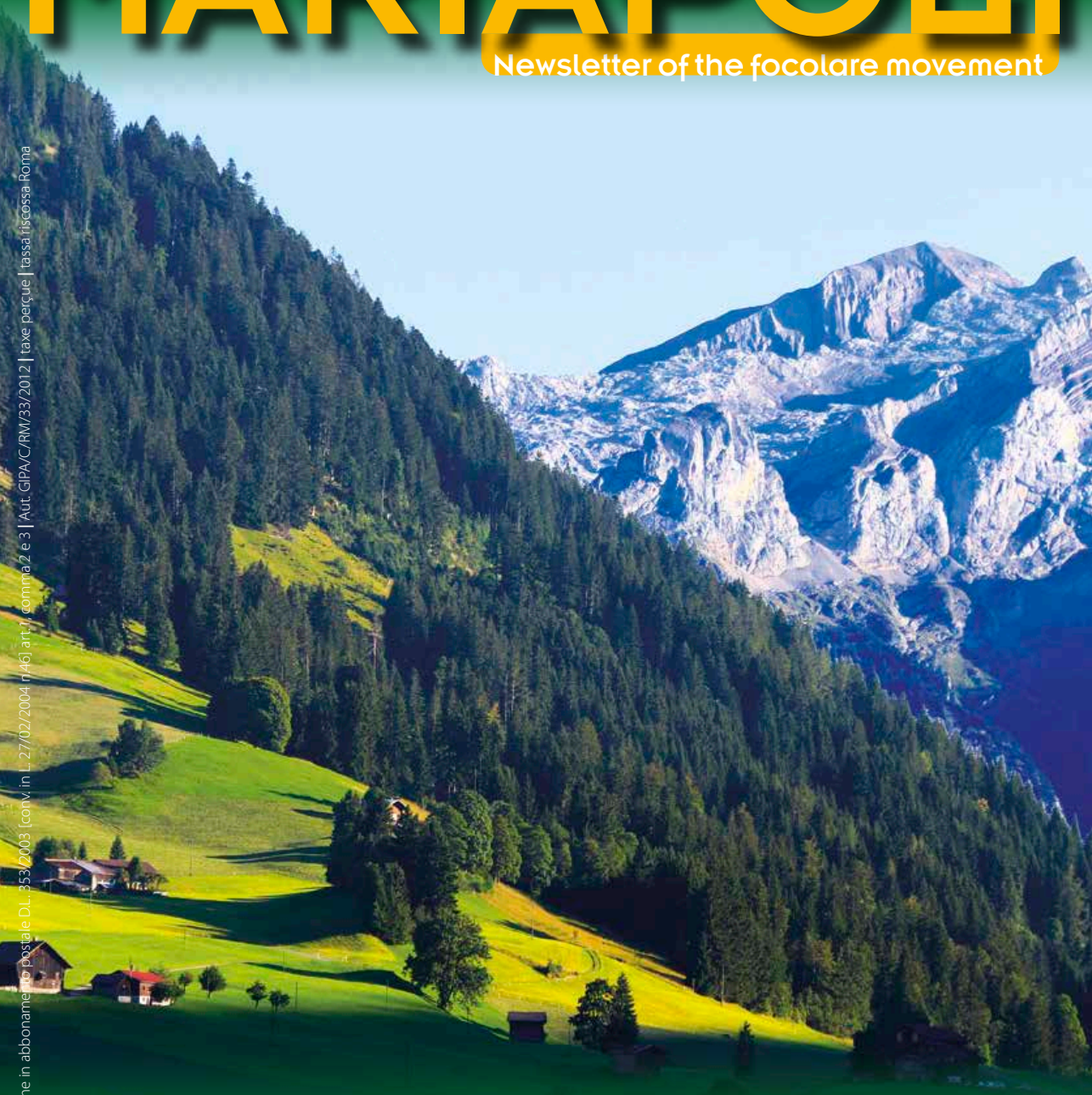


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# MARIAPOLI

Newsletter of the focolare movement

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*Day of Creation*  
**An appointment  
that involves us**

**Syria**  
A journey  
where hope  
is still alive

**Switzerland**  
The Center of the  
Opera meets the  
Cittadella of Montet

# Everything speaks of God

Last June Pope Francis' Encyclical Letter "Laudato Si" on care for our common home, was published. In it the Pope says: "If we approach nature and the environment without ... openness to awe and wonder, if we no longer speak the language of fraternity and beauty in our relationship with the world, our attitude will be that of masters, consumers, ruthless exploiters, unable to set limits on their immediate needs. By contrast, if we feel intimately united with all that exists, then sobriety and care will well up spontaneously." (N.11)

The following text by Chiara Lubich<sup>1</sup> takes us to the root of our relationship with our Creator.

Carissimi,  
[...] I would like us to stop for a moment, to recollect ourselves in the depths of our hearts, and ask ourselves again with amazement: God chose me! But who is he, who chose me?

And raising our minds from all that occupies us in this world (our business, our home, our family, the news of the day ...), to go back in our minds to the summer, when we were able to contemplate an endless stretch of sea perhaps, or a high mountain chain, an impressive glacier or the night sky studded with stars. What majesty! The immensity of it!

And through the dazzling splendor of nature, we were able to rise up to its author: God, the king of the universe, the Lord of the galaxies, the Infinite.

And say to ourselves: He is the one who looked at me one day and called me.

Then, if the awareness of his majesty crushed us, the certainty that he has chosen us could

open our hearts, stirring up a longing to discover and find his face and his presence behind such glorious beauty in creation.

And God is there. For he is present everywhere: he's in the sparkling brook,

in the opening flower, in a bright dawn sky or the red sunset, on a snow-covered peak. Then we know that after becoming man he became present in certain places in a special way: in tabernacles, at the centre of our soul, in each brother and sister and above all in those who suffer most; he is in our midst if we love one another; he is in the Church and in its pastors; he is in his Word, in his will, where we have tried to love him at all times and shall keep on doing in the next few days.

All the same it would be my wish and my advice that in the coming two weeks we seek him especially where nature reveals him to us.



Chiara durante una vacanza in Svizzera

## Time for creation

**On September 1st of each year Pope Francis has instituted also in the Catholic Church the «World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation» in keeping with the experience started by the Orthodox Patriarch of Constantinople and with the hope that it will involve other Churches and ecclesial Communities.**

«Sharing the concern of my beloved brother, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, for the future of creation (cf. *Laudato Si'*, 7-9), and at the suggestion of his representative, Metropolitan Ioannis of Pergamum, who took part in the presentation of the Encyclical *Laudato Si'* on care for our common home, I wish to inform you that I have decided to institute in the Catholic Church the "World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation" which, beginning this year, is to be celebrated on the 1st of September, as has been the custom in the Orthodox Church for some time». With these words Pope Francis, in his letter dated August 6, 2015, explains the meaning and the origin of this initiative. And he added: « We live at a time when all Christians are faced with the same decisive challenges, to which we must respond together, in order to be more credible and effective. It is my hope that this Day will in some way also involve other Churches and ecclesial Communities, and be celebrated in union with similar initiatives of the World Council of Churches».

In fact every year, the World Council of Churches promotes studies and activities dedicated to creation from the 1st of September – the first day of the liturgical year in the Orthodox tradition – to the 4th of October – the feast day of St. Francis of Assisi in the Catholic tradition.

It is true that following the summer period we went back to work in our cement metropolises, built by human hands, in the midst of the noise of the world, where nature is rarely preserved. All the same, if we want, a bit of blue sky glimpsed between the peaks of skyscrapers is enough to remind us of God; a ray of sunlight, which does not fail to pierce even through the bars of a prison, is enough; a flower, a meadow, a child's face is enough.

And I would like us to respond to his love for us, which is so special, by declaring our total love for him; adoring him, being at least spiritually prostrate on the ground, praising him with the best music that rises from our hearts; glorifying him with our whole life.

We must do this: Love God for his own sake in his immensity, his infiniteness, in his beauty, his splendor, and his omnipotence.

That will help us go back into the midst of humanity, which is where we belong, strengthened, as Jesus certainly was when he had prayed to the Father all night long, on the hillside, under the starry sky, and then went back among people to do good.

So in these coming days let us re-live our own annunciation like Mary by welcoming God in our hearts, God whom we would like to rediscover present everywhere in nature. May God enter into us more with his graces, with the charism for which he destined us, so that his design for us may be fulfilled, as it has been fulfilled already in Mary.

To conclude: let's live the present letting go of everything, but pausing now and then to adore the God who has called us.

