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MARIAPOLI

Newsletter of the focolare movement

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*The first h.c. Doctorate
of Sophia to His Holiness
Bartholomew I*

**New prospects in
the journey of unity**

**Peace is
calling us**
In action
in the world

**Externs
Abbà School**
At the service of the
text of "Paradise '49"

Our «rock»

With profound joy and gratitude, it seems to us that the Holy Spirit is suggesting [...] a way to ensure the growth of the Focolare Movement now and also in the future: an idea that is simple and convincing, that cannot be paid by any price. There is an affirmation of Jesus that fully guarantees it, and brings peace to the

heart. He affirms that a house built on rocks will never crumble, as compared to one that is built on sand: wind, storms and floods may come, but it will remain standing. The rock is the Word of God, listened to and lived.

The Opera too can be compared to a house that is being built in the world. For it too, then, there will be salvation, security, stability and progress, if it will always remain standing on the Word, if those who are part of it will have no other desire but to live the Word.

But what is the word that the Spirit has placed as a seal on this house, on our Movement, when Heaven thought of it and began its realization here on earth? We know it. The word is «unity». Unity is the word that summarizes all of our spirituality. Unity with God, unity with the brothers. Or better still: unity with the brothers so as to reach unity with God. [...]

Our statutes put unity as the basis of everything, as the norm of norms, as the rule to live before every other rule. It is the word for us, it is the rock. We do not have meaning in life if not in this word, where everything acquires a meaning: every action of ours, every



Rocca di Papa, 23 november 1989.
Collegamento CH

prayer, every breath. And, if we concentrate on this word, if we live it as best we can, everything will certainly be safe for us: we will be safe and also that portion of the Opera that is entrusted to us will be safe.

Maybe the Opera in the future, in its totality or in some zone [of the world], will experience moments that are different from the present, marked by many consolations, fruits, light, fire. Moments of darkness, of consternation may come; persecutions, temptations may arrive unexpectedly; the devil, in thousands of ways, may try to destroy everything; disasters, catastrophies may happen... But, if we remain firm on the rock of unity, nothing will be able to touch us, everything will go ahead as before.

Chiara Lubich



Castel Gandolfo, 27 september. Jesús Moran, Mons. Vincenzo Zani, the sociologist Giulia P. di Nicola, Emmaus Voce

From the collegamento CH, Rocca di Papa, 9 november 1989, published in *CHIARA LUBICH Unity* prepared by Donato Falmi and Florence Gillet, Città Nuova, Rome, august 2015, pp. 32-34.

New publications

Paul VI and Chiara Lubich

The prophecy of a Church that makes herself dialogue

«Such wisdom, such openness, what a wide open heart! I represented and was bringing a new Work born in the Church, with the novelty both in its spirituality and its structure. But there (with him), there were no difficulties». This is the way Chiara Lubich recalled the first private audience granted to her by Pope Paul VI on October 31, 1964. Words that shed light on the role that the Pontiff had in the institutional and juridical configuration of the Work of Mary and in the relationship between the foundress of the Focolare Movement and the Pope, which began when Mons. Montini was the deputy Secretary of State, and which continued when he was the archbishop of Milan, and deepened during his pontificate. It is precisely this relationship that is at the center of this volume prepared by Paolo Siniscalco and Xenio Toscani (ed. Studium), born from the collaboration between the Paolo VI Institute and the Chiara Lubich Center. The text is of substantial importance in getting to know the history of the Work of Mary, from the difficult journey of Chiara in giving life to it and the wise role that Montini took in those circumstances. It tackles «a theme that – as is written in the premise – unites a great interest together with novelty, in order to make possible a more adequate understanding of the pontificate of Paul VI, just as with the preceding seasons of his pastoral activity».

The presence of never before published documents gives to this publication a historical depth of great significance which makes it new, as underlined by Fr. Angelo Maffei, president of the Paul VI Institute, during the first presentation



of the book, which took place on September 27 at the Mariapolis Center of Castel Gandolfo. There were around 600 people present among whom were Card. Giovan Battista Re together with Emmaus and Gesù, the members of the General Council and the Delegates of the Opera

of the different geographical areas. «We approach these two great persons – Emmaus said – with the desire and with the wish that from them we can learn how to live, to be these weavers of unity who will be able to bring a contribution for the Church and for humanity». After an enlightening synthesis of the contributions of the texts given by Alessandro De Carolis of the Vatican Radio, Mons. Vincenzo Zani, secretary of the Congregation for Catholic Education, highlighted «a special action of the Spirit which outlines, through them, valid ways also today for the renewal of the life and of the mission of the Church». And of a «renewed humanism» which brings them to «give value to being laity, to redefine the man-woman relationship», as the sociologist Giulia Paola Di Nicola said. In the conclusion Mons. Marcello Semeraro, bishop of Albano, said that in the relationship of Paul VI and Chiara, he saw the development of a dialogue-conversation that becomes prophecy, or rather, «the gradual implementation in history of the eternal project of God». At the closing of the evening a surprise of such beauty and intensity - the gift of a concert by Fr. Carlo Seno, prepared with chosen pieces of Chopin «in dialogue» with texts of Paul VI.

Elena Del Nero, Lucia Abignente
Chiara Lubich Center

First h.c. Doctorate of Sophia given to Patriarch Bartholomew I

The «already» and the «not yet» of Unity

**From October 25, for three days Loppiano was
the city of the Patriarch of Constantinople, his home**

A Turkish student in Rome, at the Gregorian University, Dimitrios Archondonis, has had a long-standing friendship with the Focolare since the '60s, translating the correspondence that was exchanged between Athenagoras I and Chiara Lubich. Later he was present in Istanbul, at the meetings of Patriarch Dimitrios I with the foundress of the Focolare Movement. In 1991 he became the ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople taking the name Bartholomew I. And so, from an «old» friend, today he is recognized publicly as Teacher and Citizen, but for many he is like a father.

«To confer on Your Holiness, the first h.c Doctorate expresses that our university Community recognizes in you a visionary interpreter and a generous and untiring pioneer of that Culture of Unity in which truth, goodness and beauty are expressed – in the Light of the God Trinity of Love». This what Prof. Piero Coda, dean of Sophia, expressed on October 26 in the Auditorium of the Theotokos, which included the entire General Council of the Focolare Movement. The event was followed live online in more than 4000 venues. The lectio magistralis of the Patriarch illuminated the concept of unity from various viewpoints. It was a magisterial intervention, that will surely be an object of study not only in Sophia¹.

Then, during the evening that the Patriarch wanted to spend «in the family» with the citizens of



Loppiano, 26 October. The awarding of the Doctorate h.c to Patriarch Bartholomew by the dean Prof. Piero Coda. On the left Card. Giuseppe Betori, Grand Chancellor of the Sophia University Institute

Loppiano, he received the parchment of citizenship. «I receive the honorary citizenship of Loppiano in the name of my great predecessor Athenagoras» - were his first words. Athenagoras in fact loved to call himself a simple member of the Focolare Movement confiding to Chiara «in a little room in the Mariapolis Center, I am there». Bartholomew's being and his feeling of being a citizen of Loppiano clearly highlights the link that has never been broken, that united the Focolare with the various Patriarchs of Constantinople from the time that Chiara, on June 13, 1967, went to Istanbul for the first time. A beloved link, that started from the prophecy of an encounter and which saw such a prophecy become a reality in time.

To my dearest brother Bartholomew

On the occasion of the conferment of the Doctorate, Pope Francis sent a message to his «beloved brother Bartholomew» reexpressing his joy for this initiative that «favourably contributes to the common journey of our churches towards a full and visible unity, to which we aspire with dedication and perseverance».

The Patriarch in an interview during the event affirmed: «It is normal and natural that I feel happy and moved to receive the first Doctorate honoris causa that the Sophia University Institute wanted to grant to someone. I am the first and I am happy!

But the greatest joy and happiness that I felt, more than for the Doctorate, was for the message of Pope Francis, sent to me by my most beloved brother. Through this the Pope wanted to honour me once again. His Holiness wished to express also on this occasion the determination to work always more for the unity of our sister churches. On the part of the ecumenical Patriarch, I am happy to assure His Holiness, and all of you who are listening to me, of a similar determination of our Church of Constantinople».

He then expressed words of encouragement: «*Chiara lived her passion for unity to the maximum, [...]. This icon of Christ, that we see in all of you, is the icon of the Church, the first piece of a united world, prologue of the unity of all those who follow Christ. [...] Continue this charism, bring it everywhere in the world, be salt of the earth, privileged witnesses of the now and not yet.*».

It is a mandate! It is visibly shining forth in the faces of those who have already sealed in their heart a living passion for unity. On October 27, at the Shrine of the Theotokos the words of the bishop of Fiesole at the end of the ecumenical prayer recalls this: «I thought that unity has already been given to us, it is in our midst, we just have to remove the scales from our eyes. May the Lord enlighten us so that we can see what we already have».

