

Press release – 2nd February 2018

## **Pope Francis will go to Loppiano**

*The Focolare's joyful response in the words of its President, Maria Voce*

The Focolare Movement has received the surprising news of Pope Francis's visit to Loppiano, a little town of the Movement, scheduled for 10<sup>th</sup> May 2018. Focolare President, Maria Voce, will receive the Pope, together with the local Ordinary, Rt Rev. Mario Meini, Bishop of Fiesole.

Maria Voce's immediate response was, "This surprising news has given me deep joy. It is a great honour for the Focolare Movement to welcome a Pope into our midst, in one of our little towns. Above all, it prompts us to intensify our commitment to live love and unity, being rooted in the Gospel. All we want is that the Pope should find this breath of Gospel life on his arrival at Loppiano. Now that the news is spreading to the Movement's communities, this joy and commitment will be shared all over the world".

Loppiano is the first of the Focolare's little towns, established in 1964 on the Tuscan hills not far from Florence. Currently, there are 850 residents: men and women, families, young people and children, priests and religious from 65 countries and all 5 continents. More than half live there permanently while others are attending one of the 12 international schools during which they spend 6-18 months at Loppiano. This multi-national and multi-cultural population has made its own the *law* of mutual love. This makes Loppiano become a *workshop* of shared living among people of different ages, backgrounds, traditions, cultures and religious faiths.

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