

Only the breath of the Spirit can give life to our neighbour

To live being transferred into the Other: into our neighbour, for example, who, moment by moment, is close to us: living the other's life in all its fullness. Just as in the Trinity – and this alone is Love – the Father lives in the Son and vice versa. And their mutual Love is the Holy Spirit. When we live transferred into our brother or sister (you must lose your life to find it again), as soon as we need to return into ourselves to respond to them, we find within ourselves a Third: the Holy Spirit, who has taken the place of our emptiness.

Now, we can enter into the other in various ways: pushing ourselves in like someone big who wants to get in through a small door... and this is how someone acts who does not listen to the very end (someone who does not die totally in their brother or sister who is Paradise for the self, the Kingdom for the self) and wants to give answers gathered bit by bit in his or her own head that may be inspired but are not that breath of the Holy Spirit that will give life to the other.

There are those who (passionately in love with Jesus Forsaken) more willingly die than live and who listen to their brother or sister to the very end, not worried about the reply, which will be given in the end by the Holy Spirit who summarizes in few words, or in one, all the medicine for that soul.

Chiara Lubich

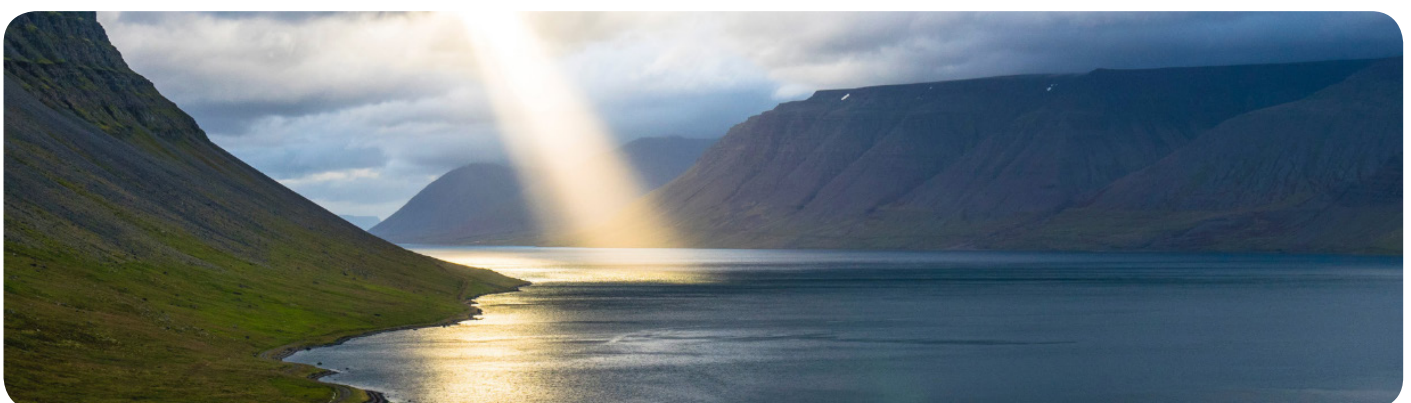
Dear readers,

Some experiences enkindle fire in our hearts and leave their mark. I have lived such an experience when I accompanied Maria Voce and Jesús Morán on their journey to Syria and Lebanon from April 30 to May 17. As the president and co-president said, they visited these two countries with the intention of being some source of hope to the Focolare Community that has lived and still lives in very difficult conditions. But the opposite happened; families, youth and children who live there filled us with hope.

Articles written about this journey can be found on pages 3-6, but I suggest that you will not miss the opportunity - if you have it - to watch the last Linkup, the video transmission that brings together the Focolare community worldwide (<http://collegamentoch.focolare.org>). It was so touching to meet our Focolare family in Syria and Lebanon, to meet these people who share the great ideal of unity, of a brotherhood that knows no borders, of a love that is not hindered by pain and suffering.

I confess outrightly: these people stole my heart! Thank you, dear friends; these countries are blessed by your presence!

Joachim Schwind
Focolare Communications Office





The flame is alive

Siria /1:

Homs is the first city visited by the President and Co-president of the Focolare Movement during their journey to Syria, and there they met the small community that chose not to abandon the city during the civil war. These people now contribute towards the rebuilding of their country.

“People around us think we are weak when we respond to hatred with love; this is neither easy to bear nor to pass on to our children. But they do not know that love is the most powerful weapon”. This was the most overwhelming answer received when we asked about the great challenges these people have to face.

And it was confirmed by a young mother from Homs, the third largest city in Syria that was amongst the worst hit during the war. Homs was the first city that Maria Voce and Jesús Moran, president and co-president of the Focolare Movement visited on their journey to this region where one can still note the scars of war, but also perceive the attempts to resurrect the city after years of conflict.

On the afternoon of May 1, about fifteen members, who form part of the oldest Focolare Community in Syria, gathered at the Jesuit Centre. They were very happy to meet the president and co-president of the Movement, who went there to get to know them, to comfort them and give them hope, as Maria Voce said before leaving for Syria.

But during this first meeting one could already witness a change of roles; these people, who chose to remain in Syria despite great risks, were the ones offering hope, joy and courage to the ones who were lucky to meet them.

They related very clearly and authentically about the hard times they lived during the war. Many of them lost all their belongings, but they kept alive their faith in God who is Love, whilst witnessing it in a daily life shattered with bombs, destruction and death.

One of them said: “Through our way of life, we try to be a living Gospel, because the Focolare spirituality has implanted in us a different seed. Those who accompany us have taken good care of this seed which seems to be bearing fruit because people around us realize that there is something different”.

And it is not just a question of remaining in the same situation or of having the courage to rebuild one’s own life. Many, who are members of this small community of about fifty people, are now engaged in projects that have been set up to help their people: support to cancer patients, physiotherapeutic and psychological support to those who are victims of war trauma, ethical formation courses to primary and secondary school students.

Touched by the life of this community, Maria Voce said to them: “You have kept the flame of the Gospel alive. You have understood one the most fundamental points of our spirituality; you have realized that the secret of true love lies in the love for Jesus crucified and forsaken. This meeting with you has really been a grace for us”. ■

Joachim Schwind

“We want to turn the page and make a new start”

Siria /2:

On Saturday May 4th the president and co-president of the Focolare met with the Syrian community of the

movement. The sharing of their testimonies conveyed their pain and their sense of loss and mourning, but also their wealth of culture and traditions - and their desire to live and to rebuild their homeland.

From the very beginning, Saturday 4 May promised to be very intense. Three hundred members of the

Syrian Focolare community met at the monastery of St Ephrem the Syrian in Sednaya, about 40 kilometres north of Damascus.

The day began with the story of the movement, told with the same words that Chiara Lubich used so many times – words that are known, almost by heart, by members of the Focolare communities around the world: "It was during the war and everything was collapsing..." But what made today's telling of the story different is that after retelling each episode of Chiara's life, one of the Syrians illustrated it with their own recent experience in this tormented land.