And the moments to do this come. The Patriarch indicated and remembered the coming meeting of

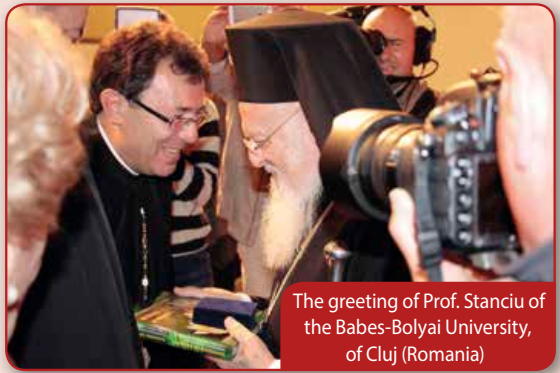


Bishops of various Churches: «*A month from now, I will welcome at Constantinople, the bishops friends of the Movement. [...]. We, as the church of Constantinople, we*



The voices of those who were present

Among the 1400 who came to Loppiano from October 25 to 27, there were many delegations of the Orthodox churches, from 7 Patriarchates and Churches, (Constantinople, Moscow, Serbia, Romania, Georgia, Cyprus, Greece) from various countries. There were also representatives of the Catholic Church, of the Oriental Orthodox, Anglican, Evangelical, Methodist, Valdesian Churches, civil authorities,



The greeting of Prof. Stanciu of the Babes-Bolyai University, of Cluj (Romania)

“in unity” and we must make this visible through our words and even more through our life. We must show that we are already living, with much diversity yes, but in the path of unity».

The archimandrite Ignatios Sotiriadis of Athens underlined this: “It was a moment in which we could savour the “already” of unity among the two Churches, which was made tangible by the presence of the Patriarch and the charism of Chiara”. The archimandrite Panteleimon said: “I made an extraordinary spiritual experience. We saw how we Christians can be united, if we walk according to God’s will. If we walk according to the



The greeting of the Orthodox nuns from Greece. In the center is Bishop Meini of Fiesole

professors of various Universities linked to Sophia, representatives of a Muslim community.

An orthodox nun from the monastery of Akritochori, in the north of Greece, told us: «It is moving to be in a place such as this, with people from all over the world. We are Christians of different Churches, and the relationship among us has not always been good. But here it is charity that guides us and we can walk together. In our monastery we pray with *komboskini* “Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God have mercy on this your world and grant it peace”. We will remain united in prayer everyday» and another: «I prayed with the Patriarch at the liturgy as if I was in my cell at the monastery. We are truly of one heart with Loppiano and the monastery».

Mons. Nikolaus Wyrwoll, German Catholic priest, a member of the Focolare: «Fifty years ago I was studying in Rome with the young deacon Bartholomew. And now after my retirement I moved to Istanbul so as to be close to him. In these days I heard many saying “we are on the way to full unity”, but here we have already lived



From right to left: the undersecretary of the Council for Christian Unity, A. Palmieri and the archimandrite Panteleimon of Athens

Gospel, if we listen to the Word of God just like the Virgin, we can discover a new way of living, we can discover the truth that many times we are not yet able to see. I would like this life of love to reach the Orthodox faithful and open hearts to dialogue”.

Isabella, Catholic, who has been living in Greece for 35 years, is a Volunteer and married to an Orthodox: «It is an arrival and a starting point. Solid foundations have been laid down for a secure journey. To have the possibility of meeting Orthodox priests, archmandrites, metropolitans

are happy, we are ready to welcome them, to share our experiences and to exchange the kiss of peace between the East and the West».

We still have a long way to travel

Emmaus and Jesús gave a summary of the events, the emotions, what has matured:

«A concrete turn-around happened in these days – Jesús explained – with the fact that there are thoughts of starting or establishing an Ecumenical Chair in Sophia, that is rooted in the relationship built tens of years ago, between Chiara Lubich and Athenagoras. This was a bridge between the East and the West wherein Chiara with her Charism played a fundamental role, and which today becomes an object of study. I believe that this forms part of the culture that is born from the Work of Mary, which is a culture that is not abstract, it is not formal, but starts from concrete historical facts.» He continued «Sophia was instrumental in bringing Patriarch Bartholomew here. And so one can truly see in this the design of God. As someone said, this cultural mediation was needed for us to be able to experience this fundamental ecclesial event. This tells us also the role of the instruments that the Work of Mary has to be able to communicate its Charism to the world.»

«In this Little City – Emmaus said – a very extraordinary meeting took place. This meeting

2 Intervista integrale su Mariapoli online

and to see how much love they have in their heart, such simplicity, fills me with an immense joy. These steps can happen because at the basis of everything is a life experience of many years; how many episodes watered by tears, uncertainties, of forgiveness given and received between Catholics and Orthodox. We are few, we are small, but we have arrived at these days together. When we leave Loppiano, what will happen? It cannot end here, it is up to us, being among the people, we want to continue this life. And when it is the people who are living we must listen to them!».



was over and beyond a simple meeting of the Focolare Movement, because we received the message of the Pope who [...] has seen in this event, in this recognition given to the Patriarch of Constantinople, a concrete step in the common journey towards the full communion among the Churches. [...] The way Patriarch Bartholomew felt so at home was quite obvious, but also all the other members of the various delegations and the various Churches represented here too, and even the persons of other religions: each one felt at home. But why did everyone feel at home? Because Loppiano is the Mariapolis, it is the city of Mary, the city of the mother who welcomes everyone. If this reality in Loppiano, that Chiara saw as a possibility to become something permanent, it is also true that it is present all over the world where there are people of the Movement. Therefore I would like to tell all the people of the Movement: «Don't spare yourselves, we have a long way to go and every step that we take can be a decisive step in this common journey».

a cura di Gianna Sibelli



The family at the center

Synodality the key word

The Synod in the Vatican on «The vocation and mission of the family in the Church and in the contemporary world» has concluded. A journey together to combine doctrine and mercy. The contribution of the Focolare



comments of the media on the sometimes heated discussion in the Synod, preferring to focus instead on division and conflicting currents.

The same thing happened during the conference this year. From the vigil of the event, episodes that were not «well-intentioned» were not lacking, as the Bishop of Rome himself defined, but which did not condition the development of the synodal work.

Just as it was in the 2014 edition, the family was studied with great respect and trust, looking at its original design, its beauty and potentiality, at the expectations that it provokes as a resource of society, in spite of its complexities and the risks it is subject to today. In this communion and in the renewed attention given to the family in a world that is constantly changing, the Bishops were able to experience new and more significant convergences, moved not by the rigidity of words that can crush but by the truth that liberates, by the mercy that includes and saves.

Three weeks of work (October 4-25, 2015) preceded by other two last autumn; two years of reflection and of study. This is the innovative journey of a Synod in which – just as the meaning of the word itself signifies – is truly a «*journey together*». Through a questionnaire, each one from all over the world was able to make his or her contribution, without hiding the burning issues and problems that the family has to face today. A choral consultation that became the guideline for the work of the convocation of 2014, and which eventually provided the guidelines for the sessions of 2015.

This Synod on the family is the first Synod of the pontificate of Pope Bergoglio. And immediately from the opening lines one could already grasp all the novelty that it was bringing. Even those who were not familiar with the work became familiar with the new terminology, like for example «discernment», which means to express one's thoughts totally without fear of being judged. Not without some difficulty, the synodal fathers started to put this into practice, notwithstanding the



The final document, whose 94 articles were approved with the required quorum of at least two thirds, bore witness to this «synodality». They were proposals illuminated with hope, which stretch out their hands to everyone, no one is excluded, especially those who with humility desire to remain united to God in the full participation in the life of the Church. The most evident openness can be seen with regards to the accompaniment of «common law or de facto partnerships» in view of receiving the sacrament of marriage (art.71), the discernment and integration to the sacraments – on a case to case basis – of those divorced and remarried persons, inasmuch as « the judgment of an objective situation should not lead to a judgment about the “subjective imputability”» (art.85) and the renewed respect of the dignity of persons with homosexual tendencies. Even if it is reiterated that same-sex unions do not have any analogy with the design of God on the family (art.76). The propositions which emerged from the Synod are now in the hands of the Pope so that they can be transformed into a magisterial document.

Among the 18 couples invited as auditors were María Angélica and Luis Rojas, married focolarini of Colombia, who were members of the small working group of Cardinal João Braz de Aviz, prefect of the Congregation for consecrated life and friend of the Movement. Card. João gave an important intervention on «The Trinity as the model of family relationships» (www.focolare.org), a topic which was included in the final document. María Angélica and Luis also had the opportunity to share during the plenary session, while in the small working group they were able to make a significant contribution, especially regarding the openness towards divorced persons who are in a new relationship.



