity Movement». It is a project that hopes to recover and realize the original vision of Chiara, for which the presence in the Work of Mary of consecrated persons was motivated by their being bearers of a charism. «We – Chiara said – must only let love circulate among the different orders».

The participants of the summer gathering of 2018 were 66, coming from different European countries, from Uganda, Senegal, Brazil, Mexico and Usa.

A novelty was the presence of 11 genre: six young religious men and five young religious women. Housed in a structures not far from each other, they participated in some parts of the programme, spending time in the morning with the adult



religious where the texts on *Paradise '49* were deepened with the guidance of Lucia Abignente and Alberto Lo Presti.

Their impressions were rich in meaning: «These days have gone beyond all our expectations. We experienced having entered too in the *Soul* and returning home

we want to continue to remain there. We were amazed and enchanted upon entering *Paradise*, we truly touched and experienced it!». «Mary embraced us all. The communion we experienced everyday was so profound that we were able to share even the deepest and most intimate realities of our soul». «We could say that a special grace has fallen among us these days and the heart is filled with gratitude to God, Chiara and to the Movement». «We were fascinated by the unity experienced with the focolarini and the focolarine of the first and second generations».

In the afternoon they tackled topics regarding the mass Movements, with an exchange of experiences from the various zones. Other topics included: the «charismatic families» (through a video conference with Donatella Acerbi, president of the Pallottine Charismatic Family [*Famiglia Carismatica Pallottina*] and coordinator of the Association of Charismatic Families in Dialogue, the committed members of the mass Movements (MLR), the new generations, ecumenism among the religious, interreligious dialogue, the *Evangelii Gaudium* Center and the magazine *Ekklesia*.



Jésus Morán, co-president of the Focolare Movement, gave a talk via video conference and spoke about the fruits of the visit of Pope Francis to Loppiano last May 10. With a far-sighted view he gave a vision of the possible developments on many levels and encouraged us to show the Church and humanity how the charism of unity nourishes our own charism and reveals to it its natural tendency towards unity.

This meeting was like a new beginning thanks to the fact that we had lived it together, consecrated and religious, in the presence of some religious youth (gen-re) and also thanks to the historic moment that the Church is living today through the actions of Pope Francis.

We made the experience of God passing thorough our life. This is what one of the participants shared: «To feel that we were in effect “one” grew stronger and stronger. We can say that God has given us and continues to give us the grace to experience, in some way, the reality of “Paradise ‘49”. Knowing this we want to continue to go ahead!».

sr. Tiziana Longhitano, fr. Salvo d’Orto

At the «Vinea Mea» The focolare as the center

In Loppiano, two «schools» for those responsible for a priestly focolare

«I slid into the experience of “Paradise ‘49” and I had to disengage all the brakes». This is how one of the 55 participants in the two «schools» for priests responsible for a focolare expressed himself at the school which has been held for the third consecutive year at the «Vinea Mea» of Loppiano during the months of June and August.

Coming from 20 Countries in four continents (only Australia was missing), for some it was the first time that they lived together sharing even the concrete aspects of daily life.

For five mornings they were accompanied as they «journeyed through Paradise» – using an expression dear to Chiara Lubich – either through videos or direct interventions of Judith Povilus and



perience of light of ‘49. The need to incarnate the Ideal in the local Church so that it corresponds to the hopes of Pope Francis was highlighted by the central delegates of the Parish and Diocesan Movements, fr. Mariano Frigerio, Sameiro Freitas, Marco Bartolomei.

Iñaki Guerrero Ostolaza, focolarino psychologist, competently offered his contribution regarding the psychological aspects of the life of unity.

Living with the inhabitants of the Citadel during the masses at the shrine of the «Theotokos» or during the dinners shared in the focolares, made each one more aware of being a part of that people of Chiara that Pope Francis met in Loppiano last May 10.