There were those who, on returning to their city, could no longer find their houses, those who had lost their jobs, or their physical or mental health. There were those who felt they had seen their futures, or their faith in God or in relationships, stolen from them. Many have lost loved ones. Up to this moment there has been no compensation for many of these losses. "We are dead inside," says one of them, encapsulating the mood of so many, perhaps of all who are present. Yet on the background of the stage, in Arabic, we read "And we have believed in love," - the phrase that Chiara Lubich and her companions wanted to see written on their graves - ever since those early days when the movement was taking its first steps, in the middle of the Second World War.

The final song that expressed the famous "Art of Loving," which has been explained so many times by Chiara Lubich, underlined this belief in love. It's the art of loving everyone, of being the first to love, of seeing Jesus in every neighbour, of loving our enemies. Those who were present stood up, began to dance and to express with all their senses a common desire, to turn the page and to make a new start.

Right before our eyes we saw once again the two realities that distinguish this journey of the delegation of the International Centre of the Focolare to Syria: on the one hand the encounter with the peoples' pain: the wounds, the traumas, the despair, the concern for the future, especially for their own children; and, on the other hand, the desire to continue to hope, to take up their lives again with freedom. Both realities are supported by a spirituality centred on a faith that can say: we believed in love.

This life that unfolds between despair and hope, between death and resurrection, also resounded in the brief intervention given by the apostolic nuncio in

Syria, Cardinal Mario Zenari and in the answers of Maria Voce and Jesús Morán.

Cardinal Zenari invited those present to welcome the message from 800 years ago, that St. Francis heard addressed to him by the Crucifix - "repair the Church." The Cardinal added, "But here, it is not just a question of repairing the Church, but of repairing your homeland. It is a question of building a new Syria."



Jesús Morán, co-president of the Focolare, presented to the Syrian community of the movement the example of Mary, the mother of Jesus, who in the greatest desperation "believed in the impossible" and that is, in the strength of the resurrection.

But what should they do today in Syria: stay or leave? Maria Voce addressed this fundamental question asked by so many. She pointed out that beyond this choice, which is certainly not easy, there is the issue of living the present moment. She invited those present to seize the moment, to focus on whatever in the present moment seems to be "the will of God," and then "to live it with authenticity and consistency – even if God occasionally allows us to continue living in mystery."

The day ended with a big celebration. Many different regions were represented and there were large numbers of children and young people present. This might have aroused some confusion in those who, perhaps, had come there thinking they would be meeting people of great poverty. Perhaps there is very little material well-being among them, but there is also a great wealth of life, of traditions, of customs, of dances, of songs, of expressions of joy and of the desire to live.

How beautiful these people are, who, despite everything, believe in love! ■

Joachim Schwind



A people of strength and of tenderness

Siria /3

Maria Voce to the young Syrians: “Do not let your values be stolen from you. Join all the young people who want a better world. The world is waiting for you.”

“Thank you for the hope and the vitality you have given us”. These are the words that Maria Voce addressed to the Focolare communities of Syria through a video message at the end of her visit to Syria from the 1st to the 8th of May.

These were intense days in which the Focolare president, together with the co-president, Jesús Morán, visited the cities of Homs, Kafarbo, Seydnaya and Damascus. They met communities, people engaged in parishes or in social works, families, children, young people, priests and religious. They were received by the bishops and by the Apostolic Nuncio - Cardinal Mario Zenari.

They experienced first-hand the terrible wounds that the war has left on the structures and on the souls of the Syrian people - traumas and tragedies of all kinds. They got to know the inside story of the difficult, almost desperate situation of a country that had become the puppet of numerous external forces – a country which suffered a heavy economic war, even before the military conflict was over. So how is it possible that Maria Voce ended this visit by thanking the Syrian people for the hope and strength received from them?

One of the keys to understanding this is undoubtedly the last stage of the visit. At the invitation of the Melkite Patriarch, Monsignor Youssef Absi, 230 young people -Catholics and those from several other Churches - met on Monday 6 May at the Greek Catholic Cathedral in Damascus. On this occasion while responding to a few questions, Maria Voce made a strong appeal to the Syrian youth: “Do not let your values be stolen from you. Join all the young people who want a better world. The world is waiting for you.”

Later the co-president, Jesús Morán, explained the profound motivation of these words: “These young people have experienced that everything collapses; yet they have preserved a deep thirst for God and a true sense of community. Perhaps they are not completely aware of it, but they are in an ideal spiritual situation, from which great things can grow.”

What needs to be done, then, to create the conditions in which these seeds of hope can grow and flourish in Syria?

Anyone who knows at least a little about the past and recent history of this country, might suggest a double solution for leaving Syria and the Syrians in peace. The first part of the solution would be for all the conflict to cease. The second part of the solution would be for all the great powers of the Middle East and of all the other parts of the world that want to exploit Syria, to leave the country to find its own way.

These Syrian people, who, according to Maria Voce, have such strength and such tenderness, are more than capable of taking their destiny into their own hands. ■

Joachim Schwind



A message that continues

Lebanon /1:

The Focolare president and co-president returned to Lebanon where they celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of the Movement with the community and various civil and religious leaders.

It sometimes happens that the great currents of history are concentrated in the small history of an individual. This happened on Saturday, May 11, during the meeting of the members of the Focolare movement in Lebanon, on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the arrival of the Movement in the Land of the Cedars. In front of the 450 who were present, the presenters had just retraced some of the main stages of those 50 years, when one of them announced: "In the war from 1975 to 1990 my brother died. I was one of those who had a weapon in his hand. Then in 1993 I met the Focolare and the spirituality of unity changed my life."

These few words are a concentration of reality: there is the richness and beauty of Lebanon, the gateway to the Middle East, where three continents and three great religions meet. They say it's a country that's been privileged by history. That it lives out the continuous challenge of fraternal coexistence among peoples, religions, Christian rites and denominations. It is referred to as a nation that never gives up and that always finds new resources to start again. This presenter's announcement expressed the drama and the trauma of a war that lasted 16 years, a war whose origins and roots have never really been addressed.

Hidden within this one individual's story is the seed sown by the first men and women members of the Focolare who arrived in Beirut in 1969. Their witness of a life based on love has not only survived the war but it is manifested in the various expressions of the Movement and in the many ecclesial and social activities that are presented on this day of celebration.

Maria Voce and Jesús Morán, president and co-president of the Focolare, who came to celebrate with the Lebanese community, were not satisfied with a jubilee that started with the past and arrived at the present. In their answers to questions, they challenged the Lebanese Focolare community to look to the future and to never tire of announcing the Gospel in the style that's typical of the charism of unity – which means, like Christ, to make themselves one with everyone. They encouraged them not to avoid the differences and con-



flicts that could challenge their own cultural classifications, but to reach a new evangelical mentality. They encouraged them not to live a superficial witness to ecumenism, but to live a true unity in the diversity of rites and denominations and before ecclesial authorities. They asked them to live inter religious dialogue - especially with Muslims - the way that Chiara Lubich lived it. In this way the prophecy inherent within inter religious dialogue would become manifest.