*Chiara Lubich*

1 From the Conference Call, Mollens, 22 September 1988, published in CHIARA LUBICH *Cercando le cose di lassù*, Città Nuova, Roma, April 1992, pp. 111 - 112



## Mariapolis Foco

# Mission Montet for the Center of the Opera

**A «temporary transfer» to the Mariapolis Foco in Switzerland provided the possibility of discovering together its beauty and potentiality for the whole Opera**

The temporary transfer of the whole Center of the Opera is an unusual event. It is a new sign of the beginning of the Ideal year dedicated to going in depth and focusing attention on the fundamental theme of unity. The reason behind this trip, which took place during the days of the feast of the Assumption of Mary, is quite precise. Emmaus immediately reminded the counselors who had just arrived in Switzerland: *«To discover together the existing beauty of Montet and the potentiality, that can emerge from this little town, and which it can offer as an enrichment for the Opera».*

With a bit of a sense of humour, Emmaus recalled how the previous Center of the Opera had already visited Loppiano, but not the little town beyond the Alps, *«and so, as Center of the Opera, we will now undergo our second year of formation: starting the school in Montet».* And from this, a wish. *«I would like all those present here in the little town, permanent residents or visitors, from the school of the focolarini or not, to possibly be the presence of the “body” of Chiara, with a very profound atmosphere of Jesus in the midst, so as to be able to see and to discover this little town together with the “eyes of Chiara” – now looking at it from Paradise».*

This proposal was welcomed with an immediate applause. To which the president replied, pointing out that *«in order to do the school together in the way it should be done, we must listen to the Holy Spirit».* This is the methodology that was proposed: *«Let us tell one another that we will all listen to the Holy Spirit, reminding each other that the Holy Spirit can speak through*

*the mouth of anyone, not only of the persons in-charge. And then, so as to let Him speak, someone’s voice is also needed, therefore, aside from listening we must also speak, listening first to His voice within us. But be careful not to think: well what can the last one to arrive say? Instead he or she could be moved by the Holy Spirit».*

So the instructions were quite clear. Montet then made itself known in all aspects. The work places were visited (in some of them the focolarini and focolarine of the school worked together) and the offices of the different aspects (which have already been unified for the entire little town), where they spoke of results and challenges. The communion with the young men and women of the second year of the school of formation was profound, made up of getting to know one another, shared meals in a “effervescent” atmosphere of their focolares or in the more placid atmosphere of the focolares of the permanent focolarini. The meeting with the permanent focolarini of the little town was very precious and the one with the council of the Mariapolis was rich in information. A special word arrived from Palmira, one of the first focolarinas who has been the architect of Montet for more than thirty years.

The moments after dinner spent in the bar run by the youth was conducive to spontaneous conversations, and the programme of the celebration made together with the community around the little town was quite successful, with songs, dances, and delightful skits of daily life. The Center of the Opera also contributed to the



Dopo il tema di Emmaus sull'unità



Palmira Frizzera e Jesús Morán



In visita ai «luoghi» di Chiara nel Vallese

afternoon of recreation, rewarded with a warm applause, even if their performance was maybe not as artistic.

The knowledge of Montet was completed by a tour to the Vallese, where Chiara would go during the spring to rest and to write the themes of the year, public speeches, historical pages. Her visits to abbeys, shrines and small churches were often the occasion for intuitions on many topics that have marked the life of the Movement. Eli, Gis, Doni, Maria and Annapaula welcomed the Center of the Opera in a special way. Not far from it is the house of Fr. Foresi where Bruno welcomed them with his friendly smile.

Three days spent to listen, to ask, to understand. Seventy minutes to share to Emmaus, Jesús and to the two persons responsible for the little town – Denise and Franco – the evaluation, suggestions and proposals made by the

counselors of the Center of the Opera regarding the present and the future of Montet. Projects were outlined, avenues of work, some new and unprecedented outlooks. A journey that is still largely to be undertaken, but now, with the communion with the Center of the Opera which is much closer, and after having discovered and appreciated the current qualities of the Mariapolis Foco.

It is not by chance that the heart of the visit was the gift of Emmaus to all the inhabitants, namely the summary of her theme on unity, an appetizing preview – which has already become a tradition – of the complete theme that will be given to the Movement in the coming months. The meeting between Montet and the Center of the Opera revealed itself to be a first experience of those words.

*prepared by the editorial board*

New publication

## Chiara Lubich Unity

Prepared by Donato Falmi and Florence Gillet, in the year 2015-2016 dedicated to the seventh point of the spirituality, Città Nuova is publishing "Unity of Chiara Lubich", centered on a fundamental cornerstone of our ideal life which, as Chiara herself declared: «even just by itself expresses that which the Holy Spirit wants from us».

It is the keyword of Christianity, which in the world today has rediscovered the yearn-



ing to go back to the times when they were «of one heart and one soul», and a sign of our times, as Pope Francis also confirmed: «Our world needs unity, it is an era wherein we all need unity ...».

This book contains a collection of passages of Chiara belonging to the most diverse literary genres: some more concrete, others more mystical, others didactic, others more prophetic. The text does not intend to provide an «external» and purely cognitive knowledge of unity, but it hopes to be an invitation to let ourselves be fully taken in by the prayer of Jesus for unity.

*Elena Cardinali*



A school for those  
responsible of a focolare

## «Guardians of the flame»

**From August 3 to 13, in the Little Town of Montet, in Switzerland, we were welcomed with exquisite attention by all its inhabitants. They were beautiful days which encouraged moments of dialogue, of sharing and also of relaxation.**

We were one hundred twenty, of just as many women and men focolare centers, coming from forty seven nations of Africa, Asia, Europe, the Middle East and the Americas. Agnes van Zeeland and Flávio Rovere, with the two international Centers, together with Friederike Koller and Ángel Bartol, central delegates of the Opera, accompanied us with their active presence, attentive and respectful of the contribution of each one, in the realization of this school.

*«I have put you as the guardian of the flame». Here then is the vocation of the focolarino: I have put you as the guardian of the flame, the flame of God within you and the flame of Christ in the midst».*<sup>1</sup>

Guided by this motto we spent eleven days together deepening the reality of the person responsible of a focolare and our life as focolarini in the widest sphere of the Opera today.

The programme, courageous, open and innovative, with moments together and others separate, developed along two guiding lines, drawing ideas from the concrete situations of focolare life that each one was bringing : the stages of the Way of Mary and the instruments of the collective spirituality.

All of these things were presented not only from a spiritual point of view but also accompanied by suitable in-depth presentations of a psychological and relational character.

An important moment of the programme of those days was the meeting and dialogue with Raimondo and Maria Scotto who shared some reflections on the relationship between matrimony and virginity, highlighting in this regard the new and original contribution of the spirituality of unity.

The deepening of the task of the focolare in the Opera today was presented by Friederike and Ángel who started by sharing their personal experience, could not be lacking.

Tuesday, August 11, the Feastday of Saint Clare, was the day of the much-awaited meeting with Maria Voce and Jesús Morán. We prepared ourselves with a video of Chiara Lubich, of December 1991, on the specific characteristics of the vocation of the focolarino. Emmaus underlined

<sup>1</sup> Chiara Lubich, 30/12/1984. «La quarta strada»

the beauty and the preciousness of the focolarini in the Work of Mary and she reaffirmed that this vocation is irreplaceable and can be compared to the role of the heart in the body. For his part, Jesús explained that our life of unity has a sublime model: to mirror as much as possible, the relationship of love that exists among the three Persons of the Blessed Trinity. He continued, highlighting how important it is for the person responsible of a focolare to always safeguard the sacredness of each person, acting with prudence, reserve and discretion in the interweaving of relationships that our life requires. With a healthy realism Emmaus and Jesús recommended to us, that in spite of the greatness of the spirituality and the charism of unity, we must never forget that we always have to face and deal with our frailities.

In conclusion, Emmaus recalled the episode in which Chiara, in the beginning of the fifties, asked Fr. Foresi if he would like to share with her the responsibility of bringing ahead the growing Movement. Bringing this question to the Opera today, she proposed to us to carry this responsibility with her, through this task that the Opera has entrusted to us today and also in whatever will be asked of us in the future.

To crown this rich day, we met all together with the inhabitants of the Little Town in the church of Cugy for a solemn mass during which a Brazilian focolarino, present in the school, made his final vows. This was followed by a delicious dinner outdoors and a family celebration wherein we were all protagonists.

On the last morning we received the gift of Palmira Frizzera: with her words she enlightened us on the Opera today with strength and audacity. She greeted us in the same way as Foco with a «Ciao Chiara!»: a greeting which was multiplied in the hall among us with the desire to make it echo wherever we would go.

«It was a very big gift to be able to do this school before taking us this task of service in the Opera– was just one of the many impressions gathered. At the beginning of the school you in-

## New publication The intelligence of the heart

**The life of PierGiorgio  
Colonnetti**



A hidden nobility, nourished by simple gestures, nothing extraordinary. A natural gentleness and amiability, a lively intelligence of the heart that made him weave true and profound relationships with everyone. This was PierGiorgio Colonnetti (1930-2013). This is the way everyone remembers him. These are the words of his friend Franz Coriasco, who relates his life in this volume: his family of origin, Piedmontese, cultured (his father was the scientist Gustavo Colonnetti), of renowned associations (among others, Laterza, Casati, Gobetti, Croce); his infancy and adolescence; his employment at the Olivetti factory in Ivrea and his commitment in the labour union up to his encounter with the spirituality of the Focolare Movement of Chiara Lubich, which he joins together with his wife Simonetta. A new and important stage of his life begins: his commitment in the frontline of the international reality of the New Families; president for 11 years of the NGO AMU (Azione Mondo Unito - Action for a United World), his work in New Humanity – as a frontliner of the presence of the focolarino in the social realm -, the dialogue with the other Movements in the Church.

vited us to be a blank page and I think that God wrote many, many things. But what has remained in me, above all and which I am pushed to live concretely, or at least to try, is to always be an instrument that creates communion, to be an instrument of unity. I entrust myself to the Holy Spirit, ... who will remind me of all these beautiful things. I am grateful also for the abundant communion of experiences, but now I feel that I must go back and be a blank page, so that returning home, God can continue to write the novelty of today».

*Donato Falmi, Eduardo Sobral Leite, Rocío Rada*

# With the focolarini of various Churches Called to unity

**Meeting at the Center of the Opera. A journey that goes ahead through the years**

Since 2011, at the end of June, there is an appointment at the Center of the Opera: the meeting of the focolarine and focolarini of various Churches. Around forty of them were able to answer to the invitation of the Center of the focolarini and the focolarine to meet in order to be able to understand together the great importance of the charism of Chiara and to which God has

the Fathers of the first centuries of the history of the Church, those who came from a Church with a strong magisterium, those who see the only magisterium in the Sacred Scriptures and who strongly feel the need to listen to one's conscience. Each one brought with them their own Church, the joys and the challenges also in official the relationships between the different Churches. At the same time there is the conviction and the greater reality of unity rooted in the charism. The feeling of being brothers, sisters in the one Father, the desire to live the new commandment of Jesus «love one another as I have loved you» (Jn 13,34) is much stronger.