During the «school» in August, at a *skype* link-up, the co-president Jesús Morán anticipated some thoughts contained in his theme on the significance of the visit of Pope Francis with a comparison of that of John Paul II to the Center of the Movement in 1984, highlighting their importance in the life of the Movement in the journey towards the renewal of the Church.

fr. Natale Monza



fr. Hubertus Blaumeiser. They all found themselves participants in that special mystical experience of «Soul» which Chiara herself had experienced.

The deepening of the aspects on «Harmony and the Environment» and «Wisdom and Studies» with the contribution of the councillors of the Movement Vita Zanolini and Vitek Valtr, Renata Simon and Francisco Canzani, revealed the concreteness of all that Chiara had «seen» in that ex-



the world of the youth

Committed to the We

International Congress for committed youth of the parish and diocesan Movements

On the evening of August 30 at the Mariapolis Center of Castel Gandolfo there was a festive atmosphere: the participants to the first Congress for youth committed to the parish and diocesan Movements were arriving. Joy and emotions, with the expectation of the start of something new.

We felt that this was the arrival point of a journey throughout these years and which, in unity with the entire Movement, has allowed the vocation of the committed youth to take shape. But this is also the starting point for a new enthusiasm in generously sharing the Charism to the local Church, and in a special way to the youth.

160 participants coming from different Countries of Europe, Africa, Latin America and the Middle East.

It was a profound experience of God present among us. The meditations on *Paradise '49* made us enter into the reality of the Pact that enveloped all of us. Other profound moments were the meditations on the «Choice of God» and an entire afternoon for the topic of «discernment».

A special hour was spent with mons. Stefano Russo, bishop of Fabriano who, with simplicity, clarity and through his experience, told us how to bring the Charism into the structures of the local Church. An update on the *Instrumentum laboris* (Working Document) for the Synod on the youth – with the experience of a young girl who participated in the

pre-synod – put us in the heart of the Church that is going towards this very important event! The words of Pope Francis were very powerful: «Do not be satisfied with the taking the careful steps of someone who joins the end of the line. Risk, go forward!».

There were many and profound experiences shared during the Congress. The update on the Genfest with the message of Emmaus Voce was a moment of profound communion with all the second generation. There were also many participants in the four *forums* that were gateways to enter into the challenges that



the youth today face: communication, work and communion, studies ...

There was much life in the small groups that the participants were divided into so that their experience of Jesus in the midst could be immediate. At the conclusion, we made three Pacts during the Mass: a moving moment was that of the Pact of reciprocal love and the most profound was the renewal of the Pact of unity after Communion.

The youth felt themselves totally confirmed in the heart of the Movement as an integral part of the second generation and they left having in their heart the desire to be only the Word and to live the life of unity fully so as to bring the Charism to the Church and to humanity.

*fr. Mariano Frigerio, Sameiro Freitas,
Marco Bartolomei*



New publications the magazine Ekklesía is born

A tri-monthly magazine for those who work in all levels in the ecclesial ambit, in synergy with between the Work of Mary and the Città Nuova Publishing Group. The subtitle, «Pathways of communion and dialogue» reveals the style that characterizes the contents.

The 9th and 10th of August, a much-awaited moment that speaks of foundation. The annual meeting of the Secretariats of the religious had just ended in Roveré (Verona). And now, for the first time, the editorial boards of the two magazines *Unità e carismi* (Unity and charisms), promoted by the religious, and *Gen's*, animated by the branch of the priests, met together. Their aim was bold and daring: to give life to a new magazine that would express and be at the service of an ecclesial commitment, not just of some branches but of the whole Movement. It will be *Ekklesía*. *Sentieri di comunione e dialogo* (Pathways of communion and dialogue) which will be out at the end of this year.

This new magazine from the Città Nuova Publishing House will be useful as a «source of inspiration, an instrument of formation and an aid to action» not only for those who know the charism of unity, but also for many people committed to a Church that is going out, in tune with the Second Vatican Council, with the guidelines of the pontificate of Pope Francis and with the ecumenical experience.

