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MARIAPOLI

Newsletter of the focolare movement

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March 14, 2016

**Dedicated
to Chiara
woman
of peace**

India

Encounter
with a people
who are experts of
dialogue

Belarus

Communities in
celebration for the
opening of the new
focolare

«Chiara Lubich, usando la più potente forza umana dell'amore e una fede forte nell'unità di tutto il genere umano secondo gli insegnamenti di Gesù Cristo, è stata scelta per svolgere un ruolo instacabile nel gettare i semi della pace e l'amore fra tutti i popoli»

[dalla motivazione del premio Difensore della Pace, Coimbatore - India - 5 gennaio 2001]



To be seeds of peace

**From the intervention of Chiara Lubich at the Un
«Toward a Unity of Nations and a Unity of Peoples»**

[...] come to you today, representing a Movement which is actively present in practically all the nations of the world. And although it is much smaller and less well-known, it still has something in common with this great and celebrated organization.

In fact, this reality also known as the «Focolare Movement», aims at bringing peace into the world. It is present in the Catholic Church and in more than 300 Christian Churches and in many other religions. And its membership also includes people of good will who have no specific religious belief.

As it seeks to build unity among individuals, among groups and among nations; as it dreams of a future in which the world will be truly united, it is a force for peace in the world.

It proposes, promotes and builds peace not at high-level meetings, as the United Nations does, but among ordinary people of every language, race, nationality and religion. (Applause)

But what is the bond of unity? What creates peace?

It is the love, love that lives deep in the heart of every human being. For the followers of Christ, this love can be a participation in the very love that is the life of God. It is a love that is strong, capable of loving even those who do not reciprocate but instead attack us as enemies. It is a love capable of forgiving.

For those who follow other religions, this love is often called benevolence and is expressed by the Golden Rule which is a beautiful tenet of many religions: «Do to

others what you would have them do to you. Do not do to others what you would not have them do to you».

For people who do not have a religious faith, love can mean philanthropy, solidarity, non-violence.

It is love, therefore, a human-divine love which does not exclude purely human love,

and which joins men and women, children and the elderly, persons of all walks of life, making them all of one heart. This has consequences on both the spiritual and material levels: in varying degrees, everyone shares what they have in an atmosphere of peace.

Because of the Focolare Movement's vocation to unity and peace, in representing

March 14, 2016

Chiara Lubich and peace

«Because of this spirituality, men and women today of almost all the nations of the world, are slowly but decisively striving to be, at least where they are, the seeds of a new people, of a world of peace, of greater solidarity above all with the least, the poorest; of a more united world». With these words Chiara Lubich expressed herself as she presented the Focolare Movement during the awarding of the UNESCO Prize for Peace Education. It was 1996, exactly twenty years ago. For this reason it was decided to dedicate the events on the occasion of the eighth anniversary of the departure of Chiara Lubich, on March 14, to the theme «Chiara and peace».

In various occasions in fact, in diverse latitudes, her untiring role in sowing seeds of peace and love among all persons was recognized. Some examples are: in 1988 in Germany she received the «Peace Prize of Augsburg», in 1995 from the Jewish community of Rome she was given the recognition «An olive tree for Peace»; in 2001 the Gandhian Institution Shanti Ashram and the Sarvodaya Movement awarded her the «Defender of Peace» Prize. If God had given her the charisma of unity, Chiara in fact always saw peace as the fruit of living unity: *«Peace is an effect of unity - she wrote in some of her notes of 1985 - When there is unity between us and God, there is interior peace. When there is unity among brothers, there is peace among brothers. When there is unity*

among peoples, there is peace in the world». For this reason it is more than ever a present need to deepen its contents, study in depth its rich implications and to analyze the countless realizations born from it.

There are numerous celebrations being planned in various Countries. Among these, some will be characterized by the theme of unity and dialogue as the path to peace, such as the events in Kampala (Uganda) or in Sarajevo (Bosnia Erzegovina). At Castel Gandolfo (Italy) during the event «The culture of dialogue as a factor for Peace» some civil and religious personalities will be attending; the event in Houston (USA) will have an interreligious characteristic «Unity in diversity»; in Solingen (Germany), where up to now some 3,000 refugees have arrived, the event will be linked to present day realities with the theme, «Living peace in multiplicity».