In this setting, burning issues that may seem to distance the unity of the Churches could be faced. It is not a matter of finding an answer in a short time or to convince the other of one's own truth. But together, to search for the Truth of Jesus.

This year was dedicated to submitting, in whatever way possible, the experience of dialogue, to those who have been entrusted with this task at the Center of the Opera and in the Centers of men and women focolarini, after the Assembly of 2014. To take stock of the journey covered and to share it with the whole Opera.

called Christians of different Churches and not only these. They belong to different Orthodox Patriarchates (Antioch, Russia, Romania), and various Oriental Orthodox Churches of the Middle East and of Egypt, from the Catholic Church, from the Anglican Church, the Lutheran Churches of Germany and of Scandinavia, from the Reformed Churches of Holland, Switzerland and the various free Churches. An appointment that has matured with the President of the Focolare Movement on many occasions, realizing the desire of Chiara that all her spiritual children are fully inserted in the Movement.

In the past years there were attempts to express in the Regulations of the focolarini, the life and the experience of unity that comes from the charism of Chiara, even with the diversity that each Christian tradition requires. Precisely because of this diversity among us Christians the first meeting four years ago took place: there were those who oriented themselves to



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There is something new: on the first day various members of the Center of the Opera, representatives of the Centers of the priests and religious, of the families, a good number of gen, came. For the entire weekend, also a group of around ten Catholic focolarine and focolarini who in the Zones have had the experience of living in a focolare with someone of another Church, also came.

There were two characteristics: the first day was dedicated to the culture of dialogue, starting with a meditation on the thoughts of Chiara on dialogue as a way of life, followed by much communion. On Saturday, the theme chosen was «Sanctity»; and here too a meditation with passages of Chiara on sanctity according to her, our charism, preceded by a report - this time from an Evangelical point of view - with the intention of making us discover together how this is considered, or at times may be absent, in the various ecclesial traditions. There is still much to reflect on, to deepen and to understand what Chiara herself meant with the words «I leave to you my sanctity»; «to sanctify the focolare».

Lesley, Anglican focolarina and the first non-Catholic focolarina, when she entered the focolare at the end of the sixties, remembers an

image described by Chiara Lubich: in the mountains there are cracks in between the rocks, but precisely there in those fissures, in those rifts the most beautiful flowers grow. Whether you look at the cracked rock or whether you look at the flower, one can discover that from the wound of suffering new life is born. We need a change of mentality, a conversion. Delia, who is in the focolare for just a few months, comes from the Romanian Orthodox Church; like many others, she doesn't know how to express what she has experienced in these two days: «Inspite of the differing opinions, the different practices of our Churches, we as focolarine and focolarini are called to unity, to give our life for one another and therefore also to assume the suffering of the other. The love for Jesus Forsaken will bring us always closer to "Ut omnes"».

Saturday afternoon, more than an hour of dialogue with Emmaus and Jesús during which new light was generated by going back to the source of the Charism and the experience of '49 where the Opera was born. Someone wrote: «We must go a step further to live according to the experience of Chiara. To be always aware that anything I do, I do it for the universal Church, not only for and in my Church, but also for the other Churches. According to me, this is also where the bond of unity lies, the way to live that which may seem complex and complicated, impossible for our Churches».

*Lesley Ellison, Elfriede Glaubitz,  
Peter Grimheden, Mirvet Kelly, Werner Peier,  
Heike Vesper, Serghej Yartsev*



# Mariapolis 2015

## Recharging the batteries

**In many parts of the world the «city of Mary» came to life, for short periods or for periods of vacation. Among the characteristics this year: the deepening of the theme on the Eucharist, the co-responsibility of the local communities, the contribution of the new generations.**

«I am very happy to participate in a Mariapolis. I attended a workshop where everyone was doing their part in order to compose a song. This is what the Mariapolis is: the harmony of a musical piece». This is the impression of one among the two hundred participants in the Mariapolis of Yogyakarta (Indonesia) with participants also coming from Hong Kong, the Philippines and Singapore.



Long or short periods, in the Little Towns or in smaller venues in the mountains, done by communities in small groups or by countries with the participation of several hundreds of people, the Mariapolises had varied characteristics, just like every year. But there were some points in common.

### Co-responsibility

In many places the local communities were on the frontline in planning, supporting, organizing all the aspects. Like in Brazil in the Zonetta of Brasilia and San Paulo. «With the reality of letting the local communities

be the protagonists – one of the participants said – I felt that we have matured due to the co-responsibility for such intense days. We would like to thank very much the focolarini and the focolarine who were very busy, and oftentimes “invisible”, but who have always kept the presence of Jesus in the midst, from the preparation up to the conclusion».

In the zonetta of Bahia (Brazil) instead, since the intern members were few, it seemed like a challenge to be able to have a Mariapolis. But with the certainty that it would be the Holy Spirit to run everything, everyone launched themselves in realizing it. Many have never been on stage, and they did it for the first time. «We went back to our origins – a Volunteer observed at the conclusion of the Mariapolis of Soverato (Italy) – we built this Mariapolis by ourselves, sweating, with small concrete acts of love, actors not spectators». Also the 41 participants of the Mariapolis of Iceland coming from all over the Country were all protagonists. The life of the local communities in Fontem (Cameroun) was also very evident where, together with the 450 participants, also the Fon of Fonjumentaw, the Fon of Akum, the Fon of Nsongwa and the Fon of Bawock and





Sierra Nevada (California)

the bishop, Mons. Andrew Nkea, were also present. It was «a step forward in co-responsibility» which was lived by the Mariapolis held at the Luminosa (USA). A committee of eight intern members with the assistance of a hundred people were the ones who prepared it.

In the programme some persons of different religions presented the dialogues together: Lisa, of the Jewish religion, and

tory of Medellin (Colombia) everything was made possible thanks to the work of the various commissions with a significant presence of the gen boys and girls who brought freshness, dynamism and novelty to the programme. «The characteristic of the Mariapolis was the reciprocal giving among the generations, which surprised everybody» commented a lady after the holiday Mariapolis of Slovenia. «It is very beautiful to be all together, youth and adults – a young girl confided – because the more mature ones bear witness that this is a good and valid way, and that it is worthwhile to continue it». In France, the little town of Lioran was «invaded» by more than 500 mariapolites of which 200 were youth up to 25 years old. «Thank you – one of the participants wrote – because you bring new hope in the Church, a young, open, incarnated, joyful, modern Church, that is close to each one, intergenerational, intercultural, with great human and spiritual balance, pedagogical, interactive and creative».



Algeria

Yusra, a young Muslim girl. Twenty Muslims of Harlem participated in the sharing of experiences.

Mariapolises with an international and interreligious presence also in Algeria: among the 150 persons there was a family from Tunis, one from Morocco and, among the Algerian regions, a family from the Sahara. The programme was centered on the art of loving with life experiences, much communion and moments of relaxation, because the Mariapolis was held just after the period of Ramadan, which is particularly tiring due to the extreme heat.

### Eucharist, mystery of communion

«A celebration that makes one experience a real family» this was how the Mariapolis of Arequipa (Perù) with 160 participants was described. Many said that they rediscovered, in deepening the theme on the Eucharist, the love of Jesus who wanted to remain with us. «I want to receive my First Communion immediately – a gen3 girl said – so that Jesus will walk with me along the way».

«It was a rediscovery of Jesus in the Eucharist, starting again to give Him the right importance in my life» one of the participants in the Mariapolis of Araraquara – San Paulo (Brazil) said, where a lady also confided: «It is some years now that I don't receive Jesus in the Eucharist, here I went to confession and the priest reminded

### New generations at the forefront

A team made up of all the vocations built a little «city of Mary», brick by brick, at the holiday Mariapolis in Virginia (USA). At La Ceja, in the terri-



Francia

me that it is confession which gives us the strength to overcome difficulties and sin. I am grateful to the Mariapolis for my return to the communion with Christ». In the Mariapolis of Santo Domingo instead, the Apostolic Nunzio Jude Thaddeus Okolo who celebrated the Mass, speaking of Chiara and the Movement with great affection, said that he was moved and surprised to see that all the participants had received Jesus.

## Where suffering is stronger

«A Mariapolis mission» was the one held in a very poor area in Miguel Couto, Nova Iguacu (Brazil). Three days of profound communion, listening, an occasion to give oneself by going together to visit the poorest, those abandoned by society. 433 participants, many youth and teens. Two bishops were present, two evangelical pastors and six priests.

A strong ecumenical experience also in Romania. Among the 420 participants of various nationalities, there were Catholics, Orthodox and Reformed.

Everyday there was a moment dedicated to ecumenical prayer: moments animated by the youth of the different Churches. The testimonies highlighted the dialogue of the people that is lived in Romania. A gift for everyone was the experience of an Orthodox girl on how the Eucharist is lived in her Church. Then a dialogue on an academic level, with the greeting of Fr. Stanciu, dean of the Faculty of Orthodox Theology of Cluj. They also shared together the Orthodox Vespers.

Moments of silence, prayer and profound union with God were what characterized the Mariapolis of Egypt. The evocative back-



Canada



drop of the ecumenical Center of Anafora in the desert near Cairo helped everyone to «immerse themselves in the divine» and to strengthen the relationship of mutual love among everyone. «They told me that the Mariapolis is the city of Mary – commented one of the 250 participants – but I can call it with another name: the second heaven, the city of saints». «I was touched by the understanding among the Churches – one of those present said – there is no tension, but we can accept and love one another freely».