The development of this magazine has been going on for several months already. But this is the «constituent assembly», as defined by the two councillors of the Indigo of



11 August 2018. «The constituent assembly» of Ekklesia with 28 editors, the councillors of the Indigo, Renata Simon and Francisco Canzani, persons of other vocations of the Movement, among whom is Aurora Nicosia, director of the information section of Città Nuova.

the Movement, Renata Simon and Francisco Canzani. Present were 28 editors from 11 magazines in seven languages, many of them religious men and women and priests, but also – as a sign of something new – persons from other vocations of the Movement, among whom Aurora Nicosia, director of the information section of Città Nuova.

As the undertone to the two days, or better still that which determined the programme *Ekklesia*, were the themes of Jesús Morán on «the ecclesial genius of Chiara Lubich» (video dated October 3, 2016) and the prophetic talk of Chiara «The passion for the Church» (Loppiano, August 10, 1966). Listening to them in this context caused us to look at the trails that the Church is passing through in its entirety and in many parts of the world, with new eyes: these trails are «ours» and they appeal to us, calling us to put the Charism to good use in an incisive manner and with total generosity and disinterest!

The first morning was spent getting to know the situation of the various editions of *Unity and charisms* and *Gen's* in the different geographical areas: a description that reveals already existing potentialities, but also many challenges with regards to finances and human resources.

With this scenario the project *Ekklesia* is an exciting prospect that opens up future horizons of an altogether different scope. Presented in its various dimensions – from mission to target and the synergies to activate, to the editorial staff and the graphic format

already in elaboration – it made all those present protagonists of the project.

We asked ourselves – how can we ensure this intercultural flavour and at the same time immerse ourselves in the different ecclesial and socio-cultural contexts? It seemed to us that on one hand

we have an annual common «think tank» like in these days in Roveré, and on the other hand we have to work together with the lay part of the Movement and the Publishing Houses, to produce some magazines on paper and/or digital format that are inculturated in the different linguistic areas.

On the second day Jesús Morán, linked up through WebEx, strongly encouraged us, noting that the birth of *Ekklesia* comes at a crucial moment, in which the Movement feels the need for a greater incarnation of the Charism and is acquiring, especially after the visit of the Pope in Loppiano, a new ecclesial awareness. We must – he said – offer our contribution through this magazine to the reforms promoted by Pope Francis and to the discovery of the Church as a venue of great fullness also humanly speaking.

In lively group meetings and in the plenary sessions, we dedicated our time to planning the contents of the first issues of *Ekklesia*, identifying topics to be tackled, experiences to be made known, good practices to share, horizons to be opened.

Our faith – we said at the conclusion – is in Jesus in the midst which should be the foundation for everything, living well rooted in Jesus Forsaken. With Him – we are certain – we will see things that go over and beyond our possibilities.

Carlos García Andrade, Hubertus Blaumeiser



Church and Composers Evangelize through music

At the convention «Church and composers: Word and sounds» promoted by the Pontifical Council of Culture (13-15 september) Nancy Uelmen, composer, musician and vocalist of the Gen Verde participated, invited by the president, card. Gianfranco Ravasi

There were around 110 representatives of Episcopal Conferences and academic Institutes of numerous Countries, with many composers among them. Ample space was dedicated to traditional liturgical music, but they also arrived at the conclusion of the great need for music in evangelization outside the liturgical ambit. «It is now the time for courageous expressiveness and eloquence», said the composer mons. Marco Frisina. An affirmation that highlighted the theme that he himself gave in the *workshop* that I was asked to facilitate: «Spirituality and Composition in the New Evangelization». The workshops offered a vision of the situation of the youth today, together with an in-depth study of the impact that Church composers can have in answering the call to «go out towards the peripheries», towards the most disadvantaged. This is the aim of our «Start Now» projects wherein the youth are prepared

in the various artistic disciplines and then perform in the concert finale together with us. Using this means we have been able to dialogue with thou-



sands of youth all over the world.

