

MARIAPOLIS

NEWSLETTER OF THE FOCOLARE MOVEMENT

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Dear readers, on December 7th, the day that commemorates Chiara Lubich's consecration to God, the centenary of her birth was launched with the inauguration of a large exhibition in Trent. It was given ample space during the last Link Up which we recommend to those who did not have the opportunity to follow it live (<http://collegamentoch.focolare.org>). And there are two articles about it in this issue of Mariapolis (pages 11 - 13).

"Celebrating to meet": the motto for the centenary wants to underline that Chiara's charism is not a historical fact, but it is alive and at work in all those who are inspired by the spirit of unity. This is testified by every piece of news

that we publish in our media, because they are a realisation, an incarnation and an actualization of Chiara's Ideal today: from the Bishops of different Churches who met in Belfast (pg. 4) to the missionary in the Amazon (pg. 14); from the initiative "Together for Europe" (pg. 16) to the Sophia University Institute (pg. 15).

This motto is also an invitation, indeed an encouragement to all of us, to live in such a way that whoever meets us can meet Chiara today.

*Joachim Schwind
Focolare Communication Office*



Chiara Lubich: the diocesan phase of the Cause of beatification is closed

The diocesan phase of the Cause of Canonisation and Beatification of Chiara Lubich, founder of the Focolare Movement, ended on Sunday 10th November. Over 500 people filled the Cathedral in Frascati (Rome) where the last session of the diocesan inquiry took place.

Participants included Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, the President of the Focolare Maria Voce (Emmaus) and the Co-President Jesús Morán, some relatives of Chiara Lubich, two representatives of the Orthodox Church, several mayors of towns in the Lazio region, priests, lay people, men and women religious, as well as many friends who knew Chiara and the charism of unity of the Focolare.

In front of the altar stood a table on which were 75 boxes containing all the documentation that will be delivered to the Congregation for the Causes of Saints at the Holy See, where all the documents will be further studied and evaluated.

The ceremony was presided over by Rt Revd. Raffaello Martinelli, Bishop of Frascati, who summed up the work done collecting testimonies and material over these last few years saying, “The Holy See and the diocesan process must highlight the heroic nature of the person’s virtues, not simply their goodness, but their heroism. This is what I asked for from the beginning, also in the testimonies. We must demonstrate how Chiara lived the heroism of Christian virtues, that is, the theological virtues (faith, hope and charity), the cardinal virtues (prudence, justice, fortitude, temperance), and a whole series of virtues derived from those”.

In his report, the Episcopal Delegate Msgr. Angelo Amati noted that 166 witnesses were also heard during various journeys, such as those to the Dioceses of Rome, Albano and Fiesole (Italy), Lausanne-Geneva-Fribourg

(Switzerland), Augsburg-Ottmaring and Bamberg-Nuremberg (Germany), Westminster (England), Ghent and Brussels (Belgium) and two letters rogatory: in Bangkok (Thailand) and Ljubljana (Slovenia). “Bishop Amati emphasised that the investigation concerned Chiara’s life, virtues, charism and specific spirituality, together with the theological themes presented such as: unity, Jesus forsaken and Jesus in the midst; on the foundation of the Work of Mary (Focolare Movement) and inter-church and inter-faith contacts. A total of 35,057 pages have been collected, in 102 volumes “which contain various types of material (testimonies, letters, published and unpublished documents, writings, diaries, etc..).

There followed the declaration of the Promoter of Justice, the Revd. Joselito Loteria who, together with the Notary, Patrizia Sabatini and the Episcopal delegate, forms the diocesan tribunal established for the Cause of Chiara Lubich. Then Bishop Martinelli read the decree of closure of the diocesan phase and named as “Bearer” Dr Daniel Tamborini, who will have the task of delivering the documentation to the Holy See.

Then followed the oaths taken by the Bearer, Bishop Martinelli and all the members of the diocesan and postulation tribunal – the Postulator Rev. Silvestre Marques, the Vice-Postulators, Dr Giuseppina Manici and Dr Waldery Hilgeman and the signing of the closing session report.

The most significant moment was the closure and sealing of the last 3 of the 75 boxes containing the 35,000 pages.

“Our only desire now is to offer the Church, through this extensive documentation, the gift that Chiara was for us and for so many people,” said Maria Voce, President of the Focolare Movement, in her address in the Cathedral. In responding to the charism that God

gave her, consistently, day after day, journeying on and tending towards the fullness of Christian life and the perfection of charity, Chiara did her utmost so that this path of Gospel life to be travelled by many, in an ever renewed determination to help those she met to put God first and “become saints together”. Her gaze and her heart, as has now been shown, were moved by a universal love that was able to embrace all people beyond all differences, always striving to fulfil the testament of Jesus: *Ut omnes unum sint*. It is a cause of joy for all of us to know that now the Church will study and evaluate the life and virtues of the Servant of God, our beloved Chiara.

The diocesan process

The diocesan phase of the Cause of Canonisation and Beatification of Chiara Lubich began on December 7th 2013, just over five years after her death on March 14th 2008. On that occasion the petition to start the Cause was officially signed at Castel Gandolfo. The

first testimonies to be heard were the eyewitnesses who knew her from the earliest times of the foundation of the Focolare Movement.

Subsequently, Bishop Raffaello Martinelli consulted the Bishops’ Conference of Lazio on the advisability of starting the Cause, and obtained a positive opinion. The Bishop then established a Commission of three experts in historical and archival matters who had the task of collecting all unpublished material concerning Chiara. Bishop Martinelli then appointed three theologians who examined the published writings. On 29th June 2014, the Holy See granted its *Nulla Osta* to the official opening of the Cause.

On 27 January 2015, the opening ceremony of the diocesan phase took place in Frascati Cathedral, which ended on 10th November 2019. ■

Lorenzo Russo



The 75 boxes



Signature of the minutes by notary Patrizia Sabatini



The closure of the boxes



The last 3 of the 75 boxes are sealed

Northern Ireland welcomes 30 Bishops from different Churches

“In a divided world, united in Christ” was the title of an annual meeting, which for the past 38 years has been bringing together bishops from various Churches. This ecumenical event, from 21st to 25th October, has been termed historic for the island of Ireland.

“Powerful reflections across the ecclesial spectrum on witnessing hope in division. Prophetic ... Holy Spirit breathe!” This tweet from Darren O’Reilly, co-leader of the Koinonia community based in Belfast, gets right to the heart of some exceptional days, between 21st and 25th October in Northern Ireland, for the 38th meeting of Bishops from different Churches, friends of the Focolare Movement. This year’s focus was on sharing reflections and testimonies on the challenge of unity in Christ, in a world as divided as it is today.