«An atmosphere of peace and joy» is what characterized the Mariapolis of Lebanon, words which in that context is of great significance due to the difficult situation in many of the Countries in the Middle East. Among the 430 participants there were Lebanese, Syrians and Iraqis who had to leave their countries because of the war. The title chosen was «A humanity in search of love».

In El Salvador, a few days before the Mariapolis, a strong wave of violence exploded that left everyone breathless. Encouraged by the Word: «Have courage: I have won the world!» (Jn 16,33) it was decided to go ahead with the preparations. In an atmosphere of celebration 250 participants arrived.



Zambia



Egitto



El Salvador

«To live peace» was also the motto of the Mariapolis in Carinzia (Austria) which was deepened day by day: peace within me, peace through love, peace through dialogue, peace where I live. The participants came from Austria and Germany, also present were some refugees from Syria, Iraq and Turkey, Christians and Muslims. «We hope that love and reciprocal help – one of them said – will become the seeds of peace and of love that will help all peoples. We are of different opinions and religions, but we can live together in respect and in mutual love».

In Nigeria, the city of Minna, with one and a half million inhabitants, half Muslim and half Christian, who have always lived together in peace and mutual respect, welcomed the Mariapolis for the first time, upon the invitation of the bishop, Mons. Martins. 102 participants came from various parts of Nigeria.

In the heart of a Country with a difficult situation, the Mariapolis was also held in the Republic of Moldavia. The forty five participants –a significant number for this land – belonged to different Churches, and some non-believers were also present. Many opened up as they shared their painful experiences, the precariousness of their economic situation, their gratitude to God who fills up every emptiness with His love. «Listening – a gen2 girl said – I understood that many times, persons who are experiencing very difficult and very painful situations, cannot expect any consolation not even from their dearest ones. In these moments only God can intervene. If we love, we can give everything to Him who can transform the suffering of the people».

## Like the early times

«This is the perfect place for a Mariapolis – one of the 150 participants of the Mariapolis held in the mountains of Sierra Nevada in California (USA) wrote. The beauty of nature encourages prayer, meditation and personal relationships. Probably it is quite similar to the style of the first Mariapolises with Chiara and her first companions». «I never met Chiara, but... I saw her!» commented a person after having listened to the story of the Ideal of unity during the Mariapolis of Moniquirá (Colombia). The Mariapolis held in the midst of the mountains of Slovakia was a «retreat» just like the early times. Present were 550 persons among whom 158 were children and teens. And it was certainly the atmosphere of the early times that the community of Turin (Italy) experienced when they held their Mariapolis in Trent. «I have immense gratitude for these days – wrote one of the participants – It was living with Chiara the steps of her life here, so as to then live them with greater responsibility in my life». A travelling Mariapolis also for the community of Treviso (Italy) who went to Slovenia. «Let's not allow ourselves to lose hope» was the title chosen... precisely in the venue of the Mariapolis Center named «Spes». «To live the Mariapolis is like going to the source of the water – one of those present said – our thirst is quenched, we are regenerated and recharged to continue doing the routine things, simple and extraordinary. It is like recharging the batteries».

*prepared by Anna Lisa Innocenti*

# A trip to Syria with the i gen3 boys «Because you exist!»

16 days of travelling to Damascus, Aleppo, Hamah, Kfarbo, Homs  
meeting the community of the Focolare

But above all sharing with youth, teens and children moments of dialogue, of joy,

of sports... Particularly profound were those moments when I listened to their many questions: on fraternity, on suffering, on their difficulties as adolescents ... Actions of solidarity with those who suffer the most were not lacking, but also concrete actions; repairing, painting; a public park was made more beautiful, a day of sports was organized for 300 teens ... «Why did you come here to Syria? How come, when many of us try to escape from this Country, you instead came here?». These were the first questions that were asked in every city that I visited. They expressed a mix of joy and of surprise.

«Because you exist!» – this was my answer that came spontaneously from the heart. yes this was the main reason why I decided to spend some time in Syria. To share with our people there this special moment, to make them feel that they are not alone. During the Run4Unity this year we tried to make the situation of Syria known in various parts of the world. But I asked myself: «And you?». So I



Kfarbo

started to initiate the contacts for a possible visit, uncertain up to the last moment, but within me a certainty: «If You want it...!»

First stop Beirut.

The departure for Syria was planned for the morning, a taxi would bring us directly to Damascus. We leave Lebanon, passing through the land in between two neighbouring Countries. We cross the border, without much difficulty. In the village the means of communication help us, by keeping everyone linked together; this is a great instrument that allows everyone to live the moments of that which would become a «travelling Mariapolis».



Damasco



Kfarbo

I arrived in Damascus, the most ancient capital of the world still in existence, and a group of gen3 are waiting for me with nice and funny posters. I experience an immense joy: «I am here!».

In the afternoon the preparations for the next day are going ahead full swing. We are expecting at least 300 teens for a sports day,

one has the certainty that a new Syria is being born. This image was confirmed all throughout my trip, seeing this in every person and reality I encountered. At Kfarbo I encounter a surprising young reality, we remained there for five days. Together with me for the entire trip were the focolarini and the focolarine



Damasco



Aleppo

marked by the «golden rule» through the use of mathematical symbols. But the most beautiful symbol for me was left by the youth and adults who worked together beside the gen3. Everyone was a protagonist: the teens who were wards of an orphanage, and with whom the gen3 have already previously built a relationship, had the task of linking together, through a choreography, the various parts of the programme, rich with experiences.

The next day, we were in the streets of Aleppo. Along the way, the unmistakable signs of an absurd destruction. The silence of those places is so acute that it makes the suffering even stronger. Aleppo in this moment, even away from the spotlight, is living one of the most serious dramas of humanity. While I write in my diary: «How can humanity reach this point? How can we, made in the image of God, be able to renounce our very nature? This is truly inhuman!!!», I hear the sounds of gunfire. Four days spent with a splendid community. Seeing them, adults and children,

of the two Focolare centers. After a special and festive welcome, we held two gen3 congresses, open also to new ones. One day was dedicated to «CoriAmo la Città (Run through the City)», making a park and the streets more beautiful, leaving a sign of hope. On our return trip passing through Damascus, we made a detour to Homs, meeting some members of the community, and here too signs of destruction are evident. The trip in Syria concluded with the gen3 Congresses and the meeting with the community. A great sense of gratitude for each person I met. Unforgettable days! Before leaving for Italy, I had the possibility of meeting the gen3 boys and girls also of Beirut, and they threw a challenge at me: a Congress for all the gen3 realities present in the Middle East

Yes, hope is always... young!!! I make myself the bearer of many, many greetings and the gratitude of those I have met for the prayers so that this absurd war will end.

*Agostino Spolti*

# Temporary focolares

## The law of the Gospel

**A wave of life is what one who reads the many news arriving from the temporary focolares, often in frontier zones or zones undergoing conflicts, experiences. The whole family of the Opera is involved.**

**From Ethiopia**, Ivan writes:

«Greetings from Addis Abeba, the heart of Africa, there are four of us, two focolarine: Janaina, Brazilian in focolare in Palermo, Lili Congolese in focolare in Nairobi, and two focolarini: Legesse, Ethiopian, in focolare in Kampala and myself, Brazilian, in focolare at the Mariapolis Piero. This experience together is a great gift. We strongly feel the interven-



In Etiopia con il cardinal Birhane Yesus

tion of the Holy Spirit, as if He had prepared every step of our programme! We were able to participate in the “Golden Jubilee” of the Episcopal Conference of Ethiopia and Eritrea. We were surprised at the joy of Archbishop Michael Fitzgerald, now Nunzio in Egypt, upon seeing us. In his talk on dialogue between Christians and Muslims, he spoke of the experience of the Focolare Movement, of Chiara. Every relationship was important to build the Opera, like it was with the young man who was our driver, a Muslim, he accompanied us with immense joy. In just one week I fell in love with these lands, with these people marked by suffering, but always ready for joy and very, very generous.

I unite myself with the prayer of the Bishops with the hope that one day a focolare center may be opened here. Crossing through vast fields with beautiful huts made of mud and straw, we reached the south of the Country in Gighessa, Sciasciamane and Meki, where we met with the Bishop, Abraham Desta. Such love, dedication, service in this pastor who has his flock at heart: Catholics, Orthodox, Protestants or Muslims are loved as brothers and sisters, children of the same Father. The *staff* of the Diocese, a group of 25 people with different religious affiliations, throw the “dice of love” before starting to work! The coordinator expressed happiness at having come to know the “art of loving”: before it was difficult to do our meditation together now it is possible, because the language of love is understood by everyone».

**From Central America**, they write to us:

«This year in the Zone there was an explosion of temporary focolares with focolarine, focolarini, gen, men and women Volunteers, families, priests, adherents. In Colombia, in the territory of Bogotá they called it “communities going out” because it was a collective experience: 68 intern members contacted more than 2,500 persons. Santander and Huila, both seven hours from Bogotá, were the “home base” of the focolare and from there they reached vast territories visiting faraway communities, where the local community leaders - many of whom are priests - had prepared a programme of



meetings. The contacts with the Bishops, consecrated, youth, families and seminarians were countless. In everyone there was an extraordinary joy, even if they had to face long and uncomfortable trips during the days that were supposed to be their summer holidays».



A Cuba

In Cuba there were four temporary focolares. In Santiago de Cuba and Camaguey, with married focolarini and gen living in that city. «Everyday began with the meditation and then... out to visit the people in their homes: and we met so many! It was always the same magnificent welcome we received wherever we went». At the conclusion of the ten days in Camaguey, Miguel said: «There were so many experiences lived and shared, from the gen4 up to the first generation. Jesus enriched this experience with the presence of two focolarini: Gustavo, from the Center, and Timoteo, Brazilian who has been six months in the focolare of La Habana. We felt the nearness of the Center, of Emmaus, of Jesús and of everyone, as if they were here with us. I see in this the secret of the Opera: the universal connection in everyone and for everyone. We are faraway and yet close to one another. Our Jesus, is the same as everyone else, and embraces us creating bridges among all peoples, all Countries, in spite of the diversity in language, culture, we are one, like the Most Holy Trinity».