I shared some points of how the spirituality of unity helps us to go from the «I» to the «we» in the process of composing music. Before starting to compose a new song, to practice, to begin the *workshops* or a concert, we renew a pact of reciprocal love among us. This means we put aside our musical ideas or artistic intuitions to welcome those of the others. Living the spirituality of unity helps to form our musical style, wherein each one is fully herself, with all the beauty of her culture



14 september. The «roundtable» dedicated to the Movements, three speakers: Luciana Leone Martinez for RnS; Pippo Molino per CL, Nancy Uelmen for the Focolare

and her personality, but also a part of a bigger whole, an expression of the harmony of the «we». This experience generated much interest not only because of the result which is good quality music, but because of the profound need for an approach that goes beyond individualism.

In the space dedicated to Movements, there were three speakers for the round-table discussion: Luciana Leone Martinez for the Movement for renewal in the Holy Spirit; Pippo Molino, for Communion and Liberation and myself. I briefly presented the role of music in the Focolare Movement and the experience of the Gen Verde in creating music for and with the youth. They, in fact, are the ones who challenge us to dig deep within ourselves and to put into music our experiences of the Gospel lived, so as to reignite the spark of hope within them. We write our songs in the constant search of speaking the language of the youth (also musically), so as to touch their hearts.

There were some arguments coming from the participants, particularly regarding liturgical music, but, nevertheless, what emerged was the appreciation of many. After the convention in fact, card. Ravasi wrote me: «We were all enriched by this meeting: musical artistry,

through its beauty, expresses, in fact, an encounter with the divine mystery and transcendence. The complementarity of the speakers allowed us to go also beyond the horizons of the strictly liturgical, to face the various questions and their implications so as to allow the Church to revitalize its contribution to the proclamation of the Gospel in the contemporary world and also through music».

In a conversation with Salvatore Martinez – national president of the Renewal in the Holy Spirit Movement, an expert in sacred music and a composer of liturgical pieces – we expressed the hope for a greater collaboration among us; a need to share the «going out» together so as to use the «instrument» of music, but above all to go towards those who no longer come to Church.

Nancy Uelmen

From the inside out

The new album, number 70, of the Gen Verde is coming soon.

Fruit of the relationship with the youth they met in many Countries of the world, listening to and participating in their fears and hopes in these confusing times, of the desire to share the reasons for an authentic hope.

Fifteen songs in five languages.

<http://www.genverde.it>





The twenty years of the 5th dialogue

Creating critical mass. In dialogue for a culture of a united world

Twenty years after Chiara Lubich's visit to Brazil, where she felt the urgent need for a qualitative leap of the economic and political initiatives «elevating them into true and authentic social currents», we «took stock» of the situation with Silvia Cataldi, present coordinator of the Social-One network and co-responsible for the so-called Inundations

In the story of Chiara the inspirations of the Spirit have always been fruits of a vital experience that is often born from listening and from the relationships with others. This is true also for the Inundations. They were already present in «Paradise'49», but they became realities after a trip that Chiara made to Brazil in 1999, where she felt the urgent need for a qualitative leap of the economic and political initiatives «elevating them into true and authentic social currents, capable of causing the birth of real and true schools of thought»¹. From that moment, Chiara herself gave the go-signal to the 12 Inundations that cover the different sectors of human and scientific knowledge: economy, politics, art, sociology, education,



psychology, sports, architecture, medicine, law, communication and ecology.

Chiara's incentive was therefore a rather ambitious idea.

It was above all prophetic. Chiara in fact, was fully aware that every endeavour had to be supported by a cultural change. That is why there was a need for the revolution of love and the race towards a united world, so as to breach hearts in order to arrive and touch minds.

Obviously we can say – as the Pope said – as a Movement we are just at the initial stages. But we must recognize that

¹ See *Mariapoli* 5/98, pp 20-23, 28-29



some changes are beginning to happen and this gives us hope.