Maria Voce summarized all these challenges in her greeting after the Mass on Sunday, May 12th, the official act with which the fiftieth was celebrated. In the Resurrection Cathedral at Antélias near Beirut, Maria Voce expressed the wish that Lebanon's people could withstand any fragmentation. This way Lebanon could be a living 'message' of coexistence and fraternity throughout the world. This is the special characteristic of the Lebanese people that Pope John Paul II perceived in the 1980s. He saw that in Lebanon cultural and spiritual diversity could be found in the journeys of individuals and of peoples. Maria Voce repeated the words of the Pope, who is now a saint: "Lebanon is more than a country, it is a message of freedom and an example of pluralism for the East and the West."

The 50 years of the Focolare in this country show that the spirituality of unity has the capacity to keep this message alive and up to date. ■

Joachim Schwind

A small seed with overwhelming strength

Lebanon /2:

Maria Voce and Jesús Morán continue their journey in Lebanon: the roots of a culture in a country with a very complex social, political and religious situation. The challenge of an authentic dialogue as a key to Lebanon's rebirth.

"It's time to build a new nation", said a large poster overlooking the motorway, but the speed of the Lebanese traffic did not give one the chance to find out who published this appeal and the intentions behind it.



The members of a small Focolare delegation, headed by Maria Voce, its president and Jesús Morán, its co-president, were returning to Beirut from a trip to the north of the country. There, they visited the Valley of the Saints, the spiritual centre of the Maronite Church, the

largest Christian denomination in country. This area is also well known for the Cedars of Lebanon, a small forest at an altitude of 2000 metres where one can still find species that probably date back to the time of King Solomon, that is 3000 years ago.

The members of the delegation were so impressed by the richness they discovered during this visit, that on their return journey to Beirut they affirmed the great capacity of this people, who can boast of 7000 years of history. The Lebanese managed to survive at the crossroads of three continents and three great religions and to safeguard their creativity in extremely difficult conditions. As they approached nearer to the capital city, they thought more of the country's present situation, that leaves very little space for hope. In Lebanon, there are currently 18 religious communities. The state and public administrations function on "emergency" management. Ethnic, religious and political groups, big families, economic interests and foreign powers are

deeply intertwined. Wounds, caused by the so called "civil" war, that took place between 1975 and 1990, have not yet healed.

One of the bishops they met during these days said: "We haven't had the courage to face the harm we have caused to one another, so no one has ever asked for forgiveness". Comments show the fear of another outbreak of war.

"It is time to build a new nation", said the poster on the motorway. This provoked a very spontaneous question: how can this ever happen? Jesús Morán answered this question during a round table conference held at the faculty of Philosophy at the Holy Spirit University (USEK) near Beirut. His answer could be summed up in one word: dialogue. The Co-President of the Focolare Movement insisted: "Dialogue is part of man's nature. Through dialogue man becomes more man; he fulfills himself by giving himself to others. It is not so much a matter of words or thoughts but of giving oneself. This requires silence and listening; it requires risking one's own identity, even one's own cultural and ecclesial identity. However, one's own identity is not lost; it is enriched through one's openness to others".

So, does dialogue build a new nation? Is this another one of those alluring theories that the Lebanese people have come across in recent years? The 150 Christians and Muslims gathered at the so-called "Yellow House" on May 13 can answer these questions. Located on the former demarcation line between East and West Beirut, the Yellow House was rebuilt as a historical symbol to remind people of the trauma of war. The testimonies shared by those gathered there were moving and convincing. They spoke of their friendship that began during the war when they were simply made welcome by the Focolare. A Muslim woman described how small gestures of closeness and attention, reciprocal visits and unbiased relationships transformed friendship into a real family.

"Dialogue is possible only between people who are true. And it is only love that makes us true", Jesús Morán said in his speech. The Christian and Muslim friends and their experiences are a proof of this. May be it is just a small seed, that will grow slowly, just like the cedars of Lebanon. But it is certainly a seed with overwhelming strength, from which a new nation can be born. ■

Joachim Schwind



Algeria: To educate is to make the world a better place

Amine Mohammed Sahnouni, a young Algerian sociologist, sees education as a process. “We need to give the children more responsibility, trust in them and guide them so that their leadership abilities develop from an early age.”

“Children are the pillar of our work, and we dedicate ourselves to them with the aim of helping them grow up strong, since they are the future.”

For an education conference promoted by the Foculare Movement in Italy on 2 March, Amine Mohammed Sahnouni, a young Algerian sociologist, spoke of her commitment to education that benefits young people. To build a better world, she said, we need to start with the children.

Amine, you said that in order to get results it is important to have a vision, long-term objectives, and if possible, share them with others. What is your vision for the field of education?

I believe that we sociologists are doctors for society, and as such we need to go into the field and take on social phenomenon of all kinds. With that perspective, my vision is to “make the world a better place,” not only for us, but for future generations. We all can do this, but only if we start by changing ourselves, even by starting with the small things.

If we hope to build a more just society, it’s essential that we dedicate ourselves to training young people. What are the main resources, competencies and methods you propose?

My parents always encourage, support and guide me. Ever since I was young, they gave me a sense of responsibility. I still remember the words of my father: “Amine, make us proud of you.” He was always saying to put “Allah,” “God,” in the first place in everything I do; only by doing so would I be able to be a successful person. So to me the first pillar of education is family.

There are also various competencies to work on: we need to give the children more responsibility, trust in

them and guide them so that their leadership abilities develop from an early age. We need to give them our trust, support and use positive words in a way that they can develop their self-esteem, hopes and objectives. We need to encourage critical thinking in children and teach them to share their opinions in front of others.

All these competencies can be acquired by working in the field, through exchange programs where they meet young people from different countries, and by changing traditional teaching methods to make learning easy and enjoyable.

Religious leaders, institutions and non-profit organisations call for safeguarding the environment, but their efforts are not enough. Meanwhile it is said that the young Swede Greta Thunberg, who called for young people marching in all of Europe, may be nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize. Does this mean that we need young people to awaken the old?

I truly admire the courage and determination of that girl, who, despite being quite young, is completely aware of environmental issues, and this is extremely rare today, even among adults.



This great “battler” is sending a strong message to the world, and I have a lot of respect for her. We all need to take inspiration from her example. I believe, in fact, that great victories begin from the small things.

Getting on a bicycle and crossing Algeria from the Moroccan to the Tunisian border seems a way to inspire commitment for the environment. Can you tell us how it went?

We were a group of friends, passionate and motivated, hoping to inspire young people. Since 2012 our philosophy has been: if you want lasting change, start by changing yourself.

In time our goals expanded, and we decided to take up a new challenge: cycling across Algeria from east to west over 15 days. It was a project aimed at raising awareness for safeguarding the environment, promoting the values of citizenship, and educating through sports.