Nel 1996 Chiara Lubich aveva spiegato che il premio UNESCO sarebbe servito *«per costruire in una cittadella del Movimento in Asia, nelle Filippine, chiamata "Pace", una struttura utile al dialogo interreligioso».* E proprio quest'anno nelle Filippine si celebra il cinquantesimo anniversario dell'arrivo della spiritualità dell'unità. Tra gli eventi, il 14 marzo in un simposio si approfondirà il tema «Carisma dell'unità un'eredità senza tempo».

it here today, I feel at home, and I feel urged from within to offer the Movement's collaboration at a grass-roots level.

[...]

Our spirituality, modern and timely, is called the spirituality of unity. It has given rise to a new way of life that has been adopted by millions of people. This lifestyle is inspired by Christian principles, but it also emphasizes parallel values in other faiths and cultures. It has brought this world of ours - which is constantly striving to secure peace or strengthen it - a certain measure of peace and unity.

This spirituality is not something to be lived solely on one's own, but with others, together. It has a distinct community dimension.

It is rooted in a number of statements or truths found in the Gospel, which are all interrelated. [...]

But this communitarian spirituality is not necessarily tied to a particular Church or religion. It is universal and so, in one way or another, it can be lived by everyone.

In fact, it has given rise to a number of fruitful dialogues with all people: with Christians from many Churches, as I already said, with believers of various religions and with people of other ideological or philosophical persuasions. All find that this spirituality highlights the values in which they believe; and together we move toward that fullness of truth that all of us strive for.

Because of this spirituality, men and women of almost every nationality, wherever they may be, are slowly but surely trying to be seeds of a new people, of a more united world, a world at peace, one committed especially to those who are the weakest, the poorest.

Because of this spirituality, we feel the obligation to offer our contribution here, too, in this meeting place of nations, so as

to give a spiritual boost to the efforts being made to render the United Nations an institution which will measure up to the expectations of humanity.

Furthermore, there is a general consensus on the part of leading figures in international life concerning the need to re-read the meaning of reciprocity, one of the cornerstones of international relationships. And reciprocity lies at the basis of our spirituality, and therefore, of all that we do. It is a reciprocity which calls us to go beyond the old or new logic of particular alliances, and instead to establish relations with everyone, as required by true love. It asks us to take the initiative, without pre-conditions and expectations. It leads us to see the other as our other self and therefore to view every type of initiative in these terms, whether it concerns disarmament, development, or cooperation.

It is a reciprocity capable of leading each person actively involved in international life to identify with the other and with the other's needs and capabilities; not only in emergency situations but in the circumstances of everyday life.

The goals and activities of the United Nations attest to the fact that peace today has new names. And it requires, first of all, a concerted effort on everyone's part, especially the United Nations, to eliminate the category of "enemy" - any enemy.

It is not enough to exclude war; the conditions must be created in which every people can love the other's country as its own, in a reciprocal, unselfish giving relationship.

[...]

Chiara Lubich

New York, Headquarters of the United Nations, May 28, 1997. Excerpts of the intervention of Chiara Lubich in a Symposium at the Un

Cuba the «capital of unity»

To learn how to live as brothers

The meeting of Pope Francis and the Patriarch of Moscow Kirill on February 12 in Cuba, as shared by the persons of the Movement in the Caribbean island and in Moscow

They wrote us from Cuba: «The words of the Pope impressed us: "If it continues like this, Cuba will become the capital of unity". For the people of the community, and also for many friends of different Churches with whom we work together, it was spontaneous for us to think of our responsibility to make them a reality. We felt called to a greater commitment in this journey of communion at the service of society. The announcement of this meeting in Havana surprised us. We almost couldn't believe that the Pope was coming back just a few months after his first visit! The populace in general did not grasp the importance of this event, as many did not know the Orthodox Church and even less the Patriarch; the people knew more about the Catholic Church. This time the *media* helped in creating the awareness of being in front of a historical encounter».

And from Moscow: «A historical event which calls us firsthand and which has a very special significance for us here in Russia. We feel that it is also like an answer to our prayers and to our life given for unity. Eversince, we Orthodox and Catholic members feel that we are part of the same family, that of Chiara, but we are also aware that unity is not yet complete: the wounds still exist and these are a



source of suffering for us. But this event has shown to the entire world, and firstly to us, that the unity between our Churches is closer than we thought and hope is more alive, more concrete, stronger.

