

**Oreste Basso passed away.
One of the closest collaborators of Chiara Lubich
in governing the Focolare Movement**

Oreste Basso, a focolarino, one of the closest collaborators of Chiara Lubich since the 50's, passed away peacefully at the age of 91 between Saturday night and Sunday 14th April morning.

During his long life he was entrusted with tasks of great responsibility in governing the Movement, and he became an eloquent witness to the charism of unity. He was ordained priest in 1981, and he considered his ministry as a service and a calling to a greater love.

He was elected Co-President of the Movement in 1996, and he exerted a fundamental role at the time when the foundress passed away on March 14, 2008 and during the General Assembly which followed in July 2008, when a new president had to be elected. This assembly was the first of its kind for the Focolare Movement.

Oreste Basso was born in Florence on January 1, 1922, and he met the Focolare in 1949 in Milan, where he exercised his profession as an engineer in a very big factory. In those difficult years after the war, he discovered a strength in the gospel-based spirituality and life of Movement, and he thought that this, with others, could give back peace, progress and hope to the world. In 1951, together with other friends, he set up the first male focolare in Milan, and at the end of the 1950's Chiara Lubich called him to the Centre of the Movement at Castelli Romani. Here he carried out his duties in a spirit of service and led all those who met him to experience the spirit of a family.

Messages from all over the world pouring in to the Centre of the Focolare Movement express deep gratitude for Oreste Basso's tireless work to serve the Church, in the Movement and for his limpid evangelical life.

The funeral was held on Monday April 15 at the international Centre of the Focolare Movement at Rocca di Papa, Rome.

Umberta Fabris (+39) 348 8563347

Benjamim Ferreira (+39) 348 4754063