María Angélica and Luis Rojas talking to Pope Francis

The Synod was also the occasion to offer to the synodal fathers moments of relaxation and of getting to know each other. 54 among the Cardinals, Archbishops and Bishops from all over the world who were interested to know more about the work of the Focolare shared a dinner with the focolarini of the Central Secretariat of Bishop friends of the Movement and the married couples of the Central Secretariat of the New Families.

This year is also the Fiftieth Anniversary of the institution of the Synod. During the celebration held at the Vatican on October 17, the foresight of Paul VI was recalled when he desired to give a continuity to that affective and effective synodality among the Bishops and the Pope that was experienced during Vatican II. Pope Francis, in his speech recalled, that we are all called to this synodality, even when we meet in small or big assemblies of the Church. He did not hesitate to talk about «*decentralization*», giving the example of the «*inverted pyramid, whose top is found at the bottom of the base*».

These words, in total harmony with what the Opera is living, strongly impressed Emmaus, who with some of «our people» were invited to the ceremony.

On www.focolare.org/notiziariomariapoli you may listen to the «on the spot» impressions that she shared on the same day to the Roman Mariapolis.

prepared by Anna Friso



Broad scenarios, strong commitment

The meeting of the Zones with Emmaus and Gesù was rich with life and reflection centered around important themes. Here are some *flashes*.



It is a global action, that the Focolare Movement is bringing ahead in the world. It is not something just of this moment, certainly, but with a new push that it has never had before. Accommodations and welcome, without a doubt; to open homes, parishes, our structures according to our possibilities, in collaboration with the civil authorities of the area, certainly, and with our specific style of reciprocity. But also, Emmaus underlined, we must not «be satisfied with just welcoming those who arrive, because those who come are unhappy;

The meeting of the Delegates, which began soon after the invitation extended by Emmaus to the whole Movement to do something for peace and to provide accommodation, amidst the background of the dramatic images of refugees fleeing the war, the many migrants who are leaving their Countries devastated by hunger, adverse climactic conditions, violence. The delegates themselves bring with them the wounds of these peoples together with the ever-present challenge of keeping the focus on «that all may be one».

Commitment for peace willingness to provide accommodation

«What is being done to stop the conflicts? Let's do something, absolutely! We will include it in the global action of the Opera - Emmaus explained when she met the Zones of the Middle East – there will be those who will take care of opening up their homes, those who will send concrete help to the areas affected and those who will identify the causes and the solutions».

they may find love, welcome, but we cannot expect these things to make up for the fact that they had to leave their own land. It is always a tragedy to leave one's country. Therefore we must reach the goal of allowing everyone to live in peace in their own country, in security, in a condition of social equality. We must aim for this, not so much in finding accommodations for the refugees, a certain number in each Country». So we must act also on a political level, in a wider sense, to interact with international organizations in order to remove the causes of these mass migrations.

Another step which is particularly requested from those who live in Countries where these tragedies are taking place: «To welcome and accept one another, whatever the decision taken, the position, the idea, the interpretation may be», the President suggested. «We must hold on to unity – she continued – cost what it may, even up to the point of accepting an





opinion that is totally the opposite of ours, to listen up to the end, to understand it; to accept the other allowing everyone to act freely in front of God, without judging: this is one of the greatest challenges». In fact there are those who decide to remain and those instead who can no longer endure it. «Every family has the right to decide what is better for their own life and for their own dignity», the Delegates of the Middle East affirmed.

Hope in dialogue

The ability of living together, to allow realities that are so different one from the other to live together in harmony: a gift that Asia can give to the rest of the Opera in the world. «In the field of interreligious dialogue the relationship among Muslims and Christians seems to me to be an enrichment – Emmaus emphasized – certainly there may be problems in some parts, there may be difficulties, there are violent manifestations etc., but this happens everywhere. And maybe often in some places there is the manipulation of others who intervene to stir up these conflicts, but fundamentally the Asians are conciliatory, they desire harmony, because it is part of their culture. In Indonesia, in some

parts of the Philippines, in Pakistan and also in Thailand, there is the possibility of talking to each other, understanding one another, of going beyond religious differences, and these can be important examples for Countries where instead it is difficult and conflicted».

In meeting with the African Zones, Jesús underlined a particular aspect of dialogue: «At least we must keep in mind that Christianity is not accidental, even if God was incarnated historically as a Jew; therefore, even if he had a very western appearance, Christianity is not the cultural patrimony of the West. We can say that neither is it a culture. We bring a life, a light that then becomes African... and we can engage in dialogue. The Christian Africans are not westernized Africans; we must understand this very clearly even in our dialogue with Islam. Jesus brings universality, even if afterwards we are who we are».

Strategies so that «all may be one»

What are the choices to be made in this phase of the Opera? A proposal came from Emmaus: «We can also say: well, so let's invest in Asia, let's close focolare centers elsewhere, let's open focolare centers in India, in Indonesia, etc. We must discover why we have to do a certain thing and the reason must be "so that all may be one". But we can't achieve this just by opening focolare centers, we reach it maybe by recontacting those people who do not yet belong to the Opera, but who have within them the seed of the charism and who can share it for the benefit of humanity, of society, of the Church, according to their commitment. I think that this may be working more for "that all may be one" rather than by opening a focolare in some other place. Therefore everthing is

21 september. The conversation with Pasquale Ferrara and Romano Prodi



Big Zones. Europe, Italy

brewing. Maybe God is preparing new forces and new conscripts for when the time comes to open new focolare centers: in the meantime we are asked to share in this new vision».

God in fact is not absent in opening the way also for the setting up of new focolare centers: this is what happened in Zambia and Belarus, with the women's focolare, in Angola and Tunisia with that of the men, while the possibility of other new opening are being evaluated.

At the service of the institutions

We are faced with the reality of the European Union, that is finding it hard to take off as a unifying force of peoples and nations as much as from an economic point of view and also from the political and social standpoint. The Delegates of the different Zones of the «old» continent are asking themselves about the role of the Opera in these Countries in view of a contribution to Europe itself. «Looking at us one must be able to say: "Here is an assembly at the service of Europe"», affirmed a male Delegate. «We must be able to reinforce the network that is already working in the institutions in Brussels - a female Delegate said. We must create synergies, Summer schools that form our youth in the politics of Europe».

«One of the things that Romano Prodi (Italian academician and politician who spoke during a roundtable discussion) mentioned is the lack of leaders - Jesús continued. We cannot think of a single person just like the great founding fathers of Europe, but of a body, of many persons together». Another suggestion: to target the means of communication that are already existing in order to activate a



communion of ideas and to make one's voice heard. And regarding the crisis of values, a method has emerged to overcome this: to talk about a new opportunity for the Gospel in Europe. «To go beyond the schemes of transmission with a scheme of generation: to generate life - Jesús suggested. I thought of Jesus in the midst, of Mary. What do the others do? We can see it in our own Countries: they wage a certain battle, defend values. Our approach is different, it is precisely to listen to Jesus who is speaking, who may be Jesus Forsaken, to grasp what He is saying and to start from there, to allow ourselves to be called to action».



Suitably prepared

The Summer school, which is becoming more widespread have revealed themselves to be important occasions for the formation of the new generations. This is what Jesús said: «The Summer school must achieve this; to make the life be reflected in the way of thinking, to allow for categories to be acquired so that one cannot but act in a certain way, because one lives in this way and thinks in this way. This is humanism that is perfectly workable, because it has nothing confessional about it, but rather it addresses the most radical part in man. It is a formidable anthropology. This



Big Zone. NordthAmerica, Oceania

union of life and thought is what we need. A Summer school should serve to form persons of this calibre who afterwards, wherever they go, will bring with them this imprint».

Zonette and local communities: multiply the life

In the new set-up of the Opera what always comes to light is the importance and the role of the territorial subdivisions – the Zonette – and the local communities.

Regarding the first Emmaus underlined: «In defining these new Zonette I don't want it to mean that we are multiplying the structures instead of multiplying the life. We must be very

And Jesús, regarding the local communities and referring to Latin America, suggested: «Our local communities must be like a kind of critical conscience of unity, which means those venues in a city, in a place, in a nation, in a parish, where there is a group that has this particular sensitivity, that is something very vital, that grasps the signs of unity that already exist, nourishes it and then puts itself at the service. It also does concrete actions, it is a critical conscience, in the sense that it can say: here there is no unity; it does things, it doesn't only live a beautiful experience, it is incisive. It is not something structured but something very vital and alive».



Big Zone. Latin America



Big Zone. Asia

careful in this regard. Also for the councils of the Zonetta I would like to say: certainly, we need a group that will help the persons responsible, a group that sees, that applies, without a doubt. But if we say: "This is the Council of the Zonetta, this is the one in-charge of..." then that's the end of it, that's the end of it! We must enter into the mindset that these are people who assist, and therefore today they can be these people and tomorrow others, according to the actions that are being undertaken in that moment. These are all the things that in this moment we must have the courage to reduce».