At the vigil of this encounter, invited by the Archbishop, Mons. Paolo Pezzi, we prayed with the various communities and Movements whose members belong to the Orthodox and catholic Churches. It was an important sign that expressed the desire and the commitment, also of many lay people, to build unity. Here are some impressions: "Now we can openly say that Orthodox and Catholics are brothers and sisters, just as the heads of our Churches have expressed". "This is a starting point for us to work together". "For many years I participated in the Week of prayer for Christian unity, but it seemed as if nothing was happening. The prayers were accumulated and now they took effect".

These words from the Joint Declaration of Pope Francis and Patriarch Kirill call out to us: «*Much of the future of humanity will depend on our capacity to give shared witness to the Spirit of truth in these difficult times*» (n.28).

Prepared by the editorial board

Moscow, february 11, 2016.
The prayer for the meeting of Cuba





Big Zone of Africa

The tree that is growing

Notes of a trip of the Councillors of the big Zone of Africa, Juanita Majury and Joseph Assoud, who recently returned from a long trip in Africa

A big tree, fruit of the tenacity and the dedication of those who lived the Ideal of unity in these lands, a tree which grows in spite of the fragility and the challenges of the times, the difficult and delicate moments. This is how we saw the communities which we met in our trip to the Ivory Coast, Burkina Faso and Nigeria together with Maria Goretti, focolarina from Burundi who works with us at the Center.

Ivory Coast

The Little Town Victoria in Man, 600 kilometers northeast of Abidjan gave us a very beautiful impression. It offers various services, such as the Medical and Social Center with good quality facilities and services, that is very much appreciated and at a relatively low cost. They have an average of 80 patients a day. It's twinning with Italy allows consultations by internet when the opinion of a specialist is needed.

Then there is the Nutrition Center that teaches mothers how to feed their children with a complete and balanced diet, using indigenous products and plants, encouraging

their cultivation. In some villages the percentage of malnutrition is as high as 50%. A team from the Center goes there to hold formation courses.

Often the children from the surrounding villages pass through the Little Town on their way to school and the youth often come to play football. The parish is animated by two priest focolarinos. On Sundays the church is packed and during the week there are around a hundred people who attend Mass. The priests also undertake evangelization activities in fifteen villages.

At Abidjan we met the community. It was a moment which began with the traditional ceremony that created an atmosphere of profound listening wherein it was possible to welcome and communicate reciprocally what each one had in their heart. We would not have been able to do this if we started to speak immediately. We realized, once again, that there are values in traditions which are a fruit of long experience, which we must treasure.

Burkina Faso

There was truly the family among all of us. The experience with our intern members in Burkina Faso was done during the weekend. They came also from far away to represent their communities, such as the three who came from Mali.

We had the possibility of getting to know this Country which is the closest to to the Sahara Desert. Many survive with water from wells and not all of these water sources are potable everywhere. In spite of the scarcity of



Burkina Faso, at the meeting with the community. Due to the distance and heavy climate, the most common means of transport are the bicycle and motorcycle.

this precious element, one can find, especially in the south, various types of vegetables which are cheap. This reflects the character of the *burkinabé*, a hard-working people who do not allow themselves to be crushed by the everyday challenges. They possess a tenacity which is also reflected in the political field: during the crisis of September 2015, the people were able to obtain their demands thanks to the contribution of the religious and traditional authorities.

Nigeria

Determination and faith in the love of God together with the joy of belonging to the Work of Mary, these were the gifts we received in Nigeria both at Onitsha and at Abuja.



Nigeria. At the Fraternity School of Igbariam

Nigeria is the most populous Country of Africa. The two main religions are Christianity and Islam. The focal center was opened in 1985.

A characteristic of the Nigerians is optimism and industriousness, in often difficult conditions. In Onitsha there are two projects that make a notable contribution to the local society: Casa Alba and Fraternity School. The first is a «school-enterprise» for disadvantaged young girls (at present there are 23) which provides the necessary formation through work so that they could eventually lead independent lives.

At the Fraternity School of Igbariam, the 214 students from kindergarten to grade six, receive a meal daily aside from the education given. Everyday they throw the «dice of love» and try to live it. Teachers and students grow together in this new teaching experience. The lack of water and electricity do not take away the children's joy in coming to school.