My two friends, Elhadi and Naim, and I created a video about our activity, and in just one week the video spread so quickly that people started to contact us offering their help. We received so much support during the trip itself in August 2017, and the results were incredible: two million followers on social media and television. We collaborated with more than 15 associations, children’s organisations and cycling clubs.

We felt “Allah,” “God” with us each day and we asked him for courage, support and strength to complete our mission. It was a spiritual experience, and we received prayers from many Algerians and support from our families.

Just in two weeks we were able to spark other awareness campaigns, and after the initiative many people followed along our same path.■

Claudia Di Lorenzi

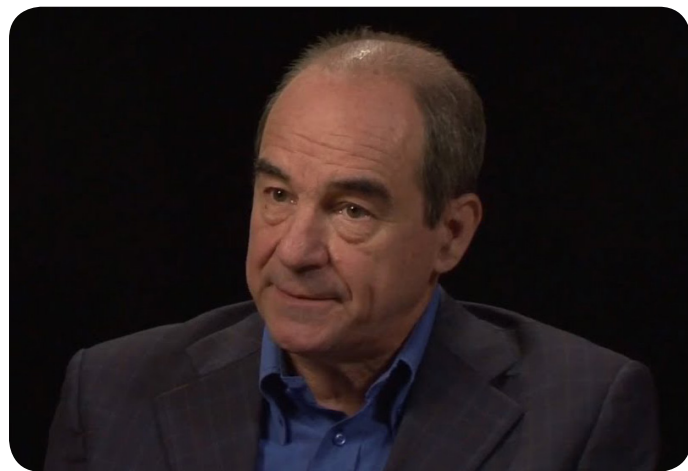
Progress report on Fraternity

Roberto Catalano of the Focolare Movement’s Centre for Inter-religious Dialogue offered his insights into the context and geo-political events leading to the drawing up of the historic DOCUMENT ON HUMAN FRATERNITY FOR WORLD PEACE AND LIVING TOGETHER, co-signed by Pope Francis and The Grand Imam of al-Azhar, Ahmed Al-Tayeb in Abu Dhabi on 4th February this year.

How can we possibly identify universal fraternity as a primary objective of today’s humanity? Are we not in an age dominated by digital bubbles, with ever more divisive personal and collective boundaries, and new forms of economic protectionism and so on?

However, the declaration signed in Abu Dhabi by Pope Francis and the Imam of al-Azhar places the values of fraternity at the heart of the geo-political and media agenda. With a clear and practical approach, the declaration proposes fraternity as the guiding objective, not only for the Christian and Muslim religions, but for the entire human family. Roberto Catalano outlined the steps leading up to this important document which is being recognized as a foundation step in dialogue towards world peace.

How significant is the declaration signed by Pope Francis and Imam al-Tayeb in Abu Dhabi on 4 February this year?



This document on fraternity represents a significant milestone and the text will remain as a reference point for the future. It’s impossible not to see how profoundly innovative it is. Once more we find ourselves before one of Pope Francis’ “absolute firsts”! Never before in the history of the Church has a pope co-signed a shared document with the leader of another religion. This document was signed in a very precise context, a meeting between the leaders of the Catholic Church and of al-Azhar, characterized by a mutual embrace, talks, and even walking hand in hand. The agreed text addresses not only religious leaders or interested parties but all believers and in fact everyone in the world.

The United Arab Emirates can be seen as a cross section of the globalized world: the Arabian Peninsula is the heart of Islam, but there are a growing number of workers from other countries and cultures...

Abu Dhabi, the capital of the United Arab Emirates and the venue for the signing of this declaration, is on the Southern Coast of the Persian Gulf. All the Gulf States are significant due to their economic and geo-political status. In only a few decades, their oil reserves have permitted a dizzying rate of progress, facilitated also by workers from countries such as the Philippines, India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh.

The Arabian Peninsula is the heart of Islam, but it also presents a true Muslim mosaic. Saudi Arabia dominates the region, as the image of Sunni Islam which identifies with Wahhabism, which on the international level supports the Salafi movement.

Within this context, there is the emerging phenomenon of new Christian communities. Whereas the traditional apostolic Christian Churches of the Middle East continue to live through dramatic events which often cause them to flee the region, the area of the Emirates is becoming populated with a new set of Christians, a real cross-section of today's Christianity. The majority of these Christians are from the Philippines and India, but also from other parts of the Middle East. We are living in a period of globalization, and the Church in the Emirates is a striking example of this.

During Pope Francis' recent visit to Morocco, the 800th anniversary of the meeting between St Francis of Assisi and Sultan Malik al-Kamil was celebrated. It seems this pope has embarked upon something of a "pilgrimage of peace".

Absolutely. And the Abu Dhabi declaration fits in with this anniversary, as a sign of the desire to be a "brother who seeks peace with his brothers" and "to be instruments of peace".

The Second Vatican Council Declaration *Nostra Aetate* states that "in the course of centuries not a few quarrels and hostilities have arisen between Christians and Moslems" and so the Council strove to urge "all to forget the past and to work sincerely for mutual understanding and to preserve, as well as to promote together for the benefit of all mankind, social justice and moral welfare, as well as peace and freedom".

In 2006, a passage from Benedict XVI's Regensburg lecture sparked controversy in the Muslim world.



Many took offence at the quotation, even though it referred not to the Quran but to the relationship between faith and reason, and between religion and violence. It led to a period of stormy relationships, during which the University of al-Azhar cut off contact with the Vatican.

In the years that followed, with great patience and diplomacy, these relationships have been rebuilt, in the spirit of *Evangelii Gaudium*, which after defining inter-religious dialogue as a "duty for Christians as well as other religious communities" (EG 250), affirmed the importance of Christian-Muslim relations.

Finally, in May 2016 Imam al-Tayeb came to the Vatican. On his arrival, he made a significant comment: "We are taking up the way of dialogue once more and we hope it will be better than before". The invitation and welcome was soon reciprocated. In 2017, the Imam invited the Pope to Cairo for an International Peace Conference.

On that occasion the Pope strongly affirmed: "Peace alone is holy and no act of violence can be perpetrated in the name of God, for it would profane his Name". He went on to propose three basic areas which, if properly linked, can "assist in this dialogue: the duty to respect one's own identity and that of others, the courage to accept differences, and sincerity of intentions." From then on, a deep spiritual understanding has grown between the two religious leaders.■

Stefania Tanesini



Getting ready for the centenary of Chiara Lubich's birth

In preparation for what would have been Chiara Lubich's 100th birthday in January next year, a delegation from the Focolare founders' home region of Trentino, north Italy, visited the Movement's international centre near Rome on 16 April.

"We're not here to 'commemorate' Chiara Lubich, or to turn her into some kind of monument, or consign her to history. That's not what's needed. We're here to relive her message, link in with her legacy and communicate with her charisma today".

With these words, Alessandro Andreatta, Mayor of the city of Trent, explained the reason behind the visit of a delegation from the Trentino region, on 16 April, to the Focolare Movement's international centre at Rocca di Papa, near Rome, in the lead-up to the celebrations of the centenary of Chiara's birth in 2020.