Can you give us some examples of how the Ideal is making a contribution in the cultural field?

Among the many things we have seen, I will cite a transversal one. An element of cultural innovation to which the Ideal has made a contribution is that of the «global persons (world-man)». Already in the '70s Chiara foresaw the challenges of globalization and proposed a concept that today, thanks to the work of the various Inundations, we can disclaim or disprove an identity that makes diversity a threat rather than a resource, with our own concept of a dialogical identity. This supposition or premise is making headway in academic and cultural reflections in different sectors and is of great importance and stimulus for contemporary society.

Then there are many examples in specific sectors. Just think of the change in the economic mentality in these past few years. I believe that a small but significant contribution though this was given by the Economy of Communion and by the civil Economy, together with many other schools and experiences, which have highlighted the need to rethink existing economic models.

This tells us something about the specific contribution of the Inundations...

The work that Chiara has called us to do is that of actively contributing to a cultural change. But change will not come only through our contribution but should increase inasmuch as we are able to create networks with others in working towards a united world. It was precisely for this reason that Chiara thought of the Inundations as one of the five dialogues because their role is to generate new ideas that express contemporary culture in the perspective of unity. Working with the others is therefore fundamental: in the cultural field they talk of «critical massa» in order to spread the culture of a united world in answer to the challenges of the present reality.

What cultural challenges do you have at heart in this moment as Inundations?

The Pope talks of the «counterculture of waste». Many of our initiatives in these past few years are concentrated on the social emancipation of the peripheries and the least. For example: HabitAndando, promoted by the Inundation of architecture in areas

Facing page: the manifesto of the event *Prophetic Economy* (2-4 november 2018).

Side: Workshop *HabitAndando*, Colombia october 2017-



the Inundations

Here below are the existing Inundations, with the coordinators and their corresponding websites



Comunion and Law

www.comunionediritto.org

Adriana Cosseddu



Dialogues in Architecture

www.dialoghinarchitettura.org

Iole Parisi



Economy of Communion

www.edc-online.org

Luigino Bruni



EcoOne

www.ecoone.org

Luca Fiorani

EDU

www.eduforunity.org

Teresa Boi



Health Dialogue Culture

www.healthdialogueculture.org

Flavia Caretta



Movement of politics for unity

www.mppu.org

Letizia De Torre



NetOne

www.net-one.org

Stefania Tanesini



Psychology and Communion

www.psy-com.org

Simona Magari



Social-One

www.social-one.org

Silvia Cataldi



Sportmeet

www.sportmeet.org

Paolo Cipolli



Clarté

www.clarte.org

Paolo Vergari

affected by natural calamities; the EoC has started to involve also children; medicine is concentrating on the «end of life» phase. There is also the commitment to peace and disarmament brought ahead in the journalistic and civil fields. The experience of Colombia is significant, called «Take the First step (Fare il Primo passo)», it was organized by the Movement of politics for unity, after the referendum on the peace treaty between the Government and FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia).

What have you learned in these twenty years?

We think that we have in some way learned the method. The initiatives that will be launched soon such as «Prophetic Economy» (2-4 november, 2018) and «Co-Governance» (17-20 january, 2019) have been planned in view of «building a network», according to a participatory logic with different partners, intern members, but especially with those outside the Movement such as: other Movements, Schools of thought and Organizations that are committed to a society that is more humane, peaceful, fair and convivial.

What are the prospects for the future?

The ecological challenge, as well as economic, social and political on a global level demand a new engagement of all the disciplines and all sectors. What strongly emerges is the need for a kind of knowledge that does not remain neutral, but becomes more and more at the service of the men and women of today and for the protection of nature. To do this we need to know how to renounce the tendency to approve or ratify, so that the united world that Chiara speaks of can become more and more «pluriversal», that is, non-uniform, varied, but convergent.

prepared by the editorial board

Temporary Focolares 2018 | Middle East and Africa

Gifts of reciprocity abundant harvest

«New sowing», «to go out»...: these are the guidelines along which the project of the temporary focolares was realized this year also in different parts of the world

Its is impossible to quantify them because of the varied compositions in territories that are undergoing some changes.