We also met some of those who came representing their far away communities (Jos, Yola, Yakoko...) who are living in tense situations due



Abubakar (second from the right beside Joseph) worked in the hospital of Jalingo, where there is a big camp for refugees who came from the cities that were destroyed by the terrorists. With what he earned he was able to buy palm oil, manioc and other necessities to bring to the camp.

to the socio-political and economic factors aside from the pervading religious fanaticism. Abubakar is a Muslim gen boy from Yakoko, in the north of Nigeria. He brings the Word of life also to the Muslim communities where – as he himself shared – they would discuss on how to put it into practice, for example, how to become a big family by helping one another reciprocally.

Juanita Majury, Joseph Assouad



Trichy

Enconter with India 15 years of fruits

The visit of Emmaus Voce and Jesús Morán to the Focolare community in the vast sub-continent 15 years after the trip of Chiara Lubich. An occasion to share the fruits gathered throughout the years, the life, the experiences made and the challenges to face

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We wanted Emmaus and Jesús to get to know the Movement in this Country with all its multiple expressions, the widely diverse local communities, the relationship with the Church in India, the experiences of inter-religious dialogue, the initiatives in the social field in favour of the poorest and the friendship with other Movements or projects inspired by the charism of unity. But also a little bit of the India in which we live with its characteristic diversity and contrasts.

It was so much more than just a simple encounter with people and places: a spiritual experience and a moment of light in order to understand what God wants from us today.

In the much-awaited meeting with the communities of **Northern India** what emerged was the unity of the indigenous peoples of the different regions, which is typical of this zone in the Country. Emmaus, underlining their experience, encouraged everyone to be a powerful witness of a world where



Bangalore

diversity is not a cause for discrimination, but rather an enrichment. In **Delhi** there was a meeting with nine Bishops, many of whom met the Movement while still seminarians or priests. Jesús then told us: *«It was one of the pearls of this trip because of the communion we shared, it was a profound encounter, a moment of "focolare"».*

At the conclusion of this first stage, at the India International Centre, a convention was held for around sixty people of different faiths and cultures. Mr. Merchant, the noteworthy representative of the Bahá'í community of the Indian capital was the Moderator. The programme offered some answers to the challenges that dialogue has to face today. During the afternoon the experience of the Focolare Movement in this field was presented.



There were fifty thousand members of the Hindu Swadhyaya Movement who were present in **Kolhapur**, in the State of Maharashtra (south-west) who came to listen to their leader, Didi

dle of the '90s, came as the parish priest in a very poor village in the heart of rural India. He started a project to help poor children and, also many *dalit* (untouchables) in their studies.

Today the project involves hundreds of minors, but also lay people and priests, in a lively and articulated community. Emmaus and Jesús wanted to meet them. *«I would like to thank each one of you – Emmaus said at the end. The Focolare i supporting everything that is here, but in this moment I feel that I am being supported by each one of you».*

This was a sentiment that was repeated in the evening, at the Thanksgiving Mass with around 1200 persons.

During the three days spent in **Coimbatore** (Tamil Nadu) the programme included meetings organized by the Shanti Ashram Movement - which has

been close to the Focolare for many years - with the children of the project Bala Shanti, with the participants if the twenty-first roundtable talks with the members of the Sarvodaya Gandhian Movement and the Focolare, and with more than 1,000 youth during the «Youth leadership summit»: moments that confirmed how much, through such realities, the interreligious dialogue is has progressed in these years. During this visit some possible ways for a collaboration with the three Gandhian institutes in Tamil Nadu were studied, with the aim of inserting Gandhian studies into the course of Interreligious dialgue at the Sophia University Institute of Loppiano.

Athavale, and then Emmaus who spoke of the friendships that links our two Movements. Both shared the common commitment to universal brotherhood.

In **Bangalore**, in the south of India, a frenetic city, Emmaus and Jesús spent a day with the community. if it is true that here the structure of the Movement has some difficulty in emerging, there is on the other hand a great desire to bring the Ideal of unity to the masses and to live for *«that all may be one»*, starting first of all from the families of the Movement. After the expeirences shared, Emmaus and Jesús expressed their joy in seeing the life of this community which is young and fresh.