These meetings, promoted by the Focolare Movement, offer bishops a space of dialogue and sharing on the spirituality of unity. This year 30 Bishops, belonging to 18 different Churches, from 14 different countries, were welcomed to the cities of Larne and Belfast. As every year, the location was selected for its symbolic meaning, this time for the “peace process”, an experience of commitment towards reconciliation within a divided society.

The participants got to know something of the history and current state of the ecumenical journey in Ireland. They could not but be impressed by the constructive relationships and noteworthy fruits they saw. Bishop Trevor Williams of the Church of Ireland, delivered a well-received presentation of the history of Christianity in Ireland, and afterwards commented, “It was heartening to hear the Bishops’ concern for our ‘unfinished business’ of peace building and their joy at witnessing so many activities undertaken by Christians from different traditions to heal the divide”. The local Catholic Bishop of Down and Connor, Noel Treanor gave a significant

contribution by outlining the ecclesial, social and political panorama.

The Bishops visited significant places in the peace and reconciliation process, such as the East Belfast Methodist Mission, where they were welcomed by pastor Brian Anderson, currently President of the Irish Council of Churches. They participated in liturgical services in Presbyterian, Anglican and Catholic churches. In the Catholic church of St Patrick, in front of a congregation from different Churches, the Bishops witnessed to how they live the New Commandment of Jesus, renewing a “pact” among themselves: a solemn commitment to love the other’s Church as their own. This pact is always one of the highpoints of these meetings.

But it was in the afternoon of 23rd October, that an open session at Larne touched the hearts of many and has been termed “historic”. The Catholic Bishop of Limerick, Brendan Leahy, described it as such, “It was like the experience of the disciples on the road to Emmaus who felt their hearts burning as Jesus was among them and explained and talks with them”. Over one hundred people participated from all over Ireland, from many different Churches (Apostolic Armenian, the Church of Ireland (Anglican), Orthodox - Patriarchate of Antioch, Presbyterian, Catholic, Methodist, Moravian, Lutheran and Syrian Orthodox). The President of the Methodist Church in Ireland was there and a representative of the Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, representatives of the Irish Council of Churches, the Irish Interchurch Committee, the Dublin Council of Churches, as well as different movements and groups.

The participation of Bishops from different Churches highlighted the fruits of the “dialogue of life” which was always encouraged by Chiara Lubich: a dialogue exercised by the people, including its pastors, a peo-





ple united in Christ through the love lived by everyone. For example, the witness of true friendship in Christ and collaboration between the two Archbishops of Armagh, Eamon Martin (Catholic) and Richard Clarke (Anglican), both primates of all Ireland.

This “dialogue of life” finds expression in the commitment to address, in the most varied of ways, the challenges, social and civil wounds of Ireland. Such as “Embrace Northern Ireland” – assisting refugees; the “Four Corners Festival” – promoting encounters and friendship across the geographical and sectarian divides which still affect Belfast; the Dublin Council of Churches involving 14 Churches. Rev Ken Newell, a former Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, described the meeting as a “new Pentecost, where Christians of different Churches from all over the world were one in the Spirit, where the unity of the Church was felt ... for the well-being of the world”. ■

Stefania Tanesini

The Gospel lived

“Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep” (Rom 12:15)

On a cruise trip

I’ve never known my mother to be healthy. She has always been unwell and for decades confined to bed. My father despite his brilliant and successful career, stayed close to her, ensuring she had everything she needed.

One day I was invited on a cruise trip and I accepted immediately, making any number of excuses to myself. On that trip, while my colleague was talking about his family, I realised that I had very little to say about my own, it seemed I almost felt ashamed of the ongoing suffering in my family. However, when he asked about my parents and I started talking about my father’s dedication to my mother, I found I was actually so proud to have a father like this, and I began to understand that suffering is of value. When I returned home, I immediately went to ask forgiveness from my parents, not so much for having left them to go on holiday, but because I had not been able to recognize that they needed me. With that “cruise trip” my life changed. And the last days of my mother’s life became a gift for the whole family.

S.S. – Spain

Asking forgiveness

Early one morning in the kitchen, my wife and I were agitated over unresolved problems. We could see no way out and, as on other occasions, a furious argument was about to explode. I paused just for a mo-

ment and asked myself if all the promises I had made to God to make a new start were valid or had they all gone up in smoke? I went to my wife and, even if I did not find it easy, I asked her for forgiveness. Immediately, she responded, saying that she was the one to blame ... By the time the children arrived in the kitchen, they found not only the breakfast ready, but their parents who were growing with them, striving to transmit to the children the right key to living well.

R.H. – Slovakia

By Stefania Tanesini

(taken from Il Vangelo del Giorno, Città Nuova, year V, n.6, November-December 2019)



Rewriting Chiara's story

From a talk given at a press conference on 18th November by Andrea Riccardi, founder of the Sant'Egidio Community and personal friend of Chiara's. A few days before the official opening of Chiara Lubich's centenary on 7th December, we share part of a speech given at a press conference on 18 November by Andrea Riccardi, founder of the Community of Sant'Egidio. As a personal friend of Chiara's with whom he worked to build pathways for unity among various Movements in the Church, he offered a reflection on Chiara's humanity and historical authenticity, much of which is yet to be discovered.



Time sometimes reduces great figures to “prayer cards” which gather dust and are gradually forgotten. Chiara's heart was full of Holiness but she was much more than a prayer card. She was a real woman, a “volcanic” woman, a native of Trent who was open to the world. Starting from Trent she went all over the world; that was Chiara's story: from Trent to Rome and the world. What is said of her is true, that if you visit some of the remotest parts of the world, even in Africa, not only do you find Chiara's followers, you also feel her presence and her thought.

A hundred years have passed since her birth. A hundred years is a long time. Chiara was born in 1920, the same year as John Paul II, and whenever he saw her he would call her “my contemporary”. Both were influenced by the tragic events of the Second World War. Chiara felt its effects deeply in Trent where her charisma matured – so to speak - in the midst of the Second World War, in a world that was deeply divided and torn by the pain of war.

Chiara is also, in my view, an important figure outside the Church. She was not just a figure within the

Church, even though she was deeply rooted in the Church, in unity with it, but she was always projected outwards to the world. She was not merely a “Sacristy Christian”; she loved and look outwards to the whole world.

Chiara was an historical figure. Twentieth-century Christianity was made up largely of men who left women to engage in a little bit of mysticism or some experience of charity. Instead, Chiara was a woman who made history in the round. Not only mysticism and charity but also politics and a passion for real change in life. This is the person I met.