The delegation included the President of the Autonomous Province of Trento Maurizio Fugatti, the President of the Primiero local community administration Roberto Pradel, the Director of the Trentino Historical Museum Foundation Giuseppe Ferrandi and Maurizio Gentilini, archivist and historian at the Italian National Research Council (CNR) and author of a new biography of Chiara Lubich to be published in 2020.

They were welcomed by Focolare President Maria Voce, Co-President Jesús Morán and other focolare members from different countries, together with the leaders of several local councils in the Castelli Romani area, where Chiara lived for over fifty years.

The visit was an important occasion in which to consolidate the friendship and collaboration between the city of Trent, the Trentino community and the Focolare Movement. A host of events are being organised to mark the centenary year both in the city of Trent and the Primiero Valley, as well as in many other towns and cities around the world. The celebrations begin on 7 December 2019 with the inauguration of a

multimedia exhibition entitled "Chiara Lubich: City-World", a collaborative venture between of the Chiara Lubich Centre and the Trentino Historical Museum Foundation.

"Through this initiative, we hope many people will get to know Chiara and her ideas," explained Alba Sgariglia, co-director of the Chiara Lubich Centre, "as well as her spirituality, her work and her profile as a tireless promoter of a culture of unity and fraternity among peoples".

According to Giuseppe Ferrandi, organising the exhibition has been a rewarding if complex cultural challenge. "We're trying to take the extraordinary legacy of Chiara Lubich's life and words, and transform it into a format within the limits of our exhibition space but without limiting the communication of the content. As our title suggests, the idea of the 'city' is central to Chiara's thinking and writing. For her, the city is a place where debate occurs enabling it to relate directly to the rest of the world. In this way, we are encouraged not to stay confined within the local but to open up".

Part of the exhibition will take place in the Primiero Valley where, from the 1940s onwards, Chiara Lubich and a small group of companions used to go every summer. Every year more people joined them, until several thousand people from all over the world were gathering there to share in the experience of a life centred on fraternity.

After Trent and Primiero, the exhibition will be hosted by nine capital cities outside Europe. In each location, it will be further shaped by the culture of the place, in a vision opening up to the rest of the world.

Throughout 2020, visitors are expected to come to Trent from all over the globe. There will be a series of national and international conventions and events taking place in the Trentino area and in other Focolare centres across all continents.

The President of the Autonomous Province of Trent spoke of their pride at “Being here, today, to express this unity of intent. Trentino is a land of thoroughfares, of borders: Chiara Lubich knew what these characteristics meant and how to communicate with them. Back in June 2001, Chiara spoke to the people of Trent about fraternity from the point of view of the city. Her attitude was to respect all the different stakeholders who form a community, and she knew how to listen to them all. This is the way to interpret the interests and needs of the people for the best outcome”.

In her concluding remarks, Maria Voce underlined the value of Chiara Lubich’s attention to the life of the

city. “She was in the Primiero Valley when she understood God wanted her to go back to the city of Trent. Throughout her life, in cities around the world – a number of which acknowledged her as an honorary citizen – she experienced a strong sense of engagement which came from identifying particular problems and sufferings, embracing them and introducing seeds of life and love there”. ■

Stefania Tanesini

Living the Gospel: peace that transforms one’s life

The Risen Jesus wants us to have the experience of new life and peace with Him that we can then share with others.

The Courtyard

Many young people from the area play in the courtyard of the apartment building where we live. One of these is Robert, a young guy with problems, who passes the time roaming the streets, often getting into arguments with others. We knew that his parents didn’t have time for him and that he was under the care of a psychiatrist. One day, while he was arguing again, my wife and I went down to the courtyard and invited Robert to come up to our house, where he stayed for the rest of the afternoon, playing with our two children, who were younger than him. In the days that followed, every time things became difficult for him, they brought him to us. We soon learned that Robert had told his psychiatrist how he was spending his afternoons. From the time he



started coming to our house his behaviour improved, so much so that he was able to stop his medication.

D. H. – USA

One Big Family

After many attempts, an African immigrant which we had welcomed into our parish had managed to get his wife and children to join him from Africa but they didn’t have any of the things they needed. Their accommodation was a building site, with no electricity. So, I offered to do their laundry and others offered food and other necessities. This family, our brothers and sisters, experienced the joy of having found the large family they had thought they’d lost forever having left their own country.

F.F Belgium

The Easter Egg

Following a visit to my friend, who was ill, as I was leaving, his wife gave me an Easter egg for my son, Cesare. When I got home I found him playing with my young nephew who was often with us due to the difficult atmosphere in his family. With a wink to my son the egg went into the hands of his younger cousin, who was so happy. Cesare kept playing and when we were on our own I explained to him that when we give a gift we feel closer to Jesus. That afternoon his grandmother arrived with an even bigger Easter egg. Cesare was delighted and said, ‘Dad, why don’t you tell everyone this secret?’

Z. C. – Italy

Sri Lanka: It's time to build bridges

While the world is still struck and the people of Sri Lanka are tightening to mourn the victims of the terrible Easter attack, Suchith Abeyewickreme, a young activist for peace and co-founder of an inter-religious network of young people, has written a message to all the Focolare members in the world.

What can we do for the people of Sri Lanka, after the horror they have experienced in the wake of the terrorist attacks last Easter? Looking at those horrible images, we ask ourselves how often we have experienced that sense of impotence towards the ongoing violence, or the impossibility to relieve the pain of those who mourn their dead.

Yet there is a path: “It challenges us to believe in God’s love and pray with faith that new hope will be reborn again and the courage to proceed on the way to peace and unity”, as the president of the Focolare Movement, Maria Voce, wrote to Suchith Abeyewickreme, a Sri Lankan young leader of a youth inter-religious network. On April 25, he wrote a message to all the members of the Focolare Movement in the world. We publish the whole message below. ■

Dear Friends from Focolare,

I write to you as we here, in Sri Lanka are mourning the loss of our people due to the recent attacks on Easter Sunday in our beautiful Island. We are shocked, saddened and shaken up by these unprecedented events.

Our first priority has been to care and support the victims and their families. We are trying to support each other across Communities in these efforts. Following the attacks with immediate response many stepped out to donate blood, help victims and donate relief and medical supplies. We are now in the process of supporting each other in our farewells to those who we have lost.

We stand together at this time understanding that these acts of terrorism aim to cause havoc and spread fear, suspicion and divisiveness through our communities. By standing together Sri Lankans of Christian, Buddhist, Hindu, Islamic and other various spiritual and cultural backgrounds, are saying to those who impose terror upon us that we will not let them succeed in their aims.

We understand that in such attacks, what follows the physical destructions and death is fear, suspicion, hate and divisiveness. While there has been some reactive forces at work lashing out with hatred, majority of the Sri Lankans have been responsible for showing empathy and care towards one another. We are working hard to ensure that these acts by few extremists do not end up being used to discriminate and alienate innocent people or entire communities.