Potentialities and challenges

«We are not afraid of challenges – Emmaus confided to the Zones of North America and Oceania – because it is good to look at these challenges, it is good to get to know them, not so that we become frightened or scared, but in order to take them on and to overcome them with our means, which are Jesus Forsaken, Jesus in the midst and being Mary».

prepared by Aurora Nicosia



Big Zone. Africa, Middle East

On Mariapoli online
www.focolare.org/notiziariomariapoli
 you will find the Special Report on the "Daily happenings of the Meeting of the Delegates"

In the Year of consecrated life

Charisms that walk together

the experiences of some consecrated young men and women of the Focolare Movement

In the year of consecrated life that is coming to an end, and which will give way to that of mercy which will begin on December 8, 2015, one of the most awaited appointments was the international Convention for us young consecrated with Pope Francis entitled «Wake the world up. Gospel Prophecy Hope». The meeting – from September 15 to 19 – was organized by the Congregation for the Institutes of Consecrated Life and the Societies of Apostolic Life.

We, the men and women consecrated adherents of the Focolare Movement were also present. We were around sixty from four continents and thirty religious families, and we met two days before in Frascati to «Rediscover the face of Christ in the relationships among young consecrated». A rainbow of Charisms at the service of the one Gospel and of the one Church in order to contribute to the edification of that spirituality of communion which already in 2001

the *Novo Millennio Ineunte*¹ had proposed as the mission of the universal Church. Strengthened by this experience we then launched ourselves in the big Convention in Rome like a small, big community.

With the more than 5000 young consecrated men and women from all parts of the world, some coming from Iran, the Philippines, Ivory Coast, Zimbabwe, we peacefully invaded Rome. The meeting had as its objective: to live an experience of formation through a biblical, theological-charismatic and ecclesiological deepening of the fundamental elements of consecrated life, to offer venues for sharing one's own reality, desires and formative expectations; to celebrate and bear witness to the beauty of the vocation.

The central moment was the meeting with Pope Francis who, in answering to some questions explained that: «It is true that culturally we live in a time that is very, very unstable, and also a time that seems to be "a fragment of time": we live in the culture of the provisional, to which we

1 *Novo Millennio Ineunte* n. 43



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must respond with *«the culture of the definitive: God sent His Son forever! Not temporarily, to one generation or to one country, but to all. To all and for ever»*. He then articulated his talk according to some key words: closeness (*«Closeness among you and with the others. Closeness with the people of God»*); memory (*«The first encounter with Jesus. The memory, the memory of one's own vocation. In the dark moments, in moments of temptation, in the difficult moments of our consecrated life, return to the sources, remember and recall the astonishment we felt when the Lord looked at us. The Lord looked at me»*); prophecy (*«Even consecrated life can be sterile, when it is not prophetic, when it is not allowed to dream»*).

On the last day during the meeting in the Paul VI Hall with Card. Joao Braz de Aviz, prefect of the Congregation for the Institutes of Consecrated Life and the Societies of Apostolic Life, some of us asked him how we can continue to live the communion of Charisms, even when the way of life that comes from the charism of unity is not fully understood or shared. He told us that our mission is that of continuing to make the Charisms walk together: we can no longer walk like parallel or separate values, or by looking only at our own beauty. A flower is beautiful, but the garden is even more beautiful! We are called to create the garden, because the Church is this garden. In order to achieve this objective, the Cardinal continued, it is necessary to have spiritual progress. No longer just the individual spirituality, but the spirituality of

Virginità, fullness of life

«The immediate sensation that one experiences, leafing through the pages of this book, is that of seeing virginity from a radically new perspective, with a freshness and a luminosity that has never been seen in our times». It is with these words that Pietro A. Cavalieri begins his preface of this book written by Helmut Sievers (Chiarama), focolarino and priest. «One can feel, almost spontaneously - Cavalieri continued – the need to thank the author for having presented us with a linear and coherent path that is capable of revealing to the person of today the intact prophetic topicality of the virginal state». The key points of the different chapters of the book are enriched by writings of Chiara Lubich. «With a simple and clear style – observed Sr. Maria Lupo cp. in presenting the book – the author develops a progressive reflection of the theme, starting from a life experience and taking into consideration the challenges, failures and overcomings which fill up the story of each one of us. A novelty in approach is that of considering virginity not by pointing out the emptiness and the renunciations, but rather the “fullness” of life and of love».



communion, because God is communion. The spirituality of communion, like oil that slowly spreads, builds this new reality.

They asked us what grade we would give these days, from one to ten, and we don't hesitate in giving it: ten. Days that we dreamed of

and prepared for, for the sake of a greater communion, that sinks its roots in God and opens its arms to the brother and sister; good days, like a mature fruit that comes from a journey of two years built together and which has reached an exclusive moment of communion among different Charisms. We give a grade of ten to the joy and the sacrifice which each one experienced in racing to be the first to wake up in the morning and to prepare coffee for seventy people and ten for the frankness in correcting whatever needed to be straightened out with the certainty of being in front of a brother and not an antagonist who judged you. And we give a ten

with honours to that extra kilo of pasta, without any hesitation, which was added for an ever increasing group of young consecrated men and women with whom we reciprocally shared the desire for family, to breathe together the added value of communion, an indispensable ingredient. And so, the laboured six of each one became a ten, because each consecrated person in these days joined in with enthusiasm and hope, without considering any personal gain, but for the glory of a Church whose face is becoming more and more familiar.

the young consecrated men and women of the Focolare Movement

Sophia University Institute

Doctorate given to Sr. Jean D'Arc from Burundi

The first woman to receive a doctorate from the Sophia University Institute is a religious: on September 22, Sr. Jean D'Arc of Burundi discussed her thesis on «Foundations and prospects of a culture of unity». The adviser was Fr. Alessandro Clementia, professor of ecclesiology at the Faculty of Theology of Central Italy, and the co-panelists were Fr. Fabio Ciardi, professor at the Institute of Theology of consecrated life (Claretianum) in Rome and Professor Piero Coda, dean of Sophia. The moderator was the vice-principal Dr. Judy Povilus. In a relaxed atmosphere Sr. Jean D'Arc explained the motivation behind her thesis dedicated to Mons. Michel Ntuyahaga, the first bishop of Burundi, and the origins of the congregation to which she belongs «Bene-Umukama du Burundi»



of which the Bishop is the founder. Present at the discussion was the Mother General Sr. Nizigiyimana Revocata, who came all the way from Africa, and all her fellow sisters from their four communities in Italy. Professor Piero Coda, in congratulating her for the work done, underlined that the person of Mons. Ntuyahaga, should be given prominence: because of his sanctity, his adherence to God, the journey of his faith can be perceived.



A globale welcome

In action for migrants and refugees

No one expected a tremor, at least in the context in which it came: an updating of the Roman Mariapolis, the occasion for starting the new year together. Certainly, the images of continuous embarkations along the Italian and Greek coastlines, and not only this but also the interminable influx of people fleeing from the wars and desperations, hundreds of thousands of people who were arriving through all means of transport, not only by sea, passing through the countries of the European Balkans were in the eyes and hearts of everyone.

The tremor therefore was foreseen, also because Emmaus already spoke about it some days ago at the Center of the Opera, but this time the appeal was very accurate, clear, transparent: in front of the drama of the refugees and the people who have remained in the countries at war, what can we as the Focolare Movement do for them? It is true, it is useless to deny it, the Movement has already been doing much for the others in this sense, but nevertheless in the words

of Emmaus there is something different from the previous times: they are asking us, as Opera, to do something concrete, but above all to work for peace, to stop the wars, together: «If we don't do anything we will not leave a mark, they are just many rivulets that will be scattered».

Pope Francis too, in one of his recent interviews with *Paris Match*, when asked the question on what can be done beyond the immediate assistance of the refugees he answered: «One can hope to solve this tragedy only by looking far and beyond. By acting to promote peace».¹

«We are equipping ourselves» as someone would say! And in fact this is it: even at the Center we are organizing ourselves to grasp this opportunity. In the meantime, all over the world, the different experiences show that we have already started working.

¹ Cfr *Sono un prete di strada in un mondo insostenibile* (I am a simple priest of the streets in an intolerable world), interview of Pope Francis prepared by Caroline Pigozzi, *Paris Match* dated October 15, 2015.





Klaus and Ursula Schwed, for example, are two Volunteers of **Munich in Baviera**, husband and wife: for some time now they had been planning a trip to the mountains. But on the evening before they were to leave, around 11:30, the telephone rang: a couple of Volunteers of Augsburg were looking for someone to assist a Syrian mother who was at the train station of Munich with her three small children. Immediately changing their plans, Klaus and Ursula went to the station. **Klaus shared:** «When the five-year old "little princess" took my hand the ice was immediately broken. We were walking to our car and when an hour later, the three children were in bed, we knew that they could finally have a good night's sleep».