In **Trichy**, the next stop-over, the presence of the Focolare was born from an experience in which the first community gradually took shape, profoundly rooted in the society and in the local Church. The first protagonists were Fr. Susai Alangaram, priest focolarino who in the mid-



Bangalore

New Delhi



A mystery revealed

Pluralism, dialogue, a sense of the sacred: some of the gifts that India can offer in particular to the West. Excerpts of the answers of Emmaus and Jesús on the occasion of the last Collegamento CH

«My first impression was this – confided Emmaus – I expected to encounter a mystery meaning something unknown to me and I came back with the impression that I've encountered a mystery much greater than what I had thought, not something unknown but something great, grandiose, deep, absolute.



So my impression is that this has to be discovered bit by bit and I'm glad that our people of the Movement are there in India and they will also help all of us to discover it more and more».

“My first sentiment is on one hand a great desire for the absolute - Jesús shared - a desire to enter more and more into the interior part of my being, to love the pluralism and not to be afraid of diversity; also the beauty of the people, there were always many people. . . We met many youth, many teens: It is very clear in India that the youth are the future. And lastly we were impressed by their pride in having received the gift of the charism of unity and of being a part of the Work of Mary».

With regards to the meeting with different exponents of the Hindu world Emmaus

commented: «I was very impressed by how they live of Chiara, of her thoughts, of the friendship they built with her, of the relationship they had. But it is not a remembrance, but for them it is a living and present reality, also because it has continued during all this time with the persons of the Movement who are there. I would say that they live it with an extraordinary intensity. It's as if they know Chiara better than we do in some respects, they quote her continually, even the page of her book where they read these things, in a very impressive manner».

«What strikes you – Jesús added – is the personal and spiritual quality of our Hindu friends; and also their intellectual level, because they are personalities in their field. We truly had the impression that we learned profoundly from them. And they also had the rather unique ability to grasp the divine in the persons, the essential, that is why the relationship with them is immediately profound. India is truly a great gift. The Indian people love pluralism and tolerance very much. But the interesting thing is to see how they live it: in an inclusive way. They see to it that each one is able to explicitly manifest his or her own faith, therefore also its symbols, its gestures. They greatly underline silence, which is fundamental for all types of dialogue. This is a very great gift for the West, which instead lives pluralism in a way that is almost excluding».

«Silence - concluded Emmaus - expresses also the religious soul of the Indian people, and so at a certain point I said: “The gift that you can give to all the West is to make us rediscover the sense of God, to experience God”».

And finally in **Mumbai**, the last week of the trip of Emmaus, Jesús and the «team» from the Center, with Antonella Liguori and Roberto Catalano, concillors for Asia, there were various meetings with the communities of Mumbai, Pune, Vasai, Goa, and with representatives from Sri Lanka.

At the meeting with the Zone council Emmaus confided her joy at having found the family of Chiara everywhere, with brothers and sisters who are bringing ahead the life of the Ideal there where they are.

During an evening with the gen boys and girls, the answers to their questions touched on topics regarding purity to discernment of one's vocation, to the relationship with those who have left the Movement. «It was as if the answers were made just for me - a gen2 boy said - Now I have more energy and more courage to live the Ideal in profundity and to make an experience of life even if we cannot meet often with the gen». «In the answer on purity - a gen2 girl confided - Emmaus and Jesús explained that it implies respect for the freedom of the person in front of you and it means to give God the first place even in these relationships. It does not mean that we must exclude but we must continue to open ourselves up to the others, to let them enter into our life and to make ourselves one with them».



Mumbai

With the visit to **Vasai**, the diocese to the north of Mumbai, there were 600 persons, among whom were priests, religious and lay people, gathered together to celebrate the end of the Year dedicated to consecrated life. There,



Con il consiglio di Zona

new possibilities for the spread of the Ideal were opened.

There were various interreligious events. At the University of Mumbai, during an academic conference organized by Hindu professors with whom we are in contact, we met new professors who were able to participate in the experience of dialogue throughout these years. With a small group of them we met again to explore new ways to study in depth the charisma of Chiara in the light of a Hindu perspective and new paths to bring our typical way of dialogue to the university students through a collaboration with the Sophia University Institute.

In a profound moment of communion with the focolarini and the focolarine of the Zone, Emmaus and Jesús left us with some challenges for the future. Emmaus, summarizing all that had emerged concluded in this way: «... to make the family-focolares grow; to maintain steady and strong the knots of the net so as to be one heart and one soul; to have a crazy love for Jesus Forsaken, for this heroism which is the heroism of one who chooses God on the cross but who has already risen».