We have received news about around twenty of them. The temporary focolares (TF) are made up of persons of varying ages, origins, vocations, who have expressed their willingness to leave. How did it go this year? We can say that once again it was a confirmation of an experience of reciprocity in which we cannot say who received more, those people who went or those in the places they went to. An abundant «harvest» which we will share starting from this issue with some of the TF that were set-up mostly during the summer in the Middle East and Africa.



Egypt «The Ideal has reached even the poorest villages in Egypt – wrote Daniele, Volunteer of Milan. I had the chance to share my professions as a nutritionist in a small hospital. Trying to understand the problems of the patients: financial, cultural, health-wise, I understood that just giving the right therapy was not enough but that I had to experience a real encounter with the other immersing myself in his needs. The suggestion of another person who was also a part of the temporary focolare taught me the right attitude to live, he spoke of the sacrament of the presence: to be there with love and out of love, just simple be there, without understanding the language. I thought that I was there to love and bring God, to bring what I knew and had to the others. Instead I received so much more than what I had given».

«The fear of participating in the experience of a temporary focolare, to go out of one's *comfort zone*, from that which seems the right thing to do age-wise – shared twenty year-old Stefano, gen2 of Milan – is always frightening. But I must learn how to launch myself with a bit of craziness and much faith. One returns so much more



enriched by the life, the joy, the smiles received in indescribable amounts, more in love with the Gospel and of an Ideal that has gone beyond the borders of language and culture. They were very strong, real and at times cruel experiences, that force you to reflect and tears to pieces the objective consumerism that we Europeans are slaves of: how can a child cry because he doesn't have the latest gadget when across the ocean another child is happy with the simple games created with a piece of string? Or a little nine-year old girl afflicted with epidermolysis bullosa, a rare and debilitating skin disease that leaves children's skin as fragile as butterfly wings, who is always smiling and takes care of her baby brother in spite of her serious illness? An experience that I would advice everyone to make, especially those who are willing to take the risk, to open up one's horizons going beyond common prejudices, to those who would like to spend their time and energies to live reciprocal love: it is an investment that gives the biggest profit». They were 10 for this TF – focolarini, focolarine, married focolarini, men and women Volunteers and a gen2 boy – and in Cairo, together with the local community, they organized a «very youthful» Mariapolis of 460 people.

South Sudan «We felt that the fire has been rekindled in us to bring the ideal

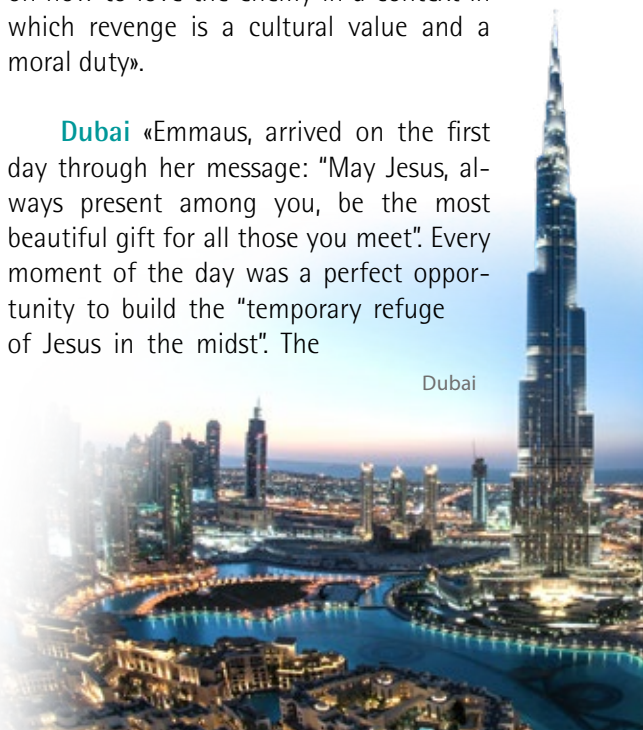
with enthusiasm there where it has not yet arrived just like in the early times – wrote Ernst (Nairobi), Alois (Munich), Ana, Legesse and Stefano (Kampala). The TF took us out of our comfort zone and *routine*, making us encounter new faces of Jesus Forsaken to love, and this did us a lot of good. For the Sports4Peace project we were involved in the *workshops*