The following day, the husband and wife organized the continuation of the trip of this small family, through various telephone calls, but above all they made the little girls and their mother feel at home by

going with them to the playground, to the grocery, buying all the ingredients for a Syrian-German dinner. «The second night was shorter, because

the train would be leaving very early. After a quick breakfast we prepared their luggage including some food and toys. At the station Irmgard from Augsburg was already waiting for them and she would accompany the family on this final stage of their journey. As we said goodbye all of us had tears in our eyes. We were very happy and grateful to have become a family in such a short time. What an

A container truck going to the Ukraine

Catholics and Orthodox together for the refugees

«Fraternity of the Churches beside the men and women of today» this is the title of the article in the local Italian newspaper that spread the news of the collection of more than twenty tons of food products and clothes achieved by the communities of Lecco, Brianza and Valtellina, in the north of Italy, and sent to the hundreds of war refugees, who were in need of everything and were being housed at the monastery of Sviatogorsk, along the border of Ukraine and Russia. «The people of the Focolare Movement – the article continued – from the parish of San Leonardo in Malgrate, the Opera of Saint Francis for the Poor of Milan and the Orthodox community collected food and clothing generating much collaboration thanks to the generosity also of many enterprises and institutions present in the territory».

The initiative began with the request for assistance to sustain the accommodation of the refugees in the monastery that the Orthodox archbishop Mark of Yegoryevsk



Il tir in partenza per l'Ucraina

enriching gift Heaven had given us with this spontaneous change in our plans!».

Also in **the Netherlands, the Little Town of Marienkroon** welcomed a group of refugees, 118 minors, 15 young girls and 103 young boys (without their parents, the majority coming from Eritrea and Syria). In collaboration with the Town Council it was decided to offer them accommodations in the Little Town for two weeks: «The response and consensus of all our people - they wrote us from the Land of Tulips - the joy of many in being ready to live together and concretely for peace, was the biggest confirmation for us. The public response and the gratitude of the Town Council, the Public Institutions who gave concrete support and the necessities and also the great admiration with

(Russia) had communicated to the Orthodox parish of San Nicola of Myra in Lecco (Italy) with whom the Focolare Movement is in contact. A request that we welcomed together with the entire community of the Focolare. An occasion to live an ecumenism of life between the Orthodox and the Catholic Churches.

Many in the community made themselves available involving also their relatives, friends and acquaintances. The organization of collection points was spontaneous. In the end we loaded everything into a truck and went to Ukraine. The company that manages waste material freely allowed the use of their warehouses for the trucks, the good and the drivers. For the documents needed to transport the goods the staff of the border office helped us very much. Fr. Vitaly, Orthodox parish priest of Lecco, and Fr. Pietro Raimondi, Catholic priest, left for Kiev together with the task of meeting the monks and the priests of the Orthodox Church in Ukraine. Due to some problems at the border, the trip took longer than planned, but in the end the truck reached the monastery of Sviatogorsk from where we

which the radio and the newspapers highlighted our helpfulness was amazing. It was a very beautiful and strong experience for the whole community».

Aside from the refugees who land everyday in Europe, there are thousands who seek asylum in other Countries of the world, also in South America: every week, for example, around 20 Syrians request for visas to enter **Brazil**. To these are added refugees from the African continent (around 4,500) and, finally the Haitians who are the largest group. These, even though they are not officially considered as refugees, because they don't fall into the international category to be considered as such, have been granted this status by the



The container truck leaving for Ukraine
Arrival at the monastery of Sviatogorsk in Ukraine

received this message: «Blessed are the merciful ...»: All the refugees are sincerely grateful to those who have taken an active part in this operation, in sharing our suffering as if it were their own. Thank you and every blessing from the Lord for all our Italian benefactors who have dedicated so much of their time and efforts... Bishop Arsenij, metropolitan of Sviatogorsk, said: "It is truly gratifying that in such a difficult moment for us, our brothers have not remained indifferent and their distance from us does not matter, but they are ready and willing to help. Thanks be to our merciful God who has made the hearts of men open to compassion».

The local communities of Lecco and of Valtellina

#SignUpforPeace



Sign and spread the appeal for peace of the Youth
for a United World of the Focolare Movement

<http://signupforpeace.cf/>

The appeal can be found 6 languages up to the present
(English, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, French, Arabic).

Brazilian government, due to the humanitarian crisis that Haiti is experiencing. There are around 130 thousand Haitians in Brazil, with an influx of around 50-100 persons everyday.

The Focolare Movement in Brazil has not remained passive: since the beginning of September the inhabitants of the Mariapolis Ginetta have undertaken a first round of communion of goods for Syria, but the Link-up CH of September 26 gave them a push to take further steps forward. A couple of married focolarini of the Mariapolis, Afife and Munir, went to two institutions in San Paolo who are taking care of refugees: Adus and Caritas. They took note of the work that is being done and above all the list of the needs. They are also contacting other agencies, like the Aurora School, the Mayor of Vargem Grande Paulista, the Bishop of Osasco. Thus a network is being set in motion in view of a more general action. Maria José, a Volunteer, is collaborating for example with a home for the elderly that has made itself available to welcome some refugees. Amanda, 16 years old, in a meeting with the parents of her school has obtained their collaboration in the collection of items to prepare hygiene kits: a delegation of students and professors will bring all that they have collected to Caritas. Pedro and Ivanira also involved their relatives: brothers and

sisters, nieces and nephews and they have already started gathering boxes of products to be used for cleaning and hygiene. One of the sisters also involved her neighbours in this action. «Now – they wrote us – we are looking for a way to transport all the goods that we have collected so far».

The ongoing experience in Brazil, land of migration and welcome, is interesting because it suggests a working method that is repeatable, effective, and encourages «networking»: the inhabitants, in fact, are open to discussion, they have tried to understand what the various needs are, together they made themselves



available in the territory and to the various agencies who are working in this field, but also to the Mayor of Vargem Grande Paulista, to the Diocesan Bishop Mons. João Bosco, involving civil and religious leaders, mapping out common goals also with other Movements.

We wrote here about Germany, the Netherlands and Brazil. But we can also write about Hungary, France, the Central African Republic, the Middle East and many other countries in the world. The network that is forming in order to provide concrete assistance to migrants and refugees, and to promote peace in the world, is just at the initial stages, but it is already starting to bear its first humble fruits. But, if you can tell it will be a good day by seeing the morning ... we can only be grateful.

Paolo Balduzzi





Marina Lafon, nipote dello scultore della «Madonna dell'Unità»

A city of migrants

In Marseilles, in the oldest neighbourhood of the city, the placing of a statue, the «Madonna of unity» is perceived as a stimulus towards the commitment to fraternity

A great port city on the Mediterranean, Marseilles is a city whose population was formed by successive waves of important migrations. From the Armenians who were fleeing the genocide of the Ottoman empire, who make up 10% of the population, to the Italians who arrived towards the end of the 800s and the beginning of the 900s (it seems that around 30% of the inhabitants are of Italian origin), and that of the more recent Maghrebs (23%), mostly Algerians, or Comorians (10%), together with Spaniards, Greeks, and other Africans. These migratory waves make up the identity of the city and define a «plural» people. Plural also from a religious point of view, if we consider that with its 80,000 members, the Jewish community is the third largest in Europe after those of Paris and London, and if we consider that one among four persons is a Muslim. In this context, where truly the ideal of unity is a challenge and a goal, the arrival of the statue: the Madonna of Unity, seems to us a gift «invented by God» for this city and for us! At the inauguration, on September 28, we discovered its history while listening to Marina Lafon, the niece of Ghiorgo Zafiropulo, sculptor of Greek origin, born in Marseilles in 1909 and who died in 1993. He was the author of this monumental bronze sculpture, of which only two models exist. The first was made and placed in Loppiano in 1979 where the sculptor lived during that time. His niece, visiting the Cittadella a few years ago, was fascinated both

by the life of the permanent Mariapolis and also by the statue made by her uncle and she wished that one day the Madonna of Unity could be placed at the center of the city of Marseilles. In order to achieve this goal, Marina started an association «Madone de l'Unité» (Madonna of Unity), which as of today has 120 members, and which has obtained the approval and support of the Town Council. Finally, the statue, realized in the foundry of Florence where the artist used to work, arrived and was placed in the garden next to the Church des Accoules, in the «Panier», the oldest neighbourhood of Marseilles. In looking at the audience present, more than a hundred people, with the Mayor and various administrators, with whom it would have been difficult to meet otherwise, we cannot but think that Mary has opened the way for us and is bringing us to unexpected paths. We feel that we are pushed by Her, and with her help, we will «go out» in this our city to welcome everyone, to weave relationships among the various communities and religions, following the way to reach unity that the Child in her arms indicates: the Cross, Jesus Forsaken.

Carla Bartoli



Externs of the Abbà School

At the service of the text of Paradiso '49

From October 9 to 11, the 24 present members, the «externs» of the various disciplines, and the living witnesses of that period of foundation of the Abbà School met together at Castel Gandolfo.