These events occurred when we in Sri Lanka were about to commemorate the 10 years since the end of the 26 year long armed conflict on the 18th of May,

2019. As a society we had many wounds yet to be healed from past experiences, but we are now wounded again. But I believe that the Sri Lankan people are strong and resilient, we will work together to heal ourselves and our society over time.

It is at this difficult time we must practice the virtues of compassion, love, empathy, responsibility and peace that our spiritual teachings guide us towards. We must rise above the divisiveness to acknowledge our interconnectedness and shared humanity.

Our main appeal to you is not for donations. Our appeal is for your time and commitment. Time and commitment to strengthen your work in your own communities to build bridges of understanding across divides, to intensify moderate voices and to stand for non-violence. Around the world there is a lot of polarization, discriminations, hate and violence that offer ideal breeding grounds for violent extremism. We must work together to be the sensitive, empathic and responsible leaders this world needs to heal its wounds.

*“Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that.”
Thank you for your solidarity at this difficult time.*

May you be well, happy and peaceful.

Thank you,

*Suchith Abeyewickreme**

**) Peace Activist, Co-Founder - Interfaith Colombo and Interfaith Youth Network Global Council Trustee, United Religions Initiative*

United World Week : voting as you spend

“Inside The Label” is part of United World Week giving people the chance to make a difference by choosing good quality, ethically produced goods and social responsibility.

11 May, just a few days after United World Week (1-7 May 2019) is “Inside the Label” day when we can “vote as we spend”. This is one of the main actions for 2019 planned by the Focolare’s Youth for a United World, an exercise in “economic democracy”, as the Italian economist, Leonardo Becchetti, who started the day, has called it. Let’s see what it is about and how we can get involved.

According to Becchetti, “Voting as you spend expresses the sovereignty of the consumer, who decides with their purchasing and saving power whether to reward or penalise companies and/or countries that act responsibly or irresponsibly from a social and environmental point of view...

Many problems we face, as Pope Francis says, are due to an economic system which is no longer able to solve people’s problems and those relating to the environment. The solution is to create a new and sustainable economic model which is both inclusive and participative.” Leonardo Becchetti affirms that “the only way to do this is to build it up from the grassroots, together. Hence the idea of voting as you spend: becoming responsible consumers, conscious of the role we can play and the power we have to reward companies that make profits, without harming their employees, customers or the environment, through the items we purchase. We have the power to judge and choose companies that are leading the way in social, environmental and financial sustainability”.

The young people of the Focolare want to encourage people to shop ethically and support companies that are economically and socially responsible. But how is this vote cast?

Supermarkets are the “polling stations” where shoppers are invited to take part in a workshop lasting about 2 hours. Scoreboards, ballot boxes and real ballot papers are prepared. The idea is to present the “candidates”, which are a selection of products divided into 5 categories: pasta, coffee, chocolate, tinned tuna and fizzy orange drinks. An information sheet on each product gives details of the characteristics and criteria on which to judge the product such as protection of the environment, respect for workers, traceability of raw materials, etc.

The workshop is set out like an election day and votes are cast by the purchase (or not) of products on the basis of their different programmes, i.e. on the basis of the information gathered. And it’s all done like a talk show, with exit polls, projections and the counting of votes.

These “Inside the Label” workshops have three aims – to bridge the gap between the consumer and the hidden choices businesses have made concerning their products, so as to generate awareness; to encourage group participation by voting for the products; and finally to generate change. When consumer choices are directed towards the common good, they can influence companies to act more ethically like the companies whose goods were purchased.

We will share developments on the “Inside the Label” campaign on this website and the United World Project website, and information on the “candidate” products is also available on the website for this initiative. ■

Stefania Tanesini



Venezuela: don't lose hope

Continuous and long blackouts throughout the whole country paralyse basic services and business activities thus making life for people very difficult. A humanitarian drama is leading to deep social divisions. Rosa and Óscar Contreras, a family that belongs to the Focolare community relate how they manage to brave this desperate situation with faith and courage and continue to give their share towards universal brotherhood.

“Rosa related: “The situation continues to get worse. A few weeks ago, 105 hours of power cuts crippled our city, especially commercial and financial activities. To make matters worse, we lack also constant public services such as water supply, waste collection, telephone and internet services And then, national backouts continue to hit the country...”

“In spite of everything we feel that life must go on”, Oscar said. Then he continued to explain, “We have reopened our factory, which produces wooden and acrylic goods and resumed our work. It is a great challenge to keep the business going when sales have really dropped, but we are try our best to comply with the commitment we have with suppliers and employees, without running the risk of bankruptcy. We aim at being creative and open to constant strategical change to be able to react against hyperinflation and complex fiscal policies. This led to a total change in the wage structure of our employees; we try to find new ways to improve their income, to encourage greater motivation and achieve better results. In the meantime unexpected circumstances do crop up. Until some time ago we were able to travel to visit people and be close to them, but presently we cannot do this anymore because our car has been damaged and we cannot afford the expense to repair it, besides being a long process because of power cuts. Meanwhile, our savings are running out, but God's Providence does not abandon us; recently we have managed to buy a few necessary things to keep us going”.

“We have never realized that there are so many unimaginable opportunities to live the Gospel radically”, continued Rosa. “Every day we come across so many relatives and neighbours who are in need and are desperate, that we are obliged to be attentive and share the little we have. Each time we ask what Mary, Joseph and Jesus would have done if they were instead of us.

We are pleased to see that many of our neighbours have started to be more friendly. We think that this is the result of initiatives we have carried out very silently to help others and create relationships”.

Oscar confided: “However, we must admit that we are really physically, mentally and emotionally exhausted, but still we are certain that the Holy Spirit is with us



and that, through us, He can fill others with the joy and hope we seek to transmit. Last week, even though we had no electricity, we thought of meeting some young people from the Movement to share experiences and reflections, and watch a film together.

Many say that these difficult times are a favourable opportunity to generate more communion within the families. The absence of mobile phones, TV, schools, work and other commitments is providing space for more dialogue within family circles and for addressing questions that were never dealt with before. Many come together to pray and they share what they have with others. It is interesting to note the change of attitude when people come to purchase or get something; they do not only think about its use for their own family, but they also think about its usefulness for others”. ■

Anna Lisa Innocenti

Europe and its calling: an interview with Maria Voce

Less than a century has passed since the end of World War II, yet it seems that today's Europe has somewhat lost sight of its original challenge. The old continent was setting for two world wars, with millions of dead and many cities and communities destroyed, yet in the 1950s it launched a renaissance that could not even have been hoped for. The founding fathers of the present-day European Union saw beyond the special interests of each country and thought on a grander scale: a community of peoples who would be able to design an economic rebirth and future of peace.

We talked with Maria Voce, president of the Focolare Movement, in an interview that took the form of nine questions. It was released in time for the European Mariapolis that will take place over the next months of July and August at Tonadico, in the region of Trent, Italy. The interview unfolded into a plain-spoken, frank conversation, taking on topics such as politics, youth, bearing witness as Christians today, the Europe we hope for, and what a European Mariapolis might mean.