In the Diocese of Holguín with focolarini, focolarini, gen2, women Volunteers and

adherents there was a temporary focolare in Banes and one in the city of Holguín. The bishop, Mons. Emilio Aranguren Echeverría welcomed us personally at the bus station!

From Armenia (Colombia), Miguel: «It is so beautiful to see a community which, having overcome some previous difficulties in their relationships, was able to organize a Mariapolis with more than 40 youth. We are beginning to see realized that which Chiara said to the gen3: “You will see the dawn of a new world”. It is true, that there is still much to do, but looking at the city of Armenia the situation has changed so much that it now allows us to foresee a new world. The seed planted in the earth has begun to sprout».

### From Sindh (Pakistan):

«We arrived in three – Uzma, in focolare at Karachi, Therese Marie in Focolare in Roma and Selina in focolare in Lahore – in Hyderabad in the Sindh province on the day in which the Gospel was about Jesus sending his disciples two by two (cf. Mk 6,7-13). It is truly His presence in our midst that guided us, helped us to find lodging, providence and, above all, very beautiful people thirsting for God, ready to listen and needing to be listened to and loved: children, youth, adults, sisters, priests, people of different tribes. “I was attracted to your way of doing things – a young girl told us – I want to become one of you! My father told me that consecrated life is very difficult, but I can see in you that it is



In Pakistan



In Tanzania

beautiful. Like Chiara I too would like to put God in the first place of my life". And a mother: "I understood that I can do everything for Jesus in the other and therefore to do it with joy. You have taught me that I have a great responsibility as a mother, because the children look at us and imitate us"».

### From Tanzania, Luigi:

«As soon as we took off Someone reassured me: "Do not worry about what you are to eat or to wear, your Father knows what you need" (cf. Mt 6, 24-32) and from that moment I felt that I was in His hands. In Tanzania there is no men's focolare at the moment. We were Sigi from the focolare of Vienna, Ernst from that of Nairobi, and myself from the Roman Mariapolis and Bene a gen boy of Iringa, a true angel, indispensable also to be able to communicate in *swahili*. The focolarine of Dar es Salaam and Iringa welcomed us with open arms. The programme included a mini-school for the gen girls and boys and a Mariapolis. I found a people who are generous, rich in talents, well-prepared to receive the Ideal and to share it and with a great capacity to



In Ruanda

was a never-ending stream of people ready to share their soul with spontaneity and profundity. After the Mariapolis we left by bus at three o'clock in the morning to go to Ifakara, we were joined by Jacquot of the focolare of Nairobi and Emmanuel, a gen from Congo who is preparing to go to Loppiano. The bishop, Mons. S. Melchior Libena, was very, very happy of our arrival and he accompanied us to different parishes. We spoke in crowded churches, to people who were recollected, ready to welcome the light of the Charism, without rushing. Some had already written us signing their letters with: "Focolare member from Ifakara". The focolarine of Dar es Salaam will be going to meet them (10 hours by bus) to bring ahead that which Jesus among us had started».

*prepared by Gianna Sibellii*

Many other temporary focolare have just concluded or are still ongoing. We are waiting for their news which will appear on *Mariapoli online!*

### Temporary focolares 2015

**Africa:** Cameroun, Ivory Coast, Rwanda, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Congo, Mali

**Asia:** Pakistan, Myanmar, Vietnam, India, Thailand Malaysia, Indonesia.

**Middle East:** Jerusalem

**USA:** Atlanta, Santo Domingo

**Oceania:** Island of Wallis and Futuna

**Latin America:** Panama, Cuba, Venezuela, Colombia, Perù, Mariapolis Lia (Argentina)

**Europe:** Poland, Ukraine



## In Spain Family-focolares a school

From different continents in the Cittadella  
Castello Estiore to reflect on their identity  
in the «new set-up»

«... It is quite ugly to meet a consecrated person who is depressed, with no motivation or lifeless: he is like a dry well where people don't find any water to quench their thirst». With these words of Pope Francis we started our school with the title «Witnesses of joy» for 60 family-focolares coming from different continents, to the Cittadella Castello Estiore (Spain) from July 5 to 12. The preparation was done by the central office of the family-focolares in close collaboration with the Spanish team, made up of members of the Opera from the different vocations. For the 30 teens and children present the programme for them was in harmony with the topics that their parents listened to, thus encouraging an experience that would involve them as a family unit.

Also present were various focolarine and focolarini living in community, in a warm and joyful fraternity that made the presence of Jesus in the midst grow day by day and which made the typical spiritual fecundity of virgins shine.

Many family-focolares who could not be present also participated in the sharing, even some who were «between heaven and earth», since one of the spouses was already in the heavenly Mariapolis. Those from the continents outside of Europe, who live around a hundred kilometers from the focolare, bore witness with

strength of the need to stand on their own two feet, taking up their responsibility to support the whole Opera and to answer to the needs of humanity.

Among the fruits, the personal rediscovery and as a couple, of the call of God: to tend towards an always more profound unity between the husband and wife, through reciprocal love that is purified by the promises, so as to have an always more stable presence of Jesus in the midst, like a true focolare.

Some families expressed the desire to volunteer themselves, to transfer to a frontier zone or to give themselves totally in the local communities. The message of Emmaus was a new and encouraging mandate: «...In the Opera today, especially in the process of the "new set-up", the reality of the family-focolare is a real resource for our communities— whether or not a focolare is present in a territory – and which gives a great contribution for "Ut omnes" to move forward. And precisely because we feel that it is all the more urgent to "go out" to alleviate the sufferings, to console and to support humanity in bearing its many wounds, you – immersed in society – are particularly suited for this task. You will be able to do this rooted in Jesus Forsaken and in Mary Desolate, the way to sanctity that will bring you to God and which will open you up to the world...».

Maria e Raimondo Scotto



# World of the youth On earth as it is, in Heaven

**In Loppiano from August 2 to 15 an international school for the gen2 «whites» and their assistants**



With the recent developments regarding the zones all over the world, as gen2 we committed ourselves to the fullest in re-organizing ourselves so as to facilitate the communication among everyone and to bring ahead our movement in the best way possible. Specially in the Countries that used to be divided into several Zones and which are now unified into one, we asked ourselves how can we go ahead as one body even with those who are living in distant places.

The School was the venue to share not only the difficulties in the Zones, but also the developments on an organizational level among us, 65 gen2 participants, and 20 assistants. What greatly helped us to refine the ideas that were placed in common was going in profundity with the vision of Chiara regarding the Opera.

Different moments of the programme were shared with the assistants: this allowed us to discover the realities of one another and to build even stronger relationships once we returned to our Zones.

We always began the day with the Word of life – chosen everyday by a different gen unit – and with our experiences on living it. This was followed by the meditation with the answers of Chiara about the gen School of the gen life.

Through the lessons and workshops we addressed themes on psychology, the theory of gender, fraternity and economics.

One of the strong points was going in-depth with Paradise '49. We were given the opportunity to watch all the six lessons of Chiara to the gen2. Thanks to the introductions and the explanations, the lessons, integrated in the different realities of today, helped us to discover

the world in the light of the Ideal and we understood better the role of the gen Movement in society and in the journey of humanity. The particular beauty of this school was that of truly living together «paradise», as if the theme that we saw each time became a reality. We built strong relationships and a great unity, we felt a profound thirst for wisdom and for revolution in every lesson and every experience. When we finished with the «earthly Paradise» of Chiara (and an international celebration during the evening), we all felt pushed to bring ahead the «paradise» we had built together and to make it the starting point when we go back to our Zones.

At the conclusion of the school we solemnly signed the pact of «up to the end (*fino alla fine*)» during an hour of «face to face with Jesus» in front of Him in the Eucharist. Count on us!

*Jessica Lahoz with the gen2 Centers*



Latin America

Direction *Ut'omnes*

A trip of the Counselors allow us to enter into the rich dynamics of reciprocity of cultures and the treasures of the Big Zone, contributions for a united world

It is the unanimous impression that the «blue continent» - the way Chiara, in her vision of the «world in colours», described Latin America - is decisively walking towards the realization of its design.

A stopover in the Zone Centers of Buenos Aires made us enter immediately into the local reality of the Opera. From here, through webex we were linked to the focolaries of the Southern Hemisphere (Argentina, Paraguay, Uruguay, Chile), and Mons. Agustín Radrizzani, archbishop of Mercedes-Luján, who introduced us to the Latin American ecclesial reality today.

In travelling to O'Higgins, with the Delegates of the six Zones which make up the Big Zone, we stopped at the Shrine of Our Lady of Luján to entrust to her our work. In the Cittadella Lia, inhabited above all by young people, who receive a significant spiritual and human formation, one can perceive the unity among the various vocations and among the generations, a pole of attraction for many that makes them live constantly the «going out». Our programme of communion regarding «new set-up» takes place in this welcoming cradle. It is important to note how in each Zone the life of the structures were given preference, even if there were the logical questions on how to put them in order. Steps taken were shared, but also the difficulties, suspended situations, each one feeling as their own the Zone of the others. One of the Delegates summarized it in this way: «An intense period where unity was always at the top». We agreed totally!

The decentralization is ongoing in the Zones. The very beautiful echoes from the Mariapolises



are an indication that the local communities are the protagonists and witnesses together with the focolarine and the focolarini in the one family of Chiara. In Brazil too, where the «new set-up» has just recently begun, we can feel a very new enthusiasm.