The objective Emmaus and Gesù clarified, from the very first hour of their meeting was: to study and go in depth in the writings of the foundress that are related to that period of particular illumination called *Paradise '49*, so as to contribute, with the competence and profound spiritual life required of the participants, to this phase in which the charism of unity is «striving to realize» with «faithful creativity».

From the founding of the Abbà School various persons have come and gone. Aside from the present group of 24 members, it includes also all those who were previously members and «externs» or collaborators. *«Moreover, it is not possible to elaborate a doctrine in four or eight years, you need generations - explained Emmaus - only thanks to the collaboration among its first members, the second, the third and so forth, can we think of arriving at identifying the doctrine of Chiara present in the Paradise. There is then a pilot group, where a person stays for four or eight years. Then this person becomes a member of a wider group. We are facing a task which generations and generations must work to complete. We are just at the beginning».*



Talking about the different cultural agencies of the Opera, Gesù explained that we are called to realize the Charism «ad intra» and «ad extra». The task of the Abbà School

is to be at the immediate service of the text of '49: to express that which in it is manifest and that which is not yet expressed, so as to let the doctrine emerge and to offer a contribution for the understanding and the realization of the Charism «ad intra». Other cultural agencies (Sophia, Città Nuova, Chiara Lubich Center) work primarily «ad extra», in dialogue with contemporary culture so as to spread the ideas present in the Charism and to contribute towards the creation of a culture of unity.

Those present – 200 from all the continents and representatives of around twenty disciplines – participated in the reading and the commenting on passages of Paradise '49, worked according to disciplinary and interdisciplinary groups, got to know some of the first members of the Abbà School and the younger ones. It was an experience of the Soul, an entering together into the Classroom of Abbà School. The enchantment of Paradise brought

about a more profound understanding of some of its aspects and allowed the various disciplinary groups to identify new pathways to work on.

Palko Toth





In dialogue

Building a Country depends on all its citizens

Appointments of the Movement of Politics for unity in various cities of Colombia

Politics is a task for everyone inasmuch as the building of a Country depends on everyone, not only on the politicians. This is one of the central ideas expressed by Cecilia Di Lascio, philosopher and university professor, presently the president in Argentina of the Movement of Politics for unity (mppu), in the interview given to the newspaper La Cronica during her trip which brought her to various cities in Colombia. A country with a complex reality, in a society stricken by violence, by the drug trade, corruption that permeates even the Institutions and brings about fear in participating in political life especially among the youth.

At Armenia in the headquarters of the University La Gran Colombia, Cecilia met around forty people among whom were politicians, students, professors, sharing with them experiences of politicians who have chosen fraternity as their method of political action. She also met with some of the local exponents of the Movement of Politics for unity. «We



InTocancipá

still have within us the warmth of the Paradise of Chiara that you brought to our city – they wrote from Armenia. You brought us "Jesus the politician" who repeats: "Look at all the flowers in the field" so as to listen to all the voices of the inhabitants of the city. You made us experience a new hope in our people, in our politics against egoism».

In Rionegro Angela Giraldo, procurator for the region of Antioquia, which includes twenty one municipalities, had invited Cecilia to launch the proposal of fraternity in politics to the fourteen staff of her office and to some politicians of the city.

In Antioquia she held a meeting with a group of public officials, almost all of them



In Armenia, at the La Gran University, Colombia

connected to the Town Council, who have for some time now been working to build fraternity in the city. The theme of fraternity in politics was also the central point of a meeting in Medellin where the priest who founded the Coredi (Educational Cooperation for integral development), an organization that works for the education of farmers, was present. He was impressed by the novelty that the Charism brings in the ambit of building spaces of fraternity.

In Bogotá, around an asado, a typical dish of barbecued meat, an open dialogue was held with professionals of the Focolare Movement from different areas. Two other meetings for politicians in Tunja, a small city three hours from Bogotá, and in Tocancipá, this last meeting with around eighty people, among whom were two candidates for Mayor and thirty belonging to the Municipal Council.

Madalena Peres, Ricardo Mazzarelli



Inundations

The youth and the world of healthcare

A school in Portugal on the themes and problems in the medical-health field in the light of the charisma of unity

Students in the medical-health field and professionals working in the ambit of healthcare went back to school together. In fifty, coming from Portugal, Italy, Spain, Belgium and Brazil, they studied the theme: «Healthcare in the present and future. Challenges and responsibility for the youth» at the Little Town Arco Iris.

The idea for a school came from a group of gen2 from Portugal who, perceiving in themselves and in their peers the typical problems of the youth who are starting to enter into the world of healthcare, they sought an answer in the charisma of unity lived in this environment. The preparation involved, together with the commission of the Inundation "Medicine Dialogue Communion", the Portuguese gen who promoted the idea and some Italian gen2. The planning meetings took place via web and, in spite of the language difficulties, an authentic relationship was built among all, one could feel the presence of Jesus in the midst.

During the school they spoke of the relationality between medicine and bioethics, with particular emphasis to the problems linked to the ending of life. A prominent contribution was given by one of the two most highly qualified Portuguese

experts on bioethics: Walter Osswald, who is among the pioneers of the study of bioethics in Portugal, and Filipe Almeida, member of the Pontifical Academy for Life, both meeting the Focolare Movement for the first time.

The topics were presented through lessons, some prepared by the gen themselves, dialogue in plenary and group work, during which the presentations of available scientific evidence were accompanied by working experiences. The moments of recreation and the tour of Lisbon helped to create unity among everyone, erasing every gap between the professors and the students. A major role should be given to the Little Town and to the love with which its inhabitants made the participants feel «at home».

Finally, the general impression was that of reciprocal gratitude for the new understanding of the themes and problems that those working in the field of healthcare have to face each day.

Flavia Caretta



New publications

Along the street named Gocciadoro

From the notes of Giosi Guella, never before published pages about the beginnings and the development of the Focolare Movement

«Along the street named Gocciadoro, Chiara pointed out the stars to me. I don't remember her words. Thinking about it well, I seemed to understand that there was the great desire to go out of our small world and to wander about in a vast world».

This is how Giosi Guella noted down her first encounters with Chiara Lubich in the spring of 1944 in Trent. This is the source of the title of the book edited by Città Nuova which recounts the life of one of the first companions of the foundress of the Focolare Movement, who had shared with her up to her death the various moments of light and of trials that accompany the birth and the development of a new reality in the Church.

Chiara, sharing in a telegram the news of her departure for heaven on May 17, 1995, called her «one of the principal pillars of the Movement, gifted with a very, very special task».

Giosi had a special talent, which she knew how to use with each neighbour who passed beside her. Wherever she lived, she was able to accept and relieve suffering, offered accurate advice, helped to find homes, employment, trust. In this way she was able to give a push in the formation of many communities of the Focolare in Italy, Europe, North America. Everything contributed to the «capital of God» that was slowly being formed, made



up of material goods but also of needs, which from the beginning she took charge of also with great generosity.

This role, maybe less visible to others, was assumed by her in the development of the aspect of «Communion of goods and work», from the early years lived beside Chiara in Trent and then in Rome.

In 1948, after a first clarification of how to live the communion of goods among the first group in Trent, Chiara entrusted to her and to Marco Tecilla the task of keeping a record of the income and expenses and the commitment of each one. Giosi continued to follow this aspect also through certain initiatives, such as the various social actions that became necessary in various countries, as the Movement gradually spread. She was also able to follow the first steps of the project «Economy of communion», launched by Chiara in 1991.

At twenty years from her departure for heaven, there was a felt need to prepare her biography, which is certainly not exhaustive, but rather made up of her writings and recorded talks preserved in the general Archives of the Focolare Movement.

Caterina Ruggiu

Nella ricorrenza di Tutti i santi abbiamo fatto festa con i mariapoliti celesti, profondamente grati per averci tracciato la strada in quella «santità di popolo» cui siamo tutti chiamati. Di seguito proponiamo il ricordo di alcuni fra coloro che sono «partiti» recentemente, mentre su Mariapoli on-line è possibile conoscere, ove esiste, la versione più ampia dei loro profili o il ricordo di altri non riportati qui per ragioni di spazio

Luigi (Gino) Bonadimani

In the midst of the world to bring God

Focolarino priest from Padua, Gino left us on September 22 at the age of 87.

A medical student, he came to know from his classmate Giorgio Marchetti (Fede), the «novelty» that Chiara was bringing in the world and he quickly understood that Jesus was calling him. So the day after he graduated, he entered the focolare. «It is a choice – he wrote to his father – that has nothing of the convent, nor of eternity, but rather, it launches me in the midst of the world to bring the Peace which is precisely of God».

During his military service in Rome, he worked at the «Lucas» Medical Center together with Lucio Dal Soglio, Enzo Fondi, Gino Lubich and others. For around seven months he was beside Chiara, who was suffering from a serious accident: they were moments of a special experience of unity with her. From there he was sent to the focolare center in Milan, then in France, and then for seven years in Spain as the Delegate of the Opera, and then for another 11 years in Trent with the same responsibility.