She had a great capacity for personal relationships and friendship: she had the charisma of friendship, everyone was unique for her. She was a woman who met thousands of people, and yet, for her, no two people were the same. Then she had another great skill: that of communicating a passion. She was a passionate woman, passionate about the unity of the world. Unity is the key to understanding her existence and her quest for peace which is also ecumenism. She was deeply sensitive to ecumenism - more than many experts in ecumenism - and I would like to recall, in this regard, her relationship with Patriarch Athenagoras, about whom I have also written a book. There is also a letter that I published which stated “It is said of Miss Chiara Lubich that because she is a woman and is not a theologian she is too fervent”, but today I would like to say that, precisely because she is not a theologian and is a woman, Chiara understood more than the technicians of ecumenism.

Unity also means dialogue to achieve peace. Chiara wrote, “The children of God are the children of love, they fight with a weapon that is the very life of humankind”. Life is a gift and through the gift of life we struggle to change the world and to change others and achieve this ideal. Chiara was consumed by a passion for the ideal. And this seems to me to be a fundamental point to come back to and reflect on.

Maria Voce mentioned that we are in a time of division. I would add that we are also in a time of small passions. Chiara might be very unpopular today, precisely because the world believes in divisions and lives with its own small passions. But I believe that the year

you are dedicating, that we are dedicating, to remembering, reviving the memory of and meeting Chiara Lubich is also a year that challenges both these little passions and being resigned to a divided world. Chiara wrote: "We hope that the Lord will bring about a new world order. He is the only one who can make humanity one family. Only He can bring out the distinctiveness of all peoples so that, in the splendour of each one being at the service of the others, the one light of life may shine forth. In this way our earthly homeland will be more beautiful and become a foretaste of the eternal homeland".

I think that celebrating this centenary is a service to humanity and to the thought of our time, which lacks vision. Her contemporary Wojtyła wrote "the world suf-

fers, especially for lack of vision". I believe that this world of ours can flourish again with Chiara Lubich's vision. Just a word of warning: we need to be careful when we use the word celebration. Maria rightly prefers to speak of an encounter. It is a demanding encounter and this encounter, dear Maria, must also be history. We must have the courage to rewrite Chiara Lubich's story in her time, to better understand how her action has changed history. I am thinking, for example, of the adventure of sending focolarini to Eastern Europe and how this contributed to the fall of the Berlin wall. Chiara did not choose to seek refuge in the West and be resigned to the wall. And so I am sure that this centenary year, which begins today, will make the person of Chiara grow in a new encounter with our times, and not diminish her. ■

A new biography of Chiara Lubich

Published by Città Nuova and entitled "History and prophecy: Chiara Lubich's way to unity", this book will be presented in preview on November 30 in the Auditorium of the Gemelli Clinic, Rome. At the moment, it is available in Italian only.

The author, Maurizio Gentilini who is an Italian historian, has chosen the title "History and prophecy: Chiara Lubich's way to unity" for his work. This is the latest biography written about the foundress of the Focolare Movement on the eve of the hundredth anniversary of her birth. Translations into English, Spanish and Korean are planned.

For those who live in the Rome area, it will be possible to meet the author on November 30 at 4.20 pm, in the auditorium of the Gemelli Clinic. The book is one of the publications prepared by the Città Nuova Publishing House for Chiara Lubich's centenary year. This begins on December 7 - a symbolic date because on that day in 1943 Chiara consecrated herself to God, thus beginning the adventure of the Focolare Movement.

The volume represents an attempt to reflect upon the biographical journey of the foundress of the Focolare Movement one hundred years after her birth and twelve years after her death. The biographer's aim was to produce a book which would appeal to a wide range of people but would also provide a deeper presentation of individual aspects and major issues related to the person of Chiara and the Focolare - the laity in the Church,



Vatican II, the world, ecumenism and peace. It wants to offer a presentation of her life within the context of the many and complex historical events that she witnessed, thus enriching this aspect of the many editorial works which have already been produced.

The author, who likes to define himself as a "simple baptized person", tries to read the events he describes by making constant reference to sources and by applying a historical-critical method. He understands everything that has happened with the sensitivity of a believer and through the hermeneutical key that finds its synthesis in the relationship between spirituality and action, between history and prophecy. ■

Stefania Tanesini

Migration from the southern shore of the Mediterranean

What is the vision from North Africa of the migration towards Europe phenomenon? How is it possible to make it person centred, thus moving from a purely economic to a human vision of migration? Interview with Pasquale Ferrara, Italian ambassador in Algiers.

According to the UNHCR*, 75,522 migrants landed by sea on the European coasts of Italy, Malta, Cyprus, Spain and Greece from January 1st to October 21st 2019. In addition, 16,322 migrants arrived by land in Greece and Spain making a total of 91,844 people, of whom 9,270 in Italy, 2,738 in Malta, 1,183 in Cyprus, 25,191 in Spain, 53,462 in Greece. This data shows a decreasing trend (in migration) and documents the emergency phases. It is not however enough so that Europe starts a broad and constructive dialogue on the subject: the prospect of the creation of a European system of flow management remains very remote, and in general the analysis at an institutional level does not take into account the perspective of African countries. In Algiers we joined the Italian Ambassador, Pasquale Ferrara:

Mr. Ambassador, what is the vision from North Africa of the migration towards Europe phenomenon?

Seen from Africa, migration is a historical and structural phenomenon, especially intra-African, because the vast majority of migrant and refugee movements take place between African countries: more than 20 million people live in a country other than their country of origin. Migration to Europe is different and people fear an uncontrolled influx. To speak of migration in terms of differences in development is only part of the picture. In Europe, a distinction is often made between political refugees and economic migrants. But often African economic migrants are the result of bad political management in countries, because there is a problem of governance, of appropriation of resources by oligarchies, of social inclusion. Therefore, in some way, economic migrants too can qualify as political refugees. Over and above the issue of illegal migration, as far as North Af-

rica is concerned, it would be necessary to restore in the Mediterranean the circular mobility of populations that has always been observed in history.

It means, for example, the possibility of coming to Europe for a period of study or work, and then returning to the country of origin. At the moment, these movements are subject to the granting of a visa, but it is very difficult to obtain one because of the many and necessary controls. For many people it is challenging, so the temptation of those who receive visas, even if they are well-intentioned, is often not to return to their country of origin. The visa must be maintained, but with a view to encouraging circular mobility, it is necessary to think of a more structured system. Then there is another factor that stimulates migration, and that is the difference in the quality of services that a society offers: health services and social security services in general, whose lack of availability and quality also influences, together with other factors such as endemic violence, the sense of security, or school services, so that even those who are not in a situation of absolute poverty try to come to Europe to give a better education to their children.