In this new unity we «look at» some common realities together: the «Sophia University Institute of Latin America» and the five Cittadelle: Lia (Argentina), Ginetta, S. Maria and Gloria (Brazil) El Diamante (Mexico). The situation of «Ciudad Nueva» (Argentina, Uruguay, Colombia) and «Cidade Nova» (Brazil) is taken into consideration. The outlines of a unitarian project are foreseen, fruit of the reciprocity of the diverse cultures, that can give to the «blue continent» a impetus to offer its own contribution for a united world.

*Gabriela Melo, Augusto Parody R.*



## Trip to Oceania

# From Perth to Sydney: dialogue and interculture

Insieme ai consiglieri della Grande Zona, rientrati da un viaggio in questo continente, conosciamo meglio la storia e la vita di due città e delle diverse comunità dei Focolari oggi

In 1962 when the American astronaut John Glenn was in orbit around the earth, the inhabitants of Perth, in Australia, switched on the lights along the roads and in their houses to greet him. From above it appeared like the «city of light». A name which has remained, confirmed by the same greeting made in '98 by the crew of the space station Skylab.

The Capital of the state of Western Australia, Perth is situated in the extreme south-west of the Country, surrounded by desertland: the nearest Australian city is around 2,700 km away! For this reason many economic and touristic ties have been forged with China, Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore. It is rich in mineral resources: red diamonds, gold, iron, natural gas and nickel. Its two million inhabitants are around half Christians (Catholics and Anglicans), beside a minority of Buddhists, Muslims and Hindu. And 25% don't have any religious beliefs. There in '73 a small community of the Focolare Movement was born, in '79 the women's focolare arrived and in '92 the men's focolare which remained until 2008.

Among the most difficult realities that the city has to face is the painful relationship with the indigenous people. A focolarina who works in the pastoral field of the Catholic Church was able to establish a profound friendship with some elderly aborigines who feel themselves part of the same family with the members of the Focolare: a small contribution to heal the wound of marginalization which they have experienced ever since the arrival of the European people.

The ecumenical dialogue is very much alive. Groups of Anglicans meet regularly for the Word of life, and many of them participate in the life of the community. The Anglican bishop-emeritus David Murray founded an Anglican Center of Spirituality in the vicinity of the Anglican cathedral of Perth. Part of the monthly programme is based on the Word of life. On various occasions people of the Focolare have presented courses on the spirituality of unity there.

On the occasion of the anniversary of the departure of Chiara Lubich for Heaven, in March of last year the Focolare community invited Fr. Brendan Purcell, an Irish priest focolarino, professor of Philosophy at the Notre



Sidney





Marzo 2015. Alla cattedrale anglicana di Perth



Perth

Dame University (Sydney), to give a talk to several groups. At the University of Notre Dame (Fremantle), a gen girl who is studying law commented: «We study the relationship between philosophy and law, but we always leave out the values of the Gospel lived. Listening to Fr. Brendan I could not help but notice the importance of this third element that must be integrated into our studies». An Anglican lady confided: «I am suffering from a chronic illness: what you shared about Jesus Forsaken has given me the answer on the meaning of suffering and I understood the love of God for me in this suffering».

Fr. Brendan was also invited to the other side of Australia, to the diocese of Wagga Wagga, 450 km from Sydney to give a retreat to the seminarians. For many years the spirituality was being lived by two priests ( Fr. Rafe Beltrame and Fr. Jean Baptiste), parish priests in small cities of the diocese. «I was touched by your personal experience - one of those present told him - and by your humility and honesty. I understood that I have lost sight of the fundamental reason of my vocation to the priesthood, the love of God and service to the others. You have reminded me of this just in time...».

In this part of eastern Australia, the Ideal of unity arrived in the seventies through the first contacts with some people from Sydney and the other neighbouring cities, a range of around 400 kms. And today it continues to spread even among the numerous archipelagos of this continent, in the most varied ways. The «dice of love», for example, is travelling during these months across the Pacific Ocean thanks to an adherent from the islands of Kiribati who works as a mechanic on a container ship. He proposed to the sailors and labourers of the ship that they throw the dice and read the Word of life and to put into practice what these suggest. An initiative that generated interest and curiosity on the part of many, including the captain. If before, as soon as the ship reached a port, many went down to engage in forms of entertainment some of which were immoral, today it has become a great witness that many remain on board or stay together in a healthy environment.

Presently the community of the Focolare in the region of Sydney is very varied, made up of Lebanese, Anglo-saxons, Sudanese, Vietnamese, Italians and now many Filipinos, Koreans, Chinese, Syrians, Iraqis, Southamericans. A living together of people and cultures that mirrors the characteristic of this continent.

*Vania Cheng, Andrew Camilleri,  
Lucia Compostella, Yob Doronila*



La comunità di Sidney

Inundations

# The fifth dialogue goes ahead...

At Castel Gandolfo from June 12 to 14, 30 persons responsible for the fifth dialogue coming from Latin America, the United States, the Philippines, Korea, aside from Italy and the various Countries of Europe

A reality that is going ahead, moving, dynamic, alive, «going out», precisely beyond its boundaries: this is the impression that remained at the end of the meeting of the persons in-charge of the Fifth Dialogue. The participation was alive, vital, or rather very lively. The particularly intense moments were those of the deepening of the Charism in its cultural context, such as the *lectio* of Chiara at the granting the the **doctorate honoris causa** in Washington in 2000 presented by Teresa Boi who then, together with Giuseppe Milan,

gave a new interpretation of the text starting from the work done by the Inundation of Education (EdU) up to the present day; the conversation of Peppuccio Zanghi at the first meeting in 2009, *Wisdom and Dialogue*, that seemed to be tailor-made for this our moment. The presentation of Vera Araujo on the last day of some passages of '49 that shed light on the charism of unity with the profile of «going out» was very much appreciated and full of light.

A special moment of precious enrichment was the dialogue with Jesús Morán who came bringing with him the greetings of Emmaus. He offered an in-depth presentation of the term «synergy» and its meaning for the Opera today. A profound dialogue ensued regarding the significance of the role of those who gradually, through contact with the inundations, discover a real and true lay vocation, a civic vocation, to live with passion, with deep commitment, immersed more than ever in that «vast world» which is the venue, the reason behind the birth and the life of the Fifth dialogue.

The comparison and updating among the persons in-charge in the Zones and those at the center was also very important: what emerged was the desire to be always more active members of the Opera today, sentinels ready to capture the signals of the possibility of dialogue with the world of culture in one's own territory or environment. Some proposals were also made on how to concretize what emerged from the Assembly 2014. Another discovery that came out from this communion was the many activities among the various inundations, not to mention a creative collaboration with New Humanity and other realities of the Opera in particular with the youth world.

Caterina Mulatero, João Manoel Motta

New publication

## Love in the time of globalization towards a new sociological concept

To recognize that love has a public dimension and not just an intimate one in the globalized society of today seems to be risky. Nevertheless, our daily life is riddled with actions, interactions and relations that have as their fundamental characteristic the excess, the unconditionality and the unaccountability. This is precisely the challenge taken up by this book of Vera Araújo, Silvia Cataldi and Gennaro Iorio: to find that which is already existing in society, to give it a name: love-agape. Agape therefore, as a phenomenal possibility, that has never been adequately emphasized in social life, in the community and in professional and consumer conduct. Agape, as a new interpretative category, that turns upside down the pessimistic stereotype of a society seen only as a venue of consumerism and uncertainty. Agape as an instrument that can become a project and a stimulus for institutional renewal.







With the Coptic community of Reggio Emilia

## Steps of unity

The sharing of a difficulty becomes the occasion to build profound relationships of friendship and fraternity among people of different Churches

What can we do as a community to «go out». Dialogue seemed to us to be the keyword. But how? When Liliana and Hani, a family of the Movement, she is Catholic and he is Coptic Orthodox, shared the difficulty that the Coptic community was undergoing, it seemed to us that God was showing us the way.

We invited the priest, a monk, and we saw how he opened up to us, up to the point of sharing with us the treasure of the deepest part of himself, oftentimes marked by worries and solitude. During the intense moment of the blessing we felt ourselves «looked upon» by God.

After that dinner which was followed by another, we suggested to celebrate together the day of fraternity between Coptics and Catholics<sup>1</sup>. It was a proposal that was welcomed with enthusiasm by the priest and the whole Coptic community: we would prepare the lunch and they would prepare the dessert. On May 10 we were around seventy, and we began by a round of presentations and the prayer in common, in the joyful discovery that the differences are not an insurmountable wall. The Coptic community returns the invitation.

For some of us there is the occasion to spend an evening with a Coptic family. They share their suffering at not being able to re-

turn to Egypt for fear of the threats, the difficult integration in Italy where, in their neighborhood, some of their fellow countrymen do not even greet them since they are Christians.

June 28 arrived: the Coptics welcome us with a festival of colours and scents of their land. With a short video on the story of Chiara Lubich and of the Focolare Movement and the proposal to live together the Word of life, we offer to them the most precious things that we have. We rejoiced together for the news that Easter will soon be celebrated on a common date by our Churches. We live another intense moment of unity, of friendship because it is by now what it is: we are friends, or rather... we are brothers, as many said.

«For our family too these are moments of great unity – confided Liliana and Hani. After years in which it was very painful to divide ourselves in order to participate in our respective celebrations, wherein organizing ecumenical moments was difficult, the time has come to profoundly share also the "life", aside from the faith. Both of us put ourselves at the service of the Church of the other and this has brought us to love each other more deeply, to rediscover the Ideal lived, also among us as a couple».

*the local community of Reggio Emilia (Italy)*

<sup>1</sup> 10 May, 2013: The Patriarch of the Coptic Orthodox Church of Egypt, Pope Tawadros, at the end of his visit to Pope Francis, proposed that on «the 10th of May every year, the feast of fraternal love between the Catholic Church and the Coptic Orthodox Church be celebrated».