While Gino was preparing for his ordination, he wrote to Chiara: «A few days ago I suddenly felt a great discouragement. I knelt down and I started to slowly recite: "I have only one spouse on earth". I believe that I pronounced these words with such a great conviction. I felt that I had truly celebrated my wedding. I was able to see my priesthood in Him, to be nothing, to possess nothing, to belong only to Jesus Forsaken: to belong to God».

In 1981 Chiara entrusted to him the responsibility of the Little City of Loppiano. They were years of great developments and Gino committed all of himself to this. The Mariapolis was enriched by new buildings, the number of inhabitants grew, schools



for all the realities of the Opera were opened. But his heart is for the focolarini of the school, who found in him a father, a brother who accompanied them in their formation to the life of the focolare.

In 1990 with Graziella De Luca he assumed the responsibility for the aspect

of «irradiation and apostolate» at the Center of the Movement. But after some time his health began to decline, even if his desire to love and to give himself does not diminish. In 2002 his condition deteriorates further and Gino goes to live in the focolare of Villa Achille. Gianmario Maddalena, the focolarino who was with him in the final years of his illness, shared: «For Gino I will not hesitate to say that there were two fixed points in his life that never diminished: the will of God and the presence of Jesus in the midst».

(from the profile read at his funeral in Rocca di Papa)

Giulio Falla

«Go up on a high mountain and announce the good news to Zion» (Is 40,9)

Married focolarino of Rome, he left for the heavenly Mariapolis on August 26 at the age of 86.

Sicilian in origin, from his youth he was committed to the communist party, convinced that the marxist ideology would lead to justice and fraternity. At a certain point, the focolare was opened near his house and that was the start of an intensive discussion between his materialistic vision of the world and that proposed by the focolarino. He felt



their love and after many long years of being faraway he felt the need to enter a church. «Those ten steps – Giulio recalled – seemed like an unscalable chain of mountains. I looked in front and behind me thinking that one of my party members may see me. Finally I entered. For more than an hour we looked at one another in silence, HE and I. Then suddenly, I felt two tears rolling slowly down my cheeks. It was HIM who was talking to me...».

Giulio felt His call: he joins the Movement and became a married focolarino. Touched by the experience of Chiara in the «heart for Heart», he confided to her: «What a marvelous thing... So this Heart suffered, beats for me even when I was faraway and I was fighting against Him! He loved me infinitely».

Giulio began to give himself to others at work, in focolare. With his wife Dina they dedicate themselves with love to their children. Through the years his faithfulness to the Ideal was tested through many insistent trials: first of all was the loss of his son Marco, then his own illness and that of his relatives. In the final years Giulio's illness became more serious and so eventually he had to stop working. Whoever went to visit him remained edified: he never let his continuous and excruciating pains become a burden. He was very humble and rejoiced at every news about the community, the Church, the Pope and the new generations. Suffering had widened his heart, and he made other people's suffering his own. What sustained him up to the end was his strong and filial love for Mary.

Maria Eulalia (Mariá) Barroca

«Walk in my presence» (Gen 17,1)

Married focolarina of Maceiò (Brasile), she left for Heaven on August 30 at 84 years old.

Being an only child, she took care of her mother and two aunties up to the end during their long illness. When her husband unexpectedly died, she remained alone with three small children. After some time she asked Chiara to transform her promises into vows.

Joyful by nature, fascinated by wisdom and rooted in the love for Jesus Forsaken, in 1986 she confided to Chiara: «I feel very happy during meditation and when I recite the rosary, because these

are the moments that I can speak to the ones I love the most».

In the Zonetta she is the point of reference during the many years in which there was no focolare center yet, respected and loved by all. She welcomed the young people with a great openness, helping them through her example on how to be coherent to the Gospel. She knew how to create fraternity and communion with everyone. Sensitive to social inequality she had a predilection for the poor. In moments of doubt or difficulties in unity, Maria would intervene with gentleness, resolving everything with a luminous smile and with a few, wise words. Following a surgical operation, her health began to decline, but she continued to go to the focolare spending more than a few days there.

At her funeral, grateful for all that she had done for the Opera, many affirmed to have felt her as their companion in the Ideal, sister, mother, grandmother, friend, a Christian of profound conviction and of a moving humility. «Mariá –a focolarino shared – answered to the call of Jesus not like the rich young man who went away because he had many riches. She was instead the rich lady who followed Jesus in a life of faithfulness and radicalness».



Maddalena Confalonieri Schienoni

«And he called her by name» (Jn 20,16).

Married focolarina of Milan, she reached Paradise on September 3 at the age of 86.

At 26 years old she met the Ideal and a short while later confided to Chiara: «I discovered the secret and I never want to give it up». With Renzo, also a focolarino, and their three children, they formed a beautiful and united family. Their service to the Opera is always immediate and concrete, with a particular dedication to the New Families. They even travelled to



give formation courses for married couples in some cities in India.

She had a great faith in the Love of God and in Providence, and the innate docility to unity, which characterized her spiritual life. No one would pass beside her without receiving a smile, a gesture of service, charity made up of many small or big acts of love.

Maddalena maintained a constant apostolic zeal, also in the commitment to spreading *Città Nuova* (how many subscriptions and relationships she brought ahead!). A life such as this does not lie even in the hour of trial. After a challenging surgical operation, she confided: «I experienced that the love of God is stronger than any physical or spiritual suffering». In fact, the diminishing of her physical and psychological strength did not affect her ability to be always living for the others, welcoming them and making her own what the other had in his or her heart.

In the final days, surrounded by her children and grandchildren, she did not always recognize the people who came, but this did not stop her from loving whoever was in front of her. Her smile that was full and luminous confirmed that Jesus is a strong and clear reality in her life. Renzo was always beside her. Their last look at one another is the seal of an intense and fecund life of communion.



Pia Fatica

Queen of love

Volunteer of God, Pia left this world on August 22 in Fontem (Camerun). For eight days, a never-ending procession paid homage to her, as a sign of gratitude for this white woman, granted by the local chief with the title of Mafua Nkong (Queen of Love).

Pia was born in Campobasso (Italy) in 1929. An obstetrician by profession, at the age of 38 she learned from the *Osservatore Romano* that they were looking for volunteers for a hospital that was being built in the forest of Cameroun, so even before meeting the Ideal, she left everything to run and give a hand.

She was quite shocked by the elevated infant mortality, but what touched even more was the

spirituality that the focolarini were living and Pia did not hesitate to make it her own and embrace the vocation of a Volunteer. She decided then to spend her life to save this people. Gifted with a great ability to dialogue with the local culture, she knew how to build important relationships with individuals as well as families, with the authorities to whom she spoke with respect and love but, when it was necessary, she also spoke to them truthfully and with inner freedom. During her 48 years stay in Fontem, she assisted in the birth of more than 11,000 babies, accompanying them afterwards also in their spiritual journey.

She contributed in different sectors of the hospital, up to the last service created precisely for her, named the

«Office for all problems», a name that by itself expresses the vastness and the openness of her heart. Pia in fact had a special sensitivity for the least: the sick, the prisoners, persons in financial difficulty, and she always found a way to help them with money that she obtained through her great faith in Providence.

She was very concrete and this characteristic accompanied her up to the final weeks of her life when she wrote to Emmaus sharing to her that she would soon leave this world: «I am happy to go to Jesus – she wrote among other things – and to place in his arms the world for which I have always lived for». At the cemetery, under a torrential rain the celebratory dance wound its way there: composed of men, women and children, profoundly grateful to God for this marvelous person.

from the Center of the Women Volunteers

Artur Tomasi

«... bring me on a divine adventure that I still don't know»

Artur was one of the first witnesses of the Ideal in Austria. From Innsbruck, his city, in the summer of 1957 he was already present in the Mariapolis of Fiera di Primiero. As a teacher of mathematics, physics and religion in a high school, he shared the life of the Movement with many young people, giving a living example through his love that was so concrete that he was chosen as the most trusted teacher by the teens. Many of them accepted his invitations to the Gen

Rosso and Gen Verde concerts. Throughout his long Ideal life he was always a guide and a light, also for his wife Walburga and their two daughters Sonja and Stefanie. During the difficult moments, he found a special comfort in the



Word of life that Chiara gave him: «If a grain of wheat does not fall to earth and die, it remains alone; if it dies, it will bear much fruit» (Jn 12,20)

It is precisely in moments of trials that Artur abandoned himself totally to God Love: «...knowing that You love us – he wrote – guide me also through suffering towards eternal happiness with You. Move my life and bring me on a divine adventure that I still don't know». On December 13 last year, at the age of 90, Artur left this world to enter that adventure that God had reserved for him, the prize for a life spent totally in love.