We should therefore invest more in the training of the ruling classes, professionals and educators. In Algiers, even though the numbers are small, we are trying to do so, increasing the scholarships for young Algerians who go to Italy to study music, art, restoration, as an investment for their professional future.

Is the West responsible for the impoverishment of African countries?

I would be very cautious. This is a narrative that is useful for certain Afro-African oligarchies to dismiss their responsibilities when faced with a governance that is dubious in its legitimacy and in its results. The colonial period has marked Africa a lot and the past responsibilities of the West are ascertained, but at least 50 years have passed since decolonization and it is difficult to at-



tribute to the West the problems of today's African societies. The quality of governance is of great importance. Rather today in Africa there is a strong presence of China with programs related to natural and mineral resources in almost all countries. China considers Africa a large market, but the exchange is asymmetrical in favour of Beijing. However, to compensate for this imbalance, China carries out infrastructural works, stadiums, theatres and cultural centres for billions of dollars at its own expense.

Europe is taking uncertain steps in managing this phenomenon. There is a lack of Community policies and it seems that the principle of shared responsibility does not warm the hearts of Europe.

The choice of solidarity cannot depend on the good will and changing direction of individual governments. The migration issue must be dealt with exclusively by the European Union as such, as is the case with the trade policies for which the EU states have given Brussels exclusive responsibility for negotiating agreements with non-European countries. Today, however, on the one hand, because of a matter of national sovereignty, the states want to retain control over migration and borders, and that is understandable. On the other hand, they accuse Europe of inaction, but they do not give it the mechanisms it needs to operate effectively. But it seems to me unlikely that there will be progress in this area, given the resistance that this issue encounters in relation to internal policies.

It has long been said that it is necessary to formally establish a collaboration with the countries of North Africa, but also with those of transit. Good intentions but few concrete facts...

To move on to concrete facts, we must take note of the reality, of the fact that the African countries, especially those of the North we consider transit countries, which are themselves countries of destination for emigration. Egypt is home to over 200,000 refugees on its territory, while in 2018 just over 120,000 people arrived in the whole of Europe. The few hundred illegal migrants who arrive from Algeria are all Algerians, not sub-Saharan migrants who pass through Algeria, because often these migrants stay here. Moreover, these countries do not accept programs aimed at creating "hotspots" for sub-Saharan migrants. Here the Turkish model does not work, where the European Union has given 6 billion euros to manage camps where more than 4 million Syrian and other refugees are accommodated. The operation worked in Turkey because there was war in Syria and because of Turkey's strategic inter-



ests. In Africa the phenomena are very different and other ways have to be found.

What forms of collaboration could work?

We don't need asymmetrical collaborations but equal partnerships. We must bear in mind that it is not only we Europeans who have a migration problem, and so it is necessary to respect these countries with their internal needs, including those of migration. Only then can we try together to manage the phenomenon. For example, there are already cooperation agreements between Italy and Algeria dating back to 2000 and 2009 that work well.

What do they include?

The joint management of the migratory phenomenon in terms of the fight against exploitation and trafficking of human beings, the trans-national criminality that uses the phenomenon to finance itself, the danger of terrorist infiltration. There are also provisions for the agreed, orderly and dignified repatriation of illegal migrants.

There is talk that Western countries must support African countries in order to create better living conditions thus discouraging migration. How viable is this?

Under the current conditions of the international economy and political culture, I see it as impractical and, all in all, ineffective. Firstly, we are already talking about a billion Africans: no European or world 'Marshall Plan' could address such demographic dimensions. Among other things, Africa is very diverse, there are countries in advanced development conditions: Ghana has a higher rate of technological innovation than several developed countries; Angola is a very resource-rich country that is trying to reorganise its economic structure in a more participatory way. We have leaders, such as the new Nobel Peace Prize winner, the Prime Minister of Ethiopia, Abiy Ahmed Ali, who is 42 years old and looks to the new generations. He has already planted 350 million trees in a worldwide reforestation program called the Tril- ➡

lion Tree Campaign. Uganda is experiencing a period of strong development. The problem is rather the dramatic and unfair economic disparities, and here the West can intervene by helping to improve the governance of these countries, so that it is more inclusive and participatory. But let us remember that these are the same problems of socio-economic polarization that we have in Europe: unfortunately, we cannot give many lessons in this field.

Reflecting on the migratory phenomenon at an institutional level, the economic dimension is at the forefront, while the human dimension is neglected. What does it mean to put human person at the centre of the migratory problem?

Behind every migrant there is a story, a family, a rough journey, the difficulty of obtaining money and perhaps debts with criminal organizations. Of course we cannot allow illegal immigration because everything must be

done in accordance with the law, but giving value to the human dimension means taking into account this past and not seeing these people as numbers that arrive on board boats or by land. I was deeply struck by the story of that 14-year-old boy from Mali, found at the bottom of the sea with a school report with excellent marks sewn into his jacket. That is a story that leaves us speechless. And behind it is a family tragedy, a human tragedy, a torn social fabric. I recommend Cristina Cattaneo's beautiful book, "Shipwrecked without a face. Giving a name to the victims of the Mediterranean". But let's not forget also the stories of our Navy - in particular that of the commander Catia Pellegrino - who saved thousands of shipwrecked people. People, faces, real events. ■

Edited by Claudia Di Lorenzi

The Gospel lived

"Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep" (Rom 12:15)

Give and there will be gifts for you

I had recently offered a homeless man the bottle of water that I used to fill every day and take with me in the car. One day, feeling thirsty, I stopped to take a drink at a fountain but it was proving very difficult: a bottle would have made things much easier but of course I had given mine away. Just as I was leaving, an elderly gentleman who was putting some bottles in his car asked me if I was thirsty. "Yes but as you can see, I can't drink from this fountain". At that moment, wanting to make me happy, he gave me one of the bottles he had just put in his car. This filled with joy because it reminded me of the phrase "give and there will be gifts for you".

R.A. - Albania

The strength of a friendship

One day as I speaking to a friend from the parish, I was surprised to hear her say I should give more time to my family. What would she know? She's not even married was my first reaction but her words turned around in my mind. I started to think about my relationship with my four children. Everything seemed to be fine but... something wasn't quite right with M. One day he was listening to music in his room, so I decided to go in with some excuse and asked him what



he thought about a certain matter. After a while he just broke down in tears. It was so unusual because he was normally such a strong, confident lad but after a while he started to tell me what was wrong; how he had been badly let down by his girlfriend and had come close to committing suicide. I was completely shocked. My friend had opened my eyes, and I decided I needed to pay the same "attention" to my other children. I had always thought I was the perfect mother. I had always taken care of everything but something was missing: the love of the present moment; that love that is ready for the unexpected.