*The Heavenly mariapolis continues to fill up with focolarine and focolarini. Here below are some of the salient features of the telegrams that Emmaus sent announcing their departure, passing then – in brief – to the testimonies of members of other vocations of the Opera, who have also recently left for Heaven. On Mariapoli online you will find the entire telegrams and some more complete profiles.*

## Fr. Mario Strada

*«My night has no darkness»*

Priest focolarino originally from Trento (Italy), Fr. Mario died in Loppiano on August 12 at the age of 88 years. He went with a light step, just as he had lived. The news of his passing raised an enormous wave of gratitude from many of the Movement all over the world who have known him benefited, as the telegram of Emmaus said, *«from his spiritual maturity and his radicalness in living the charism of unity»*. The archbishop of Trent, Mons. Bressan, was present through several messages.

Ordained a priest by Mons. Carlo De Ferrari, at 29 years old Fr. Mario met the Ideal and after serving as the parish priest in some areas in Trent, at 41 he left for Loppiano where he became the parish priest of San Vito and in other nearby parishes. His special love for the poor made him the head of Caritas of the diocese of Fiesole. Another of his characteristics was the love and care he had for the sick. His accompaniment of Chiaretta Bigoni, a gen3 of Loppiano who left for Heaven at 12 years old, throughout her long illness, is significant.

In '76 it was precisely Fr. Mario who shared with Chiara the motto attributed to St. Lawrence: *«My night has no darkness»*, which he found in an antique little church of Cappiano. This expression became for Chiara and for the Movement a luminous point in the journey to sanctity and a concrete help to overcome every trial with an ever more faithful love for Jesus crucified and forsaken.

At his funeral, celebrated in the shrine of *Maria Theotokos* (Mary Mother of God), presided by the bishop of Fiesole, Mons. Mario Meini, with Mons. Simoni, bishop of Prato and



friend of Fr. Mario, and Mons. Giovannetti, bishop-emeritus of Fiesole, the Marian dimension of his life was underlined. Serenity, sanctity, are the words used by many in paying homage to his mortal remains, grateful to God for his life, for the good efforts he had put in his ecclesial and social commitments.

## Iolis (Iolanda Maria) Alves da Luz

*«Canterò in eterno l'amore di Dio» [Sal 89 (88),2]*

Focolarina of Belém (Brazil), she, together with another focolarina, opened the focolare in Manaus in 1981. The community recognizing her contribution wrote: "She gave her life spreading the genuine Ideal in our area and left an imprint of the love of God on the heart of each one." Her life was truly



one of giving. Iolis had a special love for the most needy and she wanted to alleviate their sufferings. Therefore she, together with other members of the Movement, worked in social projects in a very poor neighborhood of Belém.

She was diagnosed with a tumor in 2004 and wrote to Chiara: "These are days filled with a communion with the Spouse... I am very peaceful and filled with trust in the love of God, happy to have this coin to offer for you". Chiara answered immediately: "I am there with you while you say your yes to the Spouse, believing that everything is a part of His design of love".

# Franca (Giovanna) Allegri

«I will dwell in the  
house of the Lord»

[Psalms 23 (22),6]



Focolarina of the Cittadella of Montet, Franca was born in 1937 in Lodi (Italy) and at 25 years old she entered the focolare in Parma. She spent 12 years in Brussels, then she disembarked in Rocca di Papa to work for Graziella De Luca at the Center of the focolarine and afterwards as the secretary of the Orange.

After 24 years at the Center, Franca was sent to Sicily. «I can't hide from you that I feel this cut! - she confided to Chiara - I am passing through a difficult moment - God has disappeared from my soul and everything within me and outside of me seems dead. I had the temptation to let go of everything... and then one day as I was doing an act of love with effort the light returned much more re-

After five years of treatment the doctors said she was cured. It was a joy for her and for all in the focolare. However, in 2010 it came back. Fully aware of the seriousness of her illness she wrote to me in 2011: "After every cycle of chemotherapy I was hoping to be able to give you some 'good news'... instead it is a new yes to the Spouse, to His will... I am certain that everything is the love of God for me, so I can say with all of my strength: Not my will, but your will will be done in the present moment."

Notwithstanding her fragile health she was always giving of herself both in the focolare and in the community. She was joyful and did not appear as a person who was ill. Even though she was weakening physically she was aiming toward God, faithful to Jesus Forsaken. She wrote on May 30th: I was in bed for six hours receiving medication and I asked: 'Jesus, what is it that you want from me?' I remembered that this bed could be the altar on which I could celebrate my Mass, offering everything for the Opera in the new step it is taking".

On July 7th she had a very beautiful and profound sharing during the focolare meeting. The following day she had to be taken urgently to the hospital. Iolis left this earth on July 10, at 72 years old. Her funeral and vigil which took place at the little city Gloria was truly a solemn and supernatural celebration.

splendent than before and I understood that one can always start over again and that God is always, always faithful».

From 2008 Franca is in Montet, where she gives herself without counting the cost, in her work at the reception desk, which she continued to do without interruption until just a few days before her death.

A few months ago the announcement of a serious illness. She wrote to Emmaus: «At the diagnosis of a tumor, even if my eyes filled with tears, I felt myself enveloped in a Love and a maternity that made me perceive very strongly the presence of God, of His Love, as I have never experienced before».

From that moment on Franca wanted to live this final moment of her Holy Journey together with the whole Little City and in each of the inhabitants of the Mariapolis there was a surge in living together with her, the present moment with radicalness in mutual love. Day by day everyone saw in her, in a splendid way, the fruits of a life of extraordinary communion: trusting abandonment in Jesus in the midst, simplicity and normality, contagious joy.

Often Franca affirmed with gratitude to have lived a very beautiful life. Even in her final moments on July 13, she confirmed this: sitting in the chair in her room of the focolare at a certain moment she opened her luminous eyes, she smiled and then she sweetly passed away.

# Ubaldo Manetti

«Now you light  
in the Lord» (Ef 5,8)



A married focolarino of Florence (Italy), on July 15, at 81 years old, Ubaldo serenely went back to the Father, surrounded by his family and by his wife Franca, also a focolarina.

When at 29 years old her met the Focolare, Ubaldo was far away from the faith. He was strongly touched and affirmed that «in this community of persons who love one another I found God once again». With an untiring love, rich in attention and constantly rooted in the faith in God Love, Ubaldo

worked in a thousand ways in the life of the Zone: from the families to the political and administrative field, from the world of work to the wider one of social associations. In the '90s, together with Franca, they spend a period of time in Chile and Bolivia, where they brought their experience as a family-focolare.

In the final years Ubaldo was struck by a progressive and heavy decline of his physical condition. He wrote to Emmaus: «I tried to make a feast for Him immediately. Now I offer every-

thing for you and for the Opera so that the burden you carry can be a little lighter». His richness and spiritual solidity became even clearer. In one of the many times he was brought to the hospital he wrote: «I was in intensive care, I became a little disoriented and instinctively afraid; but then I recall having lived that moment with great serenity. I am no longer constantly afraid. Maybe I become afraid of a particular circumstance but then I reason out and I overcome it. I am a believer, a believer in God who is my Father, who is Love ».

## Ulrike Zans

*«I will put my laws into their minds and I will write them upon their hearts»*

(Heb 8,10)

Married focolarina of Germany, Ulrike was born in 1953. At 22 she encounters the Focolare and immediately joins the Parish Movement. In '79 she married Wolfgang: together they opened their home to the adoption of two children. In '85 she felt the call to the focolare and at the moment of her final «yes» she wrote to Chiara: «I am filled with an infinite happiness... there burns within me a desire to give my life to God in you in order to be eternally in the Pact with you and to look with you at the Father».

Active in local politics ever since she was young, aside from being committed in the family and in the parish, she gets involved in volunteer work with the desire to reach out to the peripheries and to live for «*Ut omnes*». Eventually she also assumes the responsibility of the Mariapolis Center in Solingen.

When an illness manifested itself in 2007, Ulrike reacts with great simplicity believing fervently that God will give her the strength. When she overcame the disease she continued with her activities. But in 2014 the illness reappears and she knows that recovery was not possible: «Now Jesus Forsaken has a new face» she wrote.

The treatments were very strong and Ulrike offered her extreme weakness for the Opera and for its full unity. She shares with Emmaus her new experience, which she herself describes as «marvelous... Chiara has trained that in every present moment is



God, our Father, who is waiting for me and I am waiting with joy every present in order to discover Him in a new way because He is always indescribable love ».

The focolarine took turns being with to her, bringing her the Eucharist which was a true gift for her. On the last night of her life they told her: "Tomorrow is the day of the Pact, the entrance into Paradise!" And Ulrike happy, foreseeing her departure, which will happen precisely on July 16, replied: "How beautiful! Just tomorrow!".

## Michele Di Natale

*«Remain in my love» (Jn 15,9)*

Focolarino of Roma, Michele, of Sicilian origin, was struck down by a heart attack at 48 years old and, in spite of the immediate treatment in the hospital, he left suddenly for Heaven on July 25.

He met the Movement when he was 25 years old and, he became a gen and felt the call to follow God «free from everything and from everyone... so as to belong totally to God».

He spent many years at the Center and in 2005 onwards in the focolare of Rome where Michele gave himself with growing generosity. He understood that in the difficulties linked, as he said, to his «being», God helps him to «change his heart», to remove himself from the center and instead to put God and the brothers.



# Marlies Tiedeken

*«Whoever loves me, will observe my words and my Father will love him, and we will go to Him and live with Him» (Jn 14,23)*

Married focolarina of Münster (Germany), she reached Heaven on July 29, at 76 years old.