Peter Forst

structure of the Opera, but then in 1995, he «returned home», just as he himself defined his definitive return. He spent some time at the Claritas School in Loppiano, where he made a profound experience of unity. Returning to Sevilla (Spain) he committed himself to being a Claretian apostle who «burned with Charity and set fires wherever he went»: among the scouts, family groups, the lay Claretians and the community of the Opera, both as a professor of the Popular Marian University (UPM) and also as the leader of a local community. For several years he was responsible for the religious men in the zonetta.

In 2014 because of his health problems he moved to Granada. The cut was painful, but the telephone calls and the visits from people of the Focolare community, from the superior of his community, who was also of the Ideal, assured him the presence of Jesus in the midst, the gift that he desired most.

In the final months, his health grew worse, causing him to lose – in just a very short time – even his cognitive abilities. The religious of Granada remained always close by his side. On May 14, at the age of 69, Fr. Rafael Maria reached the heavenly Mariapolis. On his coffin, just as he himself desired, were three red carnations to symbolize his marriage with Jesus Forsaken.

Toni Torres (Siviglia)

Fr. Rafael Maria Guzmán (cmf)



«Whoever believes in me will do the works that I do and will do even greater things» (Jn 14,12)

At 15 years old Rafael entered the Congregation of the Children of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. In 1970 he was ordained

priest and it was then that he met the Charism of unity where he found realized his «ideals of love for the Church and how to be a person who burns with Charity», the way his founder Antonio Maria Claret desired.

Years of interior struggles followed in which Fr. Rafael Maria reached the point of leaving the

Giuseppe Lupi

...to penetrate into the stark realities of the world...

At the nucleus meeting of May 27, Giuseppe – delegate of the men Volunteers of the Zone of Florence (Italy) – was particularly radiant and no one expected that after just a few hours he would leave unexpectedly for Heaven at the age of 75.

Born in a humble family, as a young boy he was able to study and work at the same time and he became the manager of a post office. At 33 years old he met the spirituality of Chiara which he makes his own drawing from it the strength and balance for his life, based on three pillars: «family, work, life in the Opera, which included his commitments in society and in the Church». These were the priorities that Giuseppe suggested to the other Volunteers: «I am grateful to you and to your wife – he wrote to a young Volunteer – you have really been gifts for all



of us, who seem to be always running and busy, but you must find time also for yourselves and your lovely children». And to another he wrote: «If we Volunteers do not have a heart for the social and the human, how can we make the structures of the Opera grow so as to be able to penetrate the stark realities of the world where

we are immersed up to our necks?».

With Giuliana, his wife, he shared his entire life, with five children and a house always open to everyone. When he retired he became the cornerstone of the La Pira Center, a venue of hospitality and intercultural dialogue of the Diocese of Florence entrusted to the Focolare Movement. It is said that every person has one's own «place» in the Gospel. Giuseppe, who was a true poor in spirit, a meek and humble man, who had a thirst for justice, a peacemaker, a seeker and promoter of unity, we can imagine him up on the mountain of the Beatitudes.

the Center of the Men Volunteers

Gabriella Casciano Giacomobono

«... God wants us to be happy. It is up to us to bear witness to that joy»

Volunteer of God of the zonetta Lazio South, at 66 years old Gabriella unexpectedly left for Heaven on May 15.

After an entire year of receiving a copy of the Word of life, she was touched by the perseverance of the person who sending them to her and so she finally decided to read it and discovered that which she had always been searching for. She started to live it and became one of its most assiduous distributors. Who knew her can bear witness that her life was truly transformed by the Gospel.

A mother of two sons and grandmother of five, she was a teacher of literature and philosophy in the higher learning institutes, and for many years she was the principal of a high school of Pontecorvo, her city.

She had a crucifix on her table from where she drew strength when encounters with collaborators

and parents became difficult. Even in personal and family trials she revealed a profound faith in God and in His love.

Sensitive to social problems, she was responsible for the volunteer service of the Italian Red Cross, in the call center of Caritas and in the Exodus Community, without neglecting her commitments in the parish where she worked in giving catechism and in animating the liturgy. Gabriella was untiring in charity, attentive to the needs of the others and discrete in action, no one knocked on her door without receiving a gesture of concrete love.

In the final months of her life, she confided to the Volunteers of her nucleo that she had let go of all her human reasoning, her doubts or worries so as to be totally in God and in His will: «God wants us to be happy - she often repeated. He never leaves us wanting for anything. And when we have something to ask Him, let's do it certain that he has already granted it. It is up to us to bear witness to that joy»

from the Center of the Women Volunteers



Fr. Mihaly (Misi) Szekeres

«... to be love, like Jesus and to walk in his footsteps»

Priest focolarino from Hungary, Misi ended his earthly existence on August 24 at the age of only 56. He grew up as a fervent altar boy and lived his adolescence in a Country suffering from a marxist and anti-clerical ideology.

With Pali, his best friend, they met the spirituality of the Focolare. For both of them it was a very important discovery, which brought them to the point of wanting to plan their life according to the Gospel, striving to be like Mary who had given



Jesus to the world. Pali decided to give his life to God in the focolare and Misi became a priest.

During his second year at the seminary, a profound crisis made him doubt that he was suited to studies and he thought that he had chosen the wrong path. Sharing this in the focolare he understood that to follow Jesus did not mean to have one's head full of ideas about God, but rather to be love, like Jesus, and to walk along his footsteps.

Misi made this his programme and he never looked back. Because of his abilities and above all because of his knowing how to build relationships with everyone, as a chaplain and soon after as parish priest, he conquered the love and the respect of everyone he met.

In 2011 he became sick. Misi not only accepted this, offering to God the sufferings it brought, but he also found a new direction for his life: «It seems to me – he wrote – that the heart of the Gospel is to make the Trinity visible, to help the community people to live the Trinitarian life. I gave my life to God and in the time I have left I would like to offer Him everyday each action of mine so that the priests will know how to be instruments of God in this mission of the Church».

A year ago, the focolarini invited him to transfer to the focolare of Budapest, where his friend Pali was also living, and he confided: «To live in the focolare has always been my dream. Now God is allowing me to live and to die with you». In July, to some young priests who were having their retreat, he gave two pieces of advice: «Be vigilant and don't allow yourselves to be taken up worries of activism and live communion with the other priests. This will help us to have the light of the Risen One».

Tanino Minuta

Carolina Alessio

«Whoever therefore recognizes me in front of men, I too will recognize him in front of my Father who is in heaven» (Mt 10,32)

Root of the Opera in Bergamo, Carolina left us lasy may 18 at the age of 93. When she met the Ideal at 36 years old she immediately understood that she had found the precious pearl which was worthwhile to live for. She committed herself in the Movement as a Volunteer, actively collaborating in the Mariapolises ans organizing meetings in her city with the participation, at times, also of the focolarini from the Center of the Movement.

In 1981 she is in Montet for the opening of the school of the men and women focolarini. She remained there for five months to work in the kitchen. It was an occasion for her to live a strong experience of unity with the focolarine and the focolarini of the early times who used to come for the lessons. After some

years she answered to the request of the Center of the Women Volunteers and she went to the opening of the school for women Volunteers in Loppiano where she stayed for 15 years. Carolina worked in the kitchen where she came into contact with Volunteers from all over the world. To whoever asked her what pushed her to live such a life, she would answer: «I try to do everything for Jesus, like Mary did».

In her final years she had to live in a home for the elderly, remaining faithfully linked to the women Volunteers of her community who would visit her often and to celebrate life with her.

the Center of the Women Volunteers



Our relatives

The following have passed on to the Next life: **Aracy**, mother of **Julio Gulin**, focolarino in Santiago del Chile; **Lucia**, mother of **Vytautas**, focolarino in Vilnius; **Emilia**, mother of **Walter Kostner**, focolarino in Montet; **Angela**, mother of **Paola Vanoli**, **Carmine**, father of **Paola Cipollone**, and **Regina**, mother of **Rosanna (Aurea) Calegario**, focolarine at the Roman Mariapolis; **Turidda (Salvatrice)**, mother of **Gino Mineo**, focolarino in Tlemcen (Algeria); **Bruno**, father of **Daniela Ropelato**, focolarina in Loppiano; **Augusto**, father of **Leandro Bilancioni** and **Carolina**, sister of **Fausto Mazzetti**, focolarini in Loppiano; **Angelo**, brother of **Maria (Mari) Gennaro**, and **Michele**, brother of **Antonia (Aurora) Fancello**, focolarine in Montet; **Zacharie**, father of **Claudine Kasuza** focolarina at the Mariapolis Piero; **Teresa**, mother of **Alfredo Scognamiglio**, focolarino at the zone center of Italy, and of **Federico**, **Tina** and **Marisa** married focolarini in Naples; **Bernard**, brother of **Josephine Ndayshimiye (Micor)** focolarina in Dar-es-Salaam (Eadt Africa); **Christiane Catzeflis**, mother of **Isabelle**, focolarina in Bern and of **Etienne**, priest; the mother of **Roberta Munegato**, focolarina in Caracas (Venezuela).

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