With this mandate, the impression was strong in everyone that truly something new was beginning for the Movement in India.

Giuliana Taliana, Antonio Salimbeni

Please go to mariapoli online
www.focolare.org/notiziariomariapoli
 for the different stages of the trip

In Belarus

A dream comes true

The focolare center was opened in Belarus. The joy of the community who since the '90s met the Ideal of unity

The long-awaited arrival of the focolare center in Minsk became a reality: on February 22 Chiara, Italian, Natasha, Belarussian, Alessandra, Brazilian, and Ludmila, of the Czech Republic, arrived in the Belarussian capital welcomed by the concrete and delicate love of the community.

To confirm such an expectation were the words of the Archbishop, Mons. Tadeusz Kondrusiewicz to Emmaus and Jesús, who came in May 2015 to visit the community of Belarus: «The world needs witnesses – he said. They believe in you because they see your life and not because you teach. Come to this land!».

In Belarus, the Ideal arrived already in the '90s through the Dehoniani Fathers and soon six – among whom was Elena who later became the first Belarussian Volunteer – participated in the Mariapolis of Lublin (Po-

land). From there the meetings in Belarus started and the trips of the men and women focolarini. The following year, a big group participated in the youthfest in Warsaw and a month after 40 from Poland came to Belarus to prepared the Genfest '93 together. The trips and meetings continued in Poland and in 1997 the first Belarussina Mariapolis was held in Lahavicy, with the participation of 70 people. This event was then repeated every year. A turning point in the life of the community took place when starting from 2007, temporary summer focolares were came made up of mem-

bers from the different barnaches. The vocations to the Movement began to sprout: gen, men and women Volunteers, families (two of them, the Papkovskiye and the Matys of Minsk, attend the :oreto School in Loppiano for one year), married focolarine and focolarini, priests, gen3, gen4 and one focolarina, Natasha, who is part of the group that is now in Minsk.

«What is the significance for you – we asked her – who had experienced the anxieties and the hopes of your people, to come back to Belarus to open the focolare?». «Immediately after the fall of the Berlin Wall



Chiara



– Natasha confided - I ardently wished that in my Country too things would change. We discovered that we were Belarussian (not Soviets) and that our people had its own History, its own language, roots and very beautiful values. Me too, just like many youth of that time, I wanted to contribute to change. when I met the Ideal I understood that only God is the true source of the rebirth of my people. But how? By changing hearts. Now after these years of living the Ideal in other countries with brothers and sisters from many parts of the world, I believe in this even more. I believe that Jesus in the midst will renew the Belarussian people they way he has done with every people on this earth, but not only to give back to us our identity or to resolve the various problems, but with another perspective: *“that all may be one”*.

Aside from Minsk, the persons of the community are also found in Lahavicy and in Pastavy. For all of them, the opening of the focolare center is a reason for gret joy

Inspite of the difficult economic situation, each one wanted to contribute to furnishing the apartment, precisely because in the focolare, they saw this precious «ruby» that, like in a watch, assures the vitality of the whole family of the Movement. «Coming to Belarus – Alessandra said - is to continue to live that “game of love” which allows me to enter more profoundly in the union with God. I feel lucky to be here, in this His Kingdom of Heaven, which is made visible also through the hundredfold that we receive everyday».

Upon the announcement that a women’s focolare center would be opened in Minsk someone said: «They must be strong women!». The four focolarine know that their only strength does not come from them, but from Jesus himself who is made present through their reciprocal love (Mt 18,20) and by their unconditional choice of Jesus Forsaken. «For me – Chiara shared – to come here meant to give my life again to God, ready for everything that He would like from me. He gives me strength and a freedom that no one can take away».