for two elementary schools of the diocese, working together with fifty teachers and around 300 children. In various parishes we presented the spirituality of unity and the "dice of love" to youth, teens and children, reaching also three villages in a trip of 75 kilometers that took us ten hours due to the disastrous condition of the roads. And finally a meeting at the major seminary of Juba.

Nine meetings of "sowing" with more than 800 participants. It seemed that "this" culture of unity is what these people have been waiting after decades of war. Here the message of "It was war time..." powerfully resonated in all. There were many questions on how to love the enemy in a context in which revenge is a cultural value and a moral duty».

Dubai «Emmaus, arrived on the first day through her message: "May Jesus, always present among you, be the most beautiful gift for all those you meet". Every moment of the day was a perfect opportunity to build the "temporary refuge of Jesus in the midst". The

Dubai



Burj Khalifa tower, that rises majestically above the cement jungle is a symbol of what we should be, always *"over the top"* (at the highest level). The "little flock" of Chiara is no different from the people who come to Dubai to seek financial stability for themselves and for their families. Their experience is often marked by discrimination, fear of losing their job, the high cost of living, an uncertain future. But in each one there is a treasure safeguarded in their heart: their "yes" to God as the Ideal of their life. The unity we experienced gave them the certainty amidst all their daily challenges. This helps them to truly live *"over the top"*! Listening to their stories one can see a certain strength that distinguishes

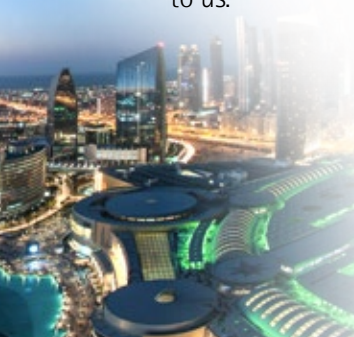


find a greater faith in the Charism – wrote Cielito. Zimbabwe is a Country that is mostly Christian. In Bulawayo the community prepared a tour for us in the various parishes. Every morning we put into our backpacks everything that could be useful... and off we went! We met more than a thousand people to whom we spoke of the Ideal of unity, the "art of loving", shared our experiences. There were many children and youth. During the second week we moved to a Mission (a college founded by the Jesuits 130 years ago) and from there we spent two days in a far-flung village where there is a Word of life group, that translates it into *ndebele*, the local language. It was started by a lady who met the Movement in 1991. It was moving to listen to their experiences; in a very poor environment, without electricity, cooking was done in a bonfire on the ground but everything was done with great dignity. the joy and honour of welcoming us was truly great! Simple people with a profound faith, pureness of heart and thirst for the ideal; it was the only place where we were able to talk about the theme of the year: Mary. It was a land prepared by Her. there we truly felt the universality of the Charism». Among the focolarine who formed this TF were, Cielito, portuguese from Loppiano and Fiamma, swiss, with Birgit, german from Zambia.



them and makes them capable of bringing change in their work environments and in relationships. The 70 participants to the Mariapolis were of 11 nationalities. The legacy of Chiara to "be a family" is alive and visible even in the middle of the desert» – this is what Romé, Murad, Susanne, Fadia and Alessandro coming from the focolare of Syria, the Philippines and Jordan, wrote to us.