Diversity between various communities of peoples is valuable, affirmed Maria Voce, and there is no need to give in to superiority or nationalism. At the Mariapolis, diversity becomes a way for everyone to be enriched, becoming a moment in which everyone can show the wealth of their culture.

“If everyone stretches themselves to do this,” she continues, “no one feels the need to assert their identity, because everyone’s identity is recognised, valued and enriched by unity.”

And this is what the European Mariapolis can give and signify for those participating, fulfilling together a phrase that Chiara Lubich said back in 2004:



“The highest dignity for humanity is not to feel like a cluster of peoples who are often at odds with each other, but being one people out of mutual love that is enriched by each person’s diversity, and as a result safeguarding the unity of the different identities.”

Another topic that was covered was the role of young people in today’s society and their scarce participation in political life. Maria Voce does not doubt their abilities, and she values the witness of many young people who presently have an influence, for example, on environmental issues.

The new generations are committed “to projects that look to the good of humanity, not just the immediacy of the passing day, for projects that require concrete action and that show an authentic life,” affirms Focolare’s president.

The task for Christians, as well, is difficult enough, but they can spread values of solidarity, fraternity, love for the last and the least, for the poorest, by personally living a life that follows the light of the Gospel.

The questions could not have overlooked her own meeting with the charism of unity, which happened in Rome during her university years and, as a result, her first experience of Mariapolis, which we discovered occurred in 1959 in the Dolomite valleys, where she got to know Chiara Lubich. Maria Voce herself is a witness to that wide variety of people who took a break each year in those enchanting places. They were attracted by being able to experience reciprocal love and fraternity first-hand, thus fulfilling Jesus’ prayer, “May all be one.”

The final question drew out a hope and a wish from her. “My hopes for Europe are that it might discover its beauty and calling: peoples who are united, who are recognisable as themselves, yet who see in each other common principles and values. The history of people is also my history, the history of every European people is also my history. It’s part of my story and lives within my story.” ■

Patrizia Mazzola



Italy: Focolare young people welcome a Buddhist delegation from the Rissho Kosei-kai

The most recent event for dialogue between the youth of Buddhist movement Rissho Kosei-kai and young people from the Focolare deepened their awareness, friendship and common commitment for world peace.

“All these years, wherever we’ve met, immediately the walls of our diversity vanished, and right away we found ourselves united with the same drive to want to work for world peace. This is also logical, since when our founder Nikkyo Niwano and Chiara Lubich originally met, right away they too found they were one, and for both it was a discovery to find someone seriously willing to work for peace in the world.”

This is how Yoshie Nishi, vice director of the Rissho Kosei-kai’s youth branch, began to tell the story of symposia between young people from the Buddhist movement and the Focolare that began in 2008.

This year’s edition, which happened at the Focolare’s international headquarters in Italy, had the theme “World peace starts from us: now is the time to step forward”.

“The world is divided in many places,” explained the Rissho Kosei-kai youth. “Refugees, poverty, economic difficulties, etc, and not just at a national level, but throughout the small world where we live. On one hand, with the spread of the internet, you can create close links with the entire world, but on the other hand, poor relationships exist where conversations with next-door neighbours never happen.”

There were many moments to share everyday experiences of peace: changes of lifestyle and actions that involve others and change reality positively.

“We want to move forward and always look to each other and the challenges we see in the world,” said Rita and Henrique of the Focolare to their Japanese friends,

“contributing to reaching a world that is more united, fraternal, where we can have more peace. But it is a peace that does not exclude people who are outcast, but that makes other people’s needs our own in order to one day arrive at the goal of ‘No one in need.’ This is how the catchphrase that young people in the Focolare have chosen this year reads for the Week of World Unity and for the course Pathways for a United World.”

There was also real action in the symposium schedule: preparing and distributing hot meals at Rome’s Ostiense Station together with the RomAmoR ONLUS Association, which helps the homeless, elderly and immigrants.

The Japanese delegation then participated in an audience with Pope Francis and experienced a day of sharing and in-depth study at the international centre of Loppiano, with young people at the school of formation and Sophia University Institute. ■

Paola Pepe





The economy of Francis

Pope Francis invites young economists from all over the world to join him in Assisi, Italy, from 26 -28 March 2020 to promote a common covenant which will bring about change in present day global economics and reanimate future thinking.

“I am writing to invite you to take part in an initiative that is very close to my heart: an event that will allow me to encounter young men and women studying economics and interested in a different kind of economy: one that brings life not death, one that is inclusive and not exclusive, humane and not dehumanizing, one that cares for the environment and does not de-spoil it. This event will enable us to come together, to know one another and will promote a “covenant” that will change the current economic situation and reanimate economics in the future”.

These are the opening lines of a message that Pope Francis sent on Saturday 11 May to young economists and entrepreneurs committed to bringing change to global economics. He invited them to contribute to planning an international event entitled “The Economy of Francis” that will take place in Assisi from 26-28 March 2020.

His aim is to begin a process of global change whereby economics now and in the future are more just, inclusive and sustainable and do not leave anyone behind. The event is being organised by a Committee made up of representatives from the diocese of Assisi, the council of Assisi, the Serafico Institute of Assisi and the Economy of Communion.

The Pope is inviting everyone to join him – people of all faiths and nationalities – to discuss together the most challenging issues the world is facing today including care of the environment and justice for those living in poverty. They are issues which demand courage and commitment in order to rethink the current economic paradigms.

Professor Luigino Bruni, scientific director of the

Committee, said, “Pope Francis’ invitation to young economists is a historic event because it draws together topics about which the Pope feels very strongly – his preference for young people and his concern to create a new type of economy. Acting on his behalf, we are inviting the economists and entrepreneurs who have shown the greatest sensitivity to and understanding of the Economy of Francis (St Francis of Assisi and Pope Francis) so that the young people who will come will hear the very best speakers and learn about the best economic practice in the world today.

The word “Oikonomia” (economy) has a complex background; its Greek root refers to our house rules or how we behave in our homes but, at the same time, OIKOS also refers to the care of our common home. The Fathers of the Church understood Oikonomia from a theological perspective, as a category of universal salvation.

Assisi as a setting is very important: it is a town with a message that speaks of a different type of economy. The programme will take place in different parts of the town and will focus upon the three main pillars of the Economy of Francis: young people, the environment and the poor.” The two- day programme, from 26 -28 March, will include a range of talks on topics such as the rights of future generations, respect for life, social equality, the dignity of workers and care for our planet. The Economy of Francis will also be expressed in workshops, artistic presentations, seminars and plenary sessions. Well known economists and experts in sustainable development and other disciplines will reflect and work alongside the young people present.

Applications to attend can be made from June onwards. The full text of Pope Francis’ letter and further details of the event can be found on www.francescoeconomy.org ■

Stefania Tanesini

Help all members of the Movement to express themselves freely

A commission has been set up to prepare for the 2020 Focolare General Assembly. Indications have been given by the President Maria Voce and Co-president Jesús Morán: guarantee maximum freedom of expression for all!