F.G. - Philippines

by Stefania Tanesini

(taken from Il Vangelo del Giorno, Città Nuova, year V, n.6, November-December 2019)



Centenary: “Chiara Lubich city world” exhibition inaugurated

Celebrations marking the 100th anniversary of the Focolare founder’s birth were inaugurated in Trent. The “Seal of St. Wenceslas” was awarded to Maria Voce by the autonomous Province of Trent.

“Chiara Lubich city world” is the title of the exhibition that was inaugurated on December 7, at the “Tunnels Gallery”, Trent. This event opened the centenary celebrations that mark the 100th anniversary of the Focolare founder’s birth. This exhibition is under the patronage of the President of the Italian Republic and is being promoted by the Trentino Historical Museum Foundation in collaboration with the Chiara Lubich Centre.

Giuseppe Ferrandi, the Director of the Historical Museum Foundation introduced the speeches delivered during the inauguration ceremony. In these speeches, Chiara Lubich emerged as a figure with a very broad-minded personality, deeply rooted in the history, culture and traditions of the Trentino region, endowed with a charisma, through which she spoke a universal language and crossed every geographical and cultural border to promote her message of peace and brotherhood. The exhibition offers an engaging and interactive journey, which helps the visitor to get to know Chiara Lubich, while promoting a commitment towards those values that marked her life.

During this celebration, the Province of Trent awarded the “Seal of St. Wenceslas” to Maria Voce, President of the Focolare Movement. It was stated that Trent wanted to confer this award to the Focolare President “for her ability and tireless commitment to shed light on the values of unity and peace”. Maria Voce answered: “I am truly grateful and moved by this recognition. And as it accentuates the values of Chiara Lubich and the Focolare Movement, I feel that it is for the whole Movement”.

“Two words come to mind when I think of Chiara Lubich: charisma and prophecy”. Giorgio Postal, President of the Trentino Historical Museum Foundation said these words during the inauguration of the exhibition. And he continued: “So, questioning ourselves about Chiara and placing her in history becomes a way to face the challenges we encounter both as a society and as individuals”.

Maurizio Fugatti, President of the Province of Trent said: “We feel proud to be part of this journey, which provides us with the opportunity to get to know and understand deeper the great message of Chiara Lubich, an exceptional woman from Trent, who managed to give her remarkable message of peace and unity to the whole world”

Mgr. Lauro Tisi, Archbishop of Trent, invited everyone, especially the Focolare Movement, to “make the God of Chiara known” so as to contribute towards a complete change in the narration of God. During this year, we are all invited to make known “this God who irrevocably protects all”. “From this vision of God love”, he concluded, “springs a positive vision of creation, of nature, of man and of the body”. This invitation was immediately accepted by Jesús Morán, the Co-President of the Focolare, who recalled that the motto of the Centenary is “Celebrate to meet” Chiara Lubich, a woman who “lived unity at 360° and gave us the navigation chart for the third millennium”.

“This centenary will be an extraordinary opportunity to discover Chiara in so many ways”, said Alessandro Andreatta, the Mayor of Trent. “She was a woman of encounter, of dialogue, of unity, of faith, of service, of hope. She was at the heart of the Church and of humanity”.



Lorenzo Dellai, former Mayor of Trent, who gave Chiara Lubich the seal of the city in 1995, recalled how she urged the people of Trent to live up to the spirit of this city. “I think that today there is an ever-increasing need for this charism, this prophecy”.

Senator Stanislao Di Piazza, under-secretary of State in the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies, delivered the message in the name of the Italian Government. “Chiara was a person who had a particular love for Italy”, he said, while he recalled her meetings with politicians from all parties to promote the value of fraternity, so that “a new political model could be created”.

Messages were also delivered by the various representatives of similar exhibitions that will be set up during the year in New York, Mexico City, Sydney, Mumbai, São Paulo, Jerusalem, Algiers and Nairobi. This project is under the patronage of the Council of Europe. Although these exhibitions will be similar to the one in Trent, yet each will have its own particular characteristic: for the one in São Paulo it will be the Economy of Communion project launched by Chiara Lubich in Brazil; the one in Sydney will project the aspect of a multicultural land; Jerusalem, a city that maybe more than any other needs peace and brotherhood.

The one in India was represented by the message of Stefania Constanza, the Italian consul in Mumbai.

Among those present for the inauguration, there were Veronica Cimino, vice-mayor of Rocca di Papa (Rome); Francesca Franceschi, town councillor of Primiero San Martino di Castrozza; Alba Sgariglia and Joao Manoel Motta, co-responsible for the Chiara Lubich Centre and the curators of the exhibition Giuliano Ruzzier, Anna Maria Rossi and Maurizio Gentilini, the author of the recent biography of the Focolare founder. Numerous relatives of Chiara Lubich were also present. ■

Anna Lisa Innocenti

The exhibition at the “Tunnels Gallery” will be open till December 7, 2020 (Tuesday to Sunday, from 09:00 to 18:00). Translations in the main European languages are available. Admission is free.

Besides the three sections of the exhibition set up in the “Tunnels Gallery”, there is another section that was inaugurated on December 8, 2019. This section has been set up in Palazzo Scopoli, in Tonadico, in the mayorship of Primiero San Martino di Castrozza (Tn). It is dedicated to the years 1949-1959: from Chiara Lubich’s profound spiritual experience lived in Primiero during the summer of 1949 to the summer Mariapolis that took place there until 1959.



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The story of a decade of light

Inauguration of the exhibition "Chiara Lubich World City" in Tonadico di Primiero

"Chiara cannot be understood without situating her in the context in which she is lived". With these words, Jesús Morán, co-president of the Focolare Movement on Sunday, December 8th, concluded the speeches of the inaugural ceremony of the exhibition dedicated to Chiara Lubich which opened at Palazzo Scopoli in Tonadico di Primiero the day after that of Trento. "During the war Chiara dedicated herself to her city, Trento, but it was in Primiero, in 1949, that God gave her the key to understanding what she was called to do. Chiara found the light here, in the mountains, but it is necessary to go to Trento and to every city to understand the consequences of her charism. This is the deep bond between the two exhibitions, where Tonadico's is not an appendix to Trento's, but the story of a decade of light.

The gratitude of the Primiero valley was expressed in different tones by the Councillor for Culture Francesca Franceschi ("Primiero represents the origin, the retreat where Chiara found answers to her questions"), by the Deputy Mayor Paolo Secco ("Our task is not only to keep alive the memory, but to be a community that responds to the ideal inspirations that moved Chiara"), by the President of the Primiero Community, Roberto Pradel ("Chiara dedicated herself to building relationships between people: may the seed she sowed bear fruit").