A pediatric nurse, she married Ugo, who will also later become a focolarino, in '66. From their marriage, three children were born. Grateful to God for having chosen her and to Chiara for having showed her the way to be, even if she was married, totally of God, together with Ugo they commit themselves in the New Families, giving a precious contribution to its development in the Zone. In Marlies what stands out is her great sense of harmony and her sense of humour, which she puts to good use in her relationships and in the «comedies» in the Mariapolis.

In the '90s the first symptoms of an illness manifests itself, but she continued to give herself with generosity to her family, in the focolare and to many people in her cluster. As the years passed, the illness brought with it certain limitations: she needed the support of everyone, something that was not so easy for her to accept. At a certain point she was able to understand this situation in the light: «At first I didn't understand, but now I see that everything enters into the plan of God for me. Lately I even saw that his plan is not only for me, but

With special love he followed the gen3 for many years, sharing important moments of their life. Here are some impressions after his death: «From up there you will give us a big smile and with one of your "pats" you will invite us to go ahead, anyway you will always be the one to protect us and watch over us». «You have given us the simplicity of an "evangelical child" and the faithfulness up to the end». "Michele would go straight to the heart, putting all of himself in whatever he did. With his simplicity he never stopped even for an instant to give everything for us teens. Now he was about to change focolares and leave us gen3. But he chose instead to remain with us up to the end ».



also for Udo a this has linked us together more than ever».

She lived her final moments in a rest home where Udo would visit her everyday. The presence of Jesus in the midst made her yoke lighter and she was able to welcome in a festive way, all those who came to visit her. She confided to Chiara: «With new courage and total trust I walk towards my great goal: to become a saint for the others... Jesus Forsaken, only Him, gives meaning to my life».

# Rubén Oscar Tonet

*«To him who has given much, much will be asked» (Lk 12,48)*

Married focolarino of Argentina, he left for Heaven on August 9 at 60 years old, surrounded by his wife and his two children.

Fascinated by the Ideale, at 22 years old Rubén decided to spend a year at the Mariapolis Lia, a formation which continued in Loppiano for another two years. Upon returning to Argentina he continued with his studies of Economics and married Adriana. After being a Volunteer, in '91 he felt the call to be a married focolarino.

Being a businessman by profession he gave an important contribution to «Ciudad Nueva» and to the social projects of the Movement. Along the trail of Foco he wanted to be a nothingness of love, happy with the purifications that God sends him and which remove from him «one by one all the reference points of human support so as to choose Him Abandoned. Foco with his life has enlightened me and confirmed that I must make myself the servant of my brothers (the least) and to love them until the presence of Jesus in the midst blossoms among us».

In July 2013 he was diagnosed with an illness. He wrote to Emmaus: «Jesus Forsaken re-



turns to ask me if I have chosen Him. In saying my “yes” to Him, he shows me the other side of the medal; and as Chiara said, loving Him brings unity, that unity which I renew with each one of you and with the whole Opera in the world».

Rubén lived this period with generosity, always in the present, accompanied by his family and by his focolare. And also by the songs of the Ideal, which gave him a special joy.



## Fr. Carlos Torres

*«Come to me, all of you, who are weary and oppressed, and I will give you rest» (Mt 11,28)*

Fr. Carlos, priest focolarino of Granada (Spain), returned to the house of the Father on March 26, at the age of 87.

In 1973, just two years after meeting the Ideal, he brought two buses of his parishioners to the mariapolis. And after two years more, he himself participated in the Priests' School that was held before in Frascati (Rome).

Gifted with a great organizing ability, Fr. Carlo took charge of the building of an elementary school, a hostel for priests and finally a house for retreats and camps for the youth. Even if great sums of money passed through his hands, everyone was edified by his spirit of poverty. In the midst of all his activities, he is still able to participate in the life of the priest focolare of Granada with his faithful, Marian and discrete presence that encouraged everyone.

In his final years he was affected by a progressive loss of sight and mobility. And from a man with a strong and congenial character, he spent the last four years of his life in a hospice, entirely dedicated to prayer and with an admirable peace and serenity.

At his funeral, celebrated by the Archbishop of Granada with more than forty priests, many, many people of various Movements who for years lived with him in the parish, gathered there. This bore witness to the ability of Fr. Carlos to build a Church-communion that is enriched by the diversity of charisms and ministries.

*Toni Torres*

# Anderson Leonardo Pinheiro

*«I have a marvelous God»*

Anderson is a gen boy of Itapecuru-Mirim (Brazil). Because of the separation of his parents, when he was only three years old, he was cared for by his grandparents, thanks to them he started his journey in the Opera: from gen4, gen3, to gen2.

After he finished his studies and wanting to give back much that he had received from his grandparents, he accepted a job offer in another city. He confided to his friends that yes, he was earning money, but his spiritual life was domonishing and that maybe it was time to come back. At first he was hesitant because it seemed to him that going back meant that he had failed. But then he surrendered.

Coming home he began to experience strong pain and problems with digestion. Jesus Forsaken presented himself in all his splendour. He decided to embrace Him, repeating his «yes» everytime the physical and moral pains attacked him. Anderson felt that God loves him and with great simplicity he transmits this to the gen and the youth her is in contact with. «Today the pains are piercing – he wrote to a friend – but they were not able to remove the peace that I feel withn me».

Remembering a gen girl, Chiara Luce Badano who is now Blessed, he continued to welcome all those who came to visit him with his smile and jolly spirit. While he was in the hospital in São Luís, he received the unexpected visit of his father. God even gave him this gift!

On the evening of January 27, many of the community – gen, men and women Volunteers, focolarini and focolarine, families – felt called to go to him. It was a moment of spontaneous communion and of prayer, with photos and also a small snack for everyone. Also on that same evening a Volunteer, an extraordinary Eucharistic minister, brought him «the most beautiful gift», and so his joy was complete.



# Franco Trapani

*When God takes you  
by the hand*

The news of his «departure» (August 22, 2014), reached us only now, and so it gave us the chance to remember him on his first death anniversary.

Franco met the Ideal while he was doing his military service in Sicily. He adheres immediately and, returning to Gaeta (Italy), he became a Volunteer at a very young age. A Marine officer, he spent long periods away from home, but in every port he found the focolare and thanks to the means of communication he always remained linked to his nucleo.

Alongside his navigation, he also taught at the Nautical Institute. Besides his experience as a seaman, he transmitted to his students his continuous striving for and his iron will to live the Gospel. His work takes up most of his time, but he never shied away from his responsibilities to his family, with his wife Brunella (a married focolarina) and their children, Gloria, Francesca, Alessandra.

At 54 years old, he is struck by an illness. His total acceptance of the plan of God does not change: «When God takes you by the hand – he wrote from the hospital – you will never be bored. I experience that when I throw myself into the arms of Jesus Forsaken, I immediately find myself in the Risen Lord». The first operation is followed by another, but the illness shows no sign of receding. He discovered in light that «Jesus Forsaken is not physical suffering, he is not the uncertainty brought about by the illness, he is not the scarce nursing assistance. He is the lack of unity, the lack of love». For this reason he never missed his nucleo meetings and never stopped showing interest in

In the following two days he no longer felt any strong pains and confided to his grandmother that he dreamt about Paradise. On January 29, at just over 18 years old, he died. In an SMS sent a few days before he wrote: «It is enough for me to know that I have a marvelous God, who is my Shepherd. I know that I will never lack anything. Thank you, my Lord!».

*Humberto Luiz Almeida*



the community of Gaeta for which he dedicated the many «Hail Marys» that he would recite during the chemotherapy sessions.

At the home of Franco one could experience the reality of Paradiso that touched everyone. The Masses celebrated around him were of such intensity that one could truly experience realized «on earth as it is in heaven».

*Paolo Mottironi*

## Our relatives

The following passed on to the Next Life: **Angelina**, mother of **Gloria Campagnaro**, **Zita**, mother of **Maria Magnolfi**, and **Francesca**, mother of **Enrica Aceti**, focolarine at the Roman Mariapolis; **M. Eugenia**, mother of **Lucia Gutiérrez**, focolarina in Chile; **Johann**, father of **Maria Magerl**, focolarina in Vienna; **Paul**, father of **Theresia Bachmann**, focolarina in Stuttgart; **Gerda**, mother of **Christa**, focolarina in Ottmaring and of **Rita Overbeck**, married focolarina in Münster; **Oreste**, father of **Luisa Sello**, focolarina in Augsburg; **Giorgio**, father of **Anita Gei**, focolarina in Trent; **Waldomiro**, father of **Rosa Ayter**, focolarina in Porto Alegre; **Alice**, mother of **Enzo (Donato) Marazzi**, focolarino in the heavenly Mariapolis; **Lourdes**, mother of **Claire Caoile**, focolarina at the Roman Mariapolis, and of **Zaza**, married focolarina sposata in Perugia; **Maria**, mother of **Monica do Socorro Rodrigues**, focolarina in Loppiano; **Sileo Baggio**, father of **Eliana de Dominicis**, focolarina in Great Britain; **Fouad**, father of **Rima Saikali**, focolarina in the Middle East; **the mother of Antonietta (Mia) Giorleo**, focolarina in Naples; **Wanderley**, brother of **Ana Marcia Carlucio**, focolarina at the Mariapolis Piero (Kenya); **Alicia**, mother of **Leonor Corea**, focolarina in the Cittadella El Diamante (Mexico); **the mother of Krysia Kebede**, focolarina in Krakow, and of **Zofia**, married focolarina sposata in Poznan (Poland); **Antonio**, father of **Maria Emilia (Mila) M. Vitorino**, focolarina in Bogotá; **Zena**, mother of **Giorgio Stecchini**, focolarino in Lazio North; **Vittorina**, mother of **Giorgio (Gesim) Triulzi**, focolarino in Algeria.

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