Zimbabwe «Open your heart, mind and soul to the needs of humanity and you will



Syria «We were 13 (aside from the men and women focolarini of Syria, Paolo and Lucia Crepez with their daughter Maria Stella, two focolarine: Sylvia, polish from the focolare of England and Patricia, portuguese of Scotland and Marco from the zone center of Amman). We were like the 12 apostles with Jesus along the roads of Homs. We experienced a very powerful impact in our meeting with this people who are always ready to stand up again from the ruins, inspite of the terrible difficulties of life. Many had to abandon the city and just a small group remain, faithful but exhausted and a bit discouraged. The Center of the Jesuits, where we took our meals together, became the home of everyone. There was always a meal ready for whoever needed it "as if it was the home of very dear relatives whom we didn't visit everyday". The communion was spontaneous, with gratitude for the reciprocal gifts of joy, great joy.

At the Mariapolis in a small city an hour's drive from Damascus, there were 300 participants from all over the Country, half of whom were young people. The visit of the apostolic nunzio, card. Mario Zenari was an important moment. His sincere answers to the questions about suffering, migration, the unity of Christians, underlined



the strenght and the beauty of the Syrians, as he encouraged them to "go out to the peripheries with the mind, heart and hands, so as to bring back hope".

One of us as we were leaving wrote at the airport: "I miss you already very much. You have given me the possibility to make the strongest and most awesome experience of my life! You have given me everything and I cannot but leave a piece of my heart here with you! I will return!"».

Senegal «In Dakar we were three focolarini (Paul from Montet, Donato from Norway, Pascal from Bobo-Dioulasso) and three gen of Bobo D. (Désiré, Jacques and Umar, a Musim), who went to meet the communy followed by sr. Maria Augustine Ndione, franciscan of the poor, who was the one who made this temporary focolare possible.

Désiré and Jacques, with a group of youth, together with a gen girl from Burkina spent 12 days in Kuram, near the border of Gambia, for a convention on ecology. Also important for us focolarini was the meeting with a young couple (Yves and Anna Cassien)



– who requested for the presence of the Focolare Movement in Dakar – and with Sophie who with her husband Eric and their five children were taking care of the families in Dakar.

We also met a small group of our members in Thiès, where the bishop mons. André Gueye encouraged us to bring ahead the relationship with the Muslims and to present the Movement inviting them to the Mariapolis. With sr. Augustine we went to pay a visit to the mayor, a young Muslim, who is happy that we continue to form the people to a sincere dialogue for the good of everyone.

A nice group of Nigerian seminarists came to the focolare. Lily, a German



woman connected to New Humanity also passed by. She started an Ngo to protect the forest. With her was a young Muslim woman who had participated in the Genfest in Manila. They had just arrived from the ecology convention in Kuram where the contribution of our gen was particularly incisive.

Fruit of this experience in Senegal, the Mariapolis in the small seminary of Ngazobil, south of Dakar, with 94 participants, of which 25 from Senegal, 43 from Burkina, 26 from Mali, 2 from Europe.

Niger «We were five: two focalarine (Aurora from Burkina Faso and Miriam, Brazilian from the mariapolis Center of Castel Gandolfo), and three gen2 girls (Stella, Bénédicte, Marie-Louise from Burkina Faso). We went to Niamey, where there is a community that is coming back to life thanks



to the presence of a Volunteer couple who moved there to work. We were able to do the formation for the gen4, gen3, gen2 also with a meeting for their friends; many coming for the first time, and among them was also a young Muslim girl. In the cathedral that was jampacked with people, we shared the story of the Ideal and our experiences on living the Word. The archbishop Laurent Lompo encouraged us to bring the charism of unity in his diocese, especially among the youth.

There were always people dropping by the focolare and providence was never lacking. Even with our neighbours, all of them Muslim, we were able to build a relationship of respect and mutual help. This is an important thing since 98% of the population is Muslim and there is not much openness towards Christians. When it was time to leave, the community assured us that they would continue to carry and bring ahead "the flame".

prepared by Gianna Sibelli

work in progress