Giuseppe Ferrandi, Director of the Fondazione Museo Storico del Trentino, illustrated the deeper meaning of the two exhibitions: "For the first time our Foundation has created an exhibition dedicated to someone: the person of Chiara has to be dealt with by not only Trento but also others. Trentino, which can claim her

birth, must discover the dimension of strong attachment to traditions alive in Chiara, the result of relationships, but without stopping at them to open up to the world in order not to be sterile. Who better than Chiara Lubich can guarantee us this capacity for relationships that the world needs today?

Alba Sgariglia, co-responsible for the Chiara Lubich Centre, expressed the gratitude of the whole Movement to the Foundation: "We worked in tandem for this historical stage. From here, from these mountains, Chiara projected herself towards the whole of humanity: this is the mission that she understood here.

Annamaria Rossi and Giuliano Ruzzier, curators of the exhibition with Maurizio Gentilini, underlined its characteristics: large images, quotations and brief captions flow along the walls of Palazzo Scopoli, right in front of that chalet where Chiara and some of her first companions went to rest in the summer of 1949.

On the ground floor of the palace, which preserves the detachments of the frescoes from the chapel of San Vittore, there are some writings and essential memories of that summer and videos of the first Mariapolis, the summer holidays, which until 1959, year after year, were enriched with people of different vocations, cultures and backgrounds. The witness of the "little towns" of the Movement in the world, the permanent Mariapolis, in which today, as in the experience of Primiero, unity is possible - it is experienced and witnessed to. ■

Paolo Crepaz



In the Amazon love is my compass

An interview with Brother Gino Alberati who has been a missionary in the Amazonian sub-continent since 1970.

Now that the media spotlight upon the green lung of the earth has faded because the forest fires have been extinguished and the Catholic Church's Synod on the Amazon has produced its final document, we feel it is important to continue to publicise news about the people who live in the Amazon and contribute to its development every day.

There is a great risk that we could regard this piece of land as something from an exotic postcard and very distant from the life of our big cities. It is one of the most extensive multi-cultural workshops on the planet. This aspect of the area certainly makes less of a stir than the environmental issues with which it is associated but respect for this fact is equally central to the survival of its population. For this reason, taking up the cultural challenge in the Amazon and supporting human education and training is of vital importance.

Its population also includes several Focolare communities, families, children and members of religious communities such as Brother Gino, as everyone calls him. Fr. Gino Alberati is an Italian Capuchin missionary who has lived and worked in the Amazon since 1970, serving dozens of communities on the Solimões River, on the Brazilian border with Colombia and Peru. He travels around the area in a boat he received from charity and which he himself maintains. It enables him to celebrate Mass and bring the word of God to communities spread over a vast area; it also allows him to save lives because the nearest doctor is often several days' travel away.

He is difficult to reach and we could only interview him via Whatsapp. Brother Gino told us about preparing for his missionary work by spending entire days spent at

the San Giovanni hospital in Rome. "For nine months I used to visit the laboratories and observed what was happening in operating theatres; I did so to learn something about medicine, because I knew that in the mission for which I was destined there would be no health care facilities and I would have to improvise as a doctor. I was 29 when I arrived in the Amazon and I didn't care about the distances or the precarious means of transport I used," explained Gino, "my compass was love. In these years I have done just about everything and now I follow a parish that covers a territory 400 km long beside the Amazon and Ica Rivers."

When we ask him what people live on, he replied that the river is their life. "On the river they travel and fish and the water fertilizes the lower lands. Currently, I follow 40 communities in addition to the parish in the city of Santo Antonio do Içá. I am also the councillor for public health in the town. I report on the health needs of the communities I visit to the municipal council. We have not experienced the drama of the fires close up because, in this area, we are far from the places of great interest; nevertheless, the decrease in the forest area is there for all to see. The population also includes Indians from the Ticunas ethnic group; there are about 45,000 of them and they live on agriculture, hunting and fishing. We work hard to give them a basic human, cultural and spiritual education. We have recently given Children's Bibles in the Ticuna language to 200 leaders from 24 different communities."

Brother Gino insisted on the fundamental role of the Indians in the conservation of the planet: "Many efforts have been made to combat the risk of pollution, such as the use of hydrogen engines for transport, but, despite this, many of the "great" people in the world see only the 'god of money' and want to take the lands away from the natives to extract minerals and oil. The lifestyle of the In-

dians follows the rhythm of nature; they take from the earth only the essentials, they work small plots of land and for this they do not need large deforestation.”

When we asked him what is the most precious thing that the men and women in the Amazon need apart

from having their material needs satisfied, he replied that it certainly is love, “the mutual love that leads to brotherhood”, capable of transforming people and territories everywhere. ■

Stefania Tanesini

The Academic Community from the Sophia University Institute in audience with Pope Francis

Pope Francis' words to the university institute: "I leave you with three key ideas: wisdom, the pact you make together and going out to others. I ask you to continue your journey with joy, vision and decision."

“I am happy with the road you have covered in twelve years since your life began. Push on! The journey has just begun!” These were Pope Francis’ opening words when he greeted the academic community of the Sophia University Institute today in a private audience. “In the path that lies before you, there is no shortage of reference points: there is the charisma of unity from which your University was born and there are also the points that I outlined in the Apostolic Constitution *Veritatis Gaudium* which your academic and formative project wants to reflect. Your participation in the preparation and development of the Global Educational Pact is evidence of this.”

The audience, which took place on 14 November in the Consistory Hall was attended by Cardinal Giuseppe Betori, Metropolitan Archbishop of Florence and Grand Chancellor of the Institute, Dr. Emmaus Maria Voce, Vice Chancellor of the Institute and President of the Focolare Movement, the entire academic community of the Sophia University Institute, a representative of the working group on “Trinitarian Anthropology” of CELAM and the teachers of the future local headquarters of “Sophia” in Latin America and the Caribbean.

“I leave you with three key ideas: wisdom, the pact you make together and going out to others. I ask you to continue your journey with joy, vision and decision.”

Wisdom, explained the Holy Father, enlightens “all men and women”, with whom “we are called to walk together”. He continued by saying that the pact is the “keystone of creation and history - the pact between God and humankind, the pact between generations, the pact between peoples and cultures, the pact - in school - between teachers and learners and also pa-

rents, the pact between man, animals, plants and even the inanimate realities that make our common home beautiful and colourful.” Pope Francis urged the academic community of Sophia to live this pact to “open the paths of the future to a new civilization that embraces humanity and the cosmos in universal brotherhood.” Finally, he said that it is important to “go out.” “We must learn with our hearts, minds and hands to ‘leave the camp’ - as the Letter to the Hebrews says (13:13) - to meet the face of God in the face of every brother and every sister.