«For this new beginning - Ludmila (Lumi) concluded for all of them – we feel that we must make our own this phrase from a letter of Chiara of December 13, 1956 for the zone of France where the focolare was about to be opened: “You are young, poor, facing many difficulties: but precisely because of this, God will work. This is what He did with us, He will do the same with you».¹

prepared by the editorial board

¹ From the book *Una via nuova* (A new way) by Chiara Lubich, pag.78



Gen 2

Together from the entire Brazil

**The gen Center meets the gen girls and boys of this big Country.
An important stage in the journey towards just one new Zone**

Brazil is a nation of continental dimensions. It is quite unique in itself: a mosaic of races and cultures. For a year now the members of the Focolare Movement are working to transform the six previous Zones into «One Brazil». It was up to the second generation to make the first step: to gather all the gen boys and girls from all points of this big Country. So for the first time, in the beginning of 2016, the gen travelled from north to south, from east to west to meet as a single Movement, welcoming as a big gift, the visit of the two persons responsible for the worldwide gen movement, Gabriella Zoncapè and Marius Müller.

In every meeting, whether big or small, we witnessed what Chiara Lubich described as the «opening of the mystical Rose»: each one came bringing a life of difficulties, overcomings, joys and experiences, and we all went home renewed, full of gratitude and hope, ready to bring this fire and this light to all the points of this vast nation.



Gabriella and Marius arrived on January 7. The first stop-over: Belém, Mariapolis Gloria (in the north of Brazil), where they met 95 gen from the various States of the Amazons (Pará, Amapá, Amazonas, Piauí and Maranhão). During the two-day meeting, the gen presented to them the typical characteristics of this immense land, where the certainty is alive that unity can bridge distances, time, economic, social and spiritual difficulties and that it is possible to incarnate the Ideal in one's own life.

January 13 gennaio, new stop-over: Mariapolis Santa Maria, Igarassu (in the state of Pernambuco, northeast) to meet the «gen whites» and the assistants from the whole Brazil for a school of nine days. They were 172, from all the zonette. Two focolarine, two Argentinian gen and a gen girl from Colombia also came bringing with them a wider experience of the big Latin American Zone to which they belong.



From the exchange of experiences, what emerged was the journey and the steps still to be taken towards the realization of the new set-up. The school gave each one the most precious patrimony of the spirituality: the highest and most profound experience of Chiara and the first pope and popi in '49, to form us with our roots firmly in the Ideal. At the same time certain topics and current local challenges were deepened, underlining that the gen2 are the «updating» of the Work of Mary, called to incarnate her, genuine and alive, in the context where each one is.

The words of Chiara, spiritually very much present the whole time, fell like seeds in fertile ground. many questions were raised which were answered by the light of Jesus in the midst.

«The school of the “whites” helped me to make a new step as gen movement – a gen

After this meeting, Marius went to Argentina for a congress of the gen boys of the Southern Cone, while Gabriella went to the Mariapolis Ginetta (around 40 kilometers from San Paolo), where she met the gen boys and girls of the center-south of the Country, who were there for their congress.

It was the days of the Carnival. Waiting for her were 330 gen from Brasília and Rio Grande do Sul. After listening to the first lesson of Chiara on Paradise '49 and a talk of Peppuccio Zanghi which generated in them a new perspective on the importance of the charism of unity, many said that they felt a new push to live the gen vocation with profundity and radicalness: «...We were living moments of confusion and bewilderment because of the lack of perspective after the death of Chiara. This meeting



With Marius Müller



With Gabriella Zoncapè (second from the right)

girl commented. Just as Silvana said during her last days: “now is the time for responsibility, go ahead gen!”».

After the school ended, Gabriella and Marius began a series of meetings to get to know the typical characteristic of the Northeast, the cradle of the Ideal in Brazil. It was like going on a pilgrimage as they visited - aside from the Mariapolis Santa Maria - Recife, João Pessoa, Aracaju and Maceió, to get to know the gen girls and boys, to see up close the problems of their cities, the challenges, the struggles and the fruits of the gen life. In everyone there was a rebirth of the gen vocation, the readiness to overcome every temptation to be discouraged, launched to transform the earth into paradise through love.

has renewed me as a gen and has given me a new courage regarding the future of the gen movement» – said Luís Felipe Coelho of Brasília.

«This time spent with Gabriella and Marius was important to build bridges: between Brazil, the Gen Center and the Center of the Movement; between the gen girls and gen boys and their assistants; between the Movement in Latin America. These bridges will bring us to the reality of a united world which we want to build, and at the same time it is already a reality. Now we are stronger in bringing ahead our revolution (to go out), with the certainty that we go ahead together and more prepared!» underlined Cynthia of Belo Horizonte.

The gen girls and boys of the Rainbow Unit of Brazil

Consacrated women and religