

Press Release – 25 May, 2021

## **CHRISTIAN UNITY TODAY: "LOVE ONE ANOTHER AS I HAVE LOVED YOU"**

### ***An international online conference 28-29 May 2021 - 1.30 p.m. - 5 p.m. (Italian time)***

*Sixty years of dialogue between members of many Churches contributed by the Focolare Movement to promote Christian unity and generate openness, justice and peace among communities and peoples. The "dialogue of life", which springs from proximity and communion among Christians of different Churches will be discussed in depth during this conference.*

#### **The main speakers will be:**

**Card. Kurt Koch**, President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity(Vatican);

**Margaret Karram**, President of the Focolare Movement;

**Rev. Prof. Dr. Ioan Sauca**, Acting General of the World Council of Churches(Switzerland);

**Prof. Dr. Piero Coda**, Sophia University Institute(Italy);

**Prof. Dr. Stefan Tobler**, Sibiu University(Romania);

**Prof. Dr. Mervat Kelly**, Pontifical Lateran University (Italy);

**Mons. Juan Usma**, Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity (Vatican);

**Pastor Giovanni Traettino**, Founder of the evangelical church of reconciliation (Italy);

**Pastor Joe Tosini**, Founder of John 17 Movement (USA);

**Rev. Dr. Jesùs Moran**, Copresident of the Focolare Movement.

"Chiara Lubich's focus on the spirituality of unity made a great impact on the ecumenical movement and contributed significantly to nourish authentic relationships between different Churches and Christian traditions". Olaf Fykse Tveit, former Secretary General of the Ecumenical Council of Churches, expressed himself through these words. There are thousands of Christians who identify with Chiara Lubich's charism and the supremacy of the gospel words "May they all be one"(Jn 17:21), Jesus' prayer to the Father. "Unity" is the key word of the Focolare Charism and also of the path that leads to dialogue, a path that does not annul diversity, but acknowledges its richness.

A conference, entitled "Love one another as I have loved you"(Jn 15:13), promoted by the Focolare Movement, will be held online on 28-29 May. This conference could not have come at a more propitious moment, when resurgent wars and conflicts and the scourge of social inequality aggravated by the pandemic, call for a personal and global contribution to heal the fractures and wounds that are making humanity suffer.

**The focus of the conference will be twofold:** 'dialogue of life' - that extraordinary attitude on which Chiara Lubich based the path of communion with Christians of different Churches, which she started in 1961 - and exchange of 'spiritual gifts'.

The '**dialogue of life**' or 'dialogue of the people', as Chiara Lubich also called it, does not go against the dialogue of Church leaders, but it accompanies and bears witness to it. Christians, who live and

work together in everyday life and strive together through the challenges of history, nurture mutual trust, esteem and respect, and thus create an atmosphere that breaks down barriers and prejudices of centuries.

There will be many witnesses that will enrich this conference, as the one that will be shared by Lina, a Catholic and Roberto, a member of the Pentecostal Church, who both come from Agrigento (Italy). While giving value to what unites and not what divides, they are engaged in a common project of social solidarity to support their town. There will also be those from the Philippines, where Christians from many Churches work together to help in emergency situations, and they discover how beneficial these occasions are to move, work and pray together.

Nicole belongs to the Greek Catholic Church, while Garo is Armenian Orthodox. They are Lebanese and work with the World Federation of Christian Students (WSCF), which is present in all Middle East countries. Through their participation, a network of relationships that creates communion is being set up: something which "is much needed in our countries", Nicole and Garo claim.

This international conference marks the 60th anniversary of the "Uno" Centre for Christian Unity, a centre for dialogue between Christians of different Churches founded by Chiara Lubich on 26 May 1961.

It will take place from 1.30 p.m. to 5.00 p.m. (Italian time) and it will be broadcast live, with translation in 20 different languages, from the Mariapolis Centre in Castel Gandolfo (Rome, Italy).

The event can be followed on: <http://live.focolare.org>

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