At the end of the audience, Piero Coda, Dean of the Institute, commented: “We are grateful to Pope Francis who was appreciative of the fact that our students come from five continents and also from different religious traditions, and our commitment not to look from the balcony, so to speak, but to put our “hands in the dough” and walk as protagonists on new roads of brotherhood.

The audience with Pope Francis comes only a few days after the inauguration ceremony for the academic year 2019-20 which took place on 11 November 2019. This included the conferral of the doctorate honoris causa in the Culture of Unity to the philosopher and theologian Professor Juan Carlos Scannone S.J., exponent of the “theology of the people” and professor to the young seminarian Jorge Mario Bergoglio. ■

Tamara Pastorelli





Twenty years being “Together for Europe”

An important anniversary was celebrated at the ecumenical little town of Ottmaring, then sealed with a ceremony in the city of Augsburg, Germany. There was a renewed commitment to be ambassadors of reconciliation and signs of hope in the various churches and society.

More than 300 members of the “Together for Europe” network of 55 communities and movements from 25 countries came together 7–9 November at the Focolare’s international centre of Ottmaring and in the city of Augsburg, Germany. It marked 20 years of life for Together for Europe.

It was 31 October 1999 when, for the solemn signing of the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification at St. Anne’s Church in Augsburg, the leaders of a number of Christian groups from different denominations came together at Ottmaring. They fully realised their shared responsibility for ecumenical coexistence in Europe.

After representatives from the Lutheran World Federation and the Catholic Church declared in a shared document that the centuries-old doctrinal condemnations were invalid, those representing the charisms of various confessions decided to get to know one another better and work to reconcile the diversity in their churches, society and politics.

Through their commitment they brought about “Together for Europe.” It was a small seedling that today has become a European project, and more than 300 communities, movements and ministries have joined.

“So many countries have never been represented at our annual meeting as have this time”, affirmed one of the representatives from friends of the Together for Europe network who attended this year. Since it began 20 years ago, there have been many profound

relationships born between people of different countries. “The representatives of the churches and politicians appreciate our contribution.”

The high regard that Together for Europe enjoys in Augsburg also supports this. The city itself, in fact, invited the European representatives attending the meeting to a reception in the Golden Hall of the Augsburg Town Hall.

Mayor Stefan Kiefer, greeting them in his speech, emphasised the various points in common and shared objectives that the network has with the city. For its jubilee year, the city made the town available for the meeting, expressing its appreciation and gratitude. At the same time, the presence of civil and religious authorities demonstrated that the network has an important function of being a bridge in the Church and society. “We must become active citizens, taking courage to defend the weak and raise our voices for justice”, invited Czech Senator Pavel Fischer.

The moving conclusion of an ecumenical prayer in the Lutheran Church of St. Anne and a procession of light on the square in front of the church reminded many of the peaceful forces that 30 years prior on the same day had brought about the fall of the Berlin Wall and a new era of a united Europe.

Gerhard Proß, who moderated the event, saw a “golden thread” linking these events, and a mission for the future. “In times of separating ourselves and tendencies to draw boundaries, we want to be a prophetic sign with Together for Europe of a credible coexistence and collaboration in Europe.” ■

Andrea Fleming

A social action to promote peace in Uruguay

During the past 15 years, the Focolare Centre "Nueva Vida" has carried out a very important social action, that supports young people and their families in an area on the outskirts of Montevideo, Uruguay. Luis Mayobre, director of this centre has been interviewed about this activity.

“The youth are the driving force of ‘Nueva Vida’. This social action challenges and stimulates us not to lose sight of what is most important: mutual love, which we want as the only law for our centre”. Luis Mayobre said these words at the beginning of the interview. He has been the director of Nueva Vida almost since it was started in 2004, when the Archbishop of Montevideo asked the Focolare Movement to continue a social activity started by a religious woman in one of the suburban districts of the Uruguayan capital. This is how Nueva Vida began. Its objectives are inscribed in its name: it wants to instil hope of a new beginning in all those who go to the centre, which forms part of the CO.DE.SO Association (Communion for Social Development established by the Focolari) and collaborates with the INAU, the institute for children and adolescents, a public entity that manages policies for Uruguayan children and adolescents.

Mayobre related: “Violence marked the year 2018 and the inhabitants of Barrio Borro lived in anguish and fear. Their life was at risk due to clashes between two families of rival drug traffickers. Shootings took place day and night, and educators and staff at Nueva Vida, together with the rest of the people, had to face this terrible situation. As families were seeking for shelter, the number of people at our centre almost doubled itself. Many were robbed and their poor homes were occupied by drug traffickers”.

How did you manage to cope with such a hostile situation?

“We reported the situation to the Minister of Internal Affairs, but we had to wait for a reply, which took quite

some time to arrive. So we offered shelter and support to some of these families. Later we obtained state services for them and they were given new homes. One of these families - two of their children participate in our youth centre activities - was being threatened with death. Our coordinator contacted another daughter of this family to ask for help, even though she knew there were family problems between the daughter and her parents. Luckily things turned out well; the daughter provided her parents with a piece of land where a new, more dignified and safe house could be built.

I also remember a case of family violence. When our team came to know about the situation, the intervention of the local authorities was sought to safeguard the children and their mother. Regardless of threats and insults, we carried on with our work to help the family regain its peace and security”.

Who are the ones that come to the Centre and what services do you offer?

“Our three projects are: the CAIF, the Children’s Club and the Youth Centre. Living in an atmosphere of violence made us decide to be builders of peace, hope and, above all, joy, so as to overcome hatred and fear. We have tried to create a pleasant environment where 48 children between the ages of 2 and 3 years and 60 younger ones - from 0 to 2 years - participate in various workshops with their mothers. We also organize educational excursions to create spaces of beauty and harmony. This proved to be a very positive experience in which even the so-called “rival” families participated and relationships improved considerably.

In our Children’s Club we take care of 62 school-age children, ranging from the age of 6 to 11 years. We are committed to fight early school leaving and we work to ensure that everyone moves on to the upper classes. In 2004, 36% of the children were early school leavers,



now there are only 5%. We encourage children to take part in art and music workshops and in other recreational activities to help them become aware and develop the cultural values of coexistence and attention to others, and also to learn the 'culture of giving'. We educate to abolish violence from all forms of behaviour. Swimming lessons and outings help to promote education in health care and hygiene.