The indications that the President Maria Voce gave to the Commission entrusted with the preparation for the coming Focolare Movement General Assembly were brief and clear: “I expect that during the preparatory process for the next General Assembly this commission will help all members of the Movement to express themselves freely, and that a synthesis of all the material received will be compiled so that no one feels excluded. This process is to be carried out without any pre-established interests”.

This commission had its first meeting at Castel Gandolfo during the weekend of 24-26 May. While preparing for the General Assembly scheduled to take place in September 2020, the commission is expected to see to the organization and to the subject-matter that will be dealt with during the Assembly. Its 18 members, who represent the Movement’s geographical areas and different branches and expressions, come from the five continents and live their call to the Movement in various forms and vocations.

“The 2020 Assembly will be of particular importance,” emphasized Co-President Jesús Morán during a meeting that the Commission had with the Movement’s General Council on Sunday, May 26. After two terms of six years each, the current President

Maria Voce can no longer be re-elected. A change - according to Jesús Morán - that will involve an important step further for the whole Movement. “Certainly, some crucial issues will come up for discussion,” he said. “We would like to make sure that this takes place in full freedom”.

In order to guarantee this freedom, Maria Voce did not want to give any indication about the subject-matter that the 2020 Assembly will have to deal with. When asked if, on the basis of her sensitivity for the whole Movement, she has any themes to suggest, she replied: “I don’t have any and I don’t want to have any, because I would not like to impose any condition on the Movement’s present requirements”.

During the coming months, the preparatory commission will have to see to various matters. It has to start a process through which it can collect the most important issues that the Movement will have to address in the coming years and on which the Assembly needs to express itself. It needs to identify people who are suitable and willing to be candidates for the roles of President, Co-President and Councillors. It has to prepare and propose a balanced programme that will enable the Assembly to work seriously and responsibly. It needs to express as much as possible all the realities of the Focolare Movement, in its most diverse cultural expressions. ■

Joachim Schwind





Jean Vanier: the poor are the Church's real wealth

Founder of L'Arche, Jean Vanier, true apostle of "the least", has died. The Focolare joins in remembering him with immense gratitude. We recall him together with Chiara and other founders of movements and new communities in St Peter's Square for the historic meeting of Pentecost 1998.

The date 30th May 1998 resounds in many hearts as "the meeting of Pentecost". On that occasion, Pope John Paul II called all the ecclesial movements and new communities together in St Peter's Square for the first time ever.

Four of the founders were invited to speak in front of the Pope: Chiara Lubich, Kiko Arguello, Don Luigi Giussani, and Jean Vanier, founder of the L'Arche community, who left us on 7 May, at 90 years of age.

His great work at the service of people with disabilities and those often considered the "least" in society, began in 1964 and led to the creation of over 150 centres around the world. The Focolare also enjoyed his wonderful capacity for friendship, and appreciates the strong support he gave through his faithful presence at all "Together for Europe" (link) events.

Jean Vanier's words to Pope John Paul II in St Peter's Square conveyed his passion for the evangelical goal of unity. "Welcoming people with disabilities from different Christian traditions, welcoming Muslims, Jews and Hindus too, we have discovered how much the poor can unite us. Men and women belonging to different churches and different religions have helped us discover the mystery of our common humanity. We discover how, if we welcome a poor person, they lead us to the God of love, they lead us to Jesus".

In November 2013, at Montmartre in France, Jean Vanier addressed a meeting of friends of "Together for Europe". The main theme of the event was the contri-

bution Christian communities and movements can offer to eliminate poverty and marginalization in Europe. Jean Vanier began by quoting the Gospel: "Jesus said, 'The Kingdom of God is like a marriage feast' where everyone was too busy to attend. So the king sent his servants into the byways to seek out the lame and the helpless. And this is what I've tried to live all my life". He dedicated himself particularly to those with intellectual disabilities, whom he defined as "the most oppressed people". "They have changed me," he declared, "I have seen that the Kingdom of God is theirs".

We express our condolences to his spiritual family throughout the world, and think of the great welcome that surely awaited him in heaven from the host of "the least" he had welcomed into his home and heart while on this earth. ■

Stefania Tanesini

Members of the Movement who have concluded their earthly life:

- 23 March 2019 Bruno Macciò - priest volunteer from Italy
- 25 March 2019 Leonardo Dambra - married focolarino from Italy
- 28 March 2019 Giuseppe Castellani - sacerdote volontario from Italy
- 05 April 2019 Ettore Verdile - married focolarino from Italy
- 09 April 2019 Manolo Romero - focolarino from Argentina
- 23 April 2019 Chit Maria Conchita Cirineo - focolarina from Philippines)
- 23 April 2019 Gábor Ivánszky (Scelto) - focolarino from Hungary
- 10 May 2019 Mario Bodega - priest focolarino from Italy
- 14 May 2019 Mariuccia Pastore Bressan - married focolarina from Italy
- 18 May 2019 Klaus Timpe - priest focolarino from Germany
- 25 May 2019 Mario Pennisi - focolarino from Italy
- 02 June 2019 Rita Muccio - focolarina from Mariapoli Romana
- 09 June 2019 Maria Gloria Huille - focolarina from Mariapoli Romana

Living the Gospel: finding joy again

The Risen Jesus invites to go beyond ourselves, our frail insecurities and our borders

Passing the test

You could hear the noise of a fight between two students down the hallway where, waiting to take a test, I was pacing back and forth nervously. I had the idea to go and calm them down, but I held back because I worried that I'd be called and marked as absent. Better to leave that to others... But the shouts kept getting louder, and I could not just be indifferent to my neighbour, which is something important to me. A moment later I ran down to separate the two and have them cool down. Coming back upstairs, after a while I heard my name called. In the study hall I answered all the questions and passed. A passed exam – and I hadn't failed the other one, either.

Antonio – Italy

Technology

My husband is interested in all the latest technology, but some devices leave me feeling hopeless, and I am slow to adapt to what's new. Over time I began to feel inferior, and he would exacerbate it by pointing out what I didn't understand and even making fun of me in front of our children. This ended with me



throwing out my mobile phone and closing myself off in silence. It was my oldest son who explained to his father that something wasn't right and, as an example, he reminded him that I had been to the doctor and he hadn't even asked me how the visit had gone, adding, "If your tech distracts you so much, why did you want a family?" When my husband came to apologise shortly after, I told him we should be grateful for the children we have.

E. d. F., Slovakia

Contributions to the Mariapolis newsletter:

Dear Readers,

This printable Pdf newsletter contains the most important articles published in the "Mariapolis" section of the Focolare Movement's international website (www.focolare.org/mariapoli).

You can download it from the site or receive it by email by activating the link.

*It is a **free service** from the Communications Office.*

We are always grateful to those who wish to continue to support our work financially and in that way contribute to the spreading of the charism of unity.

The editorial staff

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