52 young people, between the ages of 12 and 18, come to our Youth Centre. During this year, about 95% of them have participated in after-school activities. We have been organizing these activities and considering them as part of our programme since the very beginning. 6 of these young people attend high school: quite a big success when you consider that most of the children attend classes only during the first school years. We also organize complementary workshops, such as fabric processing, carpentry and communication, to

enhance their formation. All these activities are prepared by Focolare Members on a voluntary basis."

What kind of relationship is there between the centre and other associations in this area?

"Over the years, a network of all institutions that work in Borro has been set up; we collaborate with all of them and we support one another. We also participate in the life of Our Lady of Guadalupe parish, which is the parish in our area. The parish priest and another priest come to visit us once a week.

There are also volunteers from other countries who come to give a helping hand. Elisa Ranzi and Matteo Allione, the two Italians, who visited us this year, left an indelible impression. We thank heartily all those who come to help us; their collaboration is of great importance to us. Every help, no matter how small, is very precious to us". ■

Stefania Tanesini

Words of Life for 2020

- January: "They showed us unusual kindness" (cf. Acts 28:2).
- February: Immediately the father of the child cried out, "I believe; help my unbelief!" (Mk 9:24).
- March: In everything do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets. (Mt 7:12).
- April: "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe." (Jn 20:29).
- May: "You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you." (Jn 15:3).
- June: "Whoever welcomes you welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me." (Mt 10:40).
- July: "For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother" (Mt 12:50).
- August: "Who will separate us from the love of Christ?" (Rm 8:35).
- September: "Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap" (Lk 6:38).
- October: "For all who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted." (Lk 14:11).
- November: "Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted" (Mt 5:4).
- December: "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?" (Psalm 27:1).

A true captain

A final tribute to Albert Dreston. On 30 August 2019, one of the last sunlit days of summer, Albert Dreston left us. The focolarino, professor and theologian also played a lead role – for generations – with football at Loppiano, the Focolare’s international centre in Italy where he lived for 52 years.



Even during his earliest years, life was never simple. He was born in Rhineland in 1939, and at the age of six he lost his father in World War II. Despite the pain and amid the tears, he made his first great discovery of God. “Suddenly,” he recalled, “there was a strength and a voice inside me, as if God were telling me, ‘You are no orphan; I am your father.’ From that moment on, I never missed my father, and I never ever felt alone again.”

At a young age he had to have a lung removed, and it seemed he would not live for long. As often happens, however, what someone who could lose everything does is to take a step toward a great “treasure” they have discovered.

That is exactly what happened in 1957 at Münster when, in a meeting with some focolarini, he was touched by “Jesus in the midst, the fruit of reciprocal love”. His life started upon the path of the Ideal, which would help him live through the tribulations and physical difficulties with a new awareness.

The next year Fr. Foresi and Chiara agreed that he would start his life in focolare. A few years later, it would be Fr. Foresi yet again to tell him that, once he had finished his Old Testament studies, he would go to teach at Loppiano, the first permanent Mariapolis.

It was in 1967, when Albert was 28 and his physical condition had improved, that sports at Loppiano became an essential way to get to know, share and relate to others. In that framework, a new era started for him – he became the young trainer among young people from all over the world. Throughout his years of service at Loppiano, he never stopped being a resource for others. He taught both in class and on the field, with the dedication of a football enthusiast, the intelligence of a teacher and the love of a focolarino.

You could not really say that he was a star player of the beautiful game, a great goal scorer. He was more than that. In recent years, having seen 75 springs, it

could happen that he did not feel up to playing. Yet you would find him there, 30 minutes early, to gather the players and set up the same field that in a few months will be named after him.

He was truly much more than that, a champion of perfect timing – in a single game he could be groundskeeper, coach, referee, linesman, sweeper and overall sports director. There was always a team to build, and he always managed to select a pair of good defenders, whether they be African, Brazilian or Asian.

Albert Dreston was Loppiano football. He was a true captain, a teammate to everyone, even when on the opposing team. He was a genuine legend.

To speak his name today is to open the great book of the Focolare Movement, which is rich with wonderful people and precious lives. It is to dwell on a chapter of someone who, in quite different ways, knew how to give of their time to help others.

In recent years the question came up of whether he could keep playing, whether it was the time to have a farewell game, hang up his boots and close his story in style. Someone took courage and whispered it to him respectfully. Yet all of us who tried were kidding ourselves.

Albert, headstrong with German consistency, responded, “I will go straight from the sports field to potter’s field.” And so it was, kind of. He bid us farewell on a Friday. As usual, this was perfect timing: for the last call at the match vigil, to form teams and continue without delay... on the Elysian fields.

Enjoy football heaven, captain... and thank you! ■

Andrea Cardinali



The Gospel lived

Washing dishes

In the parish, we organised a party for homeless people and gave them a hot meal. At the end, there was a lot of rubbish to clear up and pots and pans and dishes to wash. In the kitchen, the parish priest had already begun to tackle the washing-up and was, obviously, happy with the evening. I was struck when he said, "Everything is prayer" and I asked him: "Doing the dishes too?" He said, "Your greatest treasure is understanding that everything has immense value because behind that pot you are washing there is a neighbour who needs you." From then onwards, my heavy work as a bricklayer, my children who needed to be taken to the nursery and even the light to repair ... everything became an opportunity for me to go beyond the action itself and transform it into something sacred.

G.F. – Italy

Members of the Movement who have concluded their earthly life:

20 October 2019 Brian Mills - married focolarino from Australia
23 October 2019 Bruno Beggiano - priest focolarino from Italy
3 November 2019 José Adolfo Monteiro - married focolarino from Brazil
6 November 2019 Aurelio Soto Duque - focolarino from Colombia
8 November 2019 Bruno Roscioli - permanent deacon focolarino from Italy
11 November 2019 Egeo Marsili - married focolarino from Italy
13 November 2019 Linette Geisseler - focolarina from Switzerland
14 November 2019 Mariele Quartana - married focolarina of the Roman Mariapolis (Italy)
19 Nov. 2019 Claude Gamble - french focolarino at the Roman Mariapolis
22 Nov. 2019 Maria del Rosario (Charito) Vindel - focolarina from Spain
25 November 2019 Filippo Casale - focolarino from Italy
27 November 2019 Gian Piero Marongiu - married focolarino from Italy
28 November 2019 Domenico Panetta - focolarino priest from Italy
28 November 2019 Giacomino Demartis - married focolarino from Italy
8 December 2019 John Maria Doherty - priest focolarino from Scotland
8 December 2019 Renzo Puccetti - focolarino from Loppiano (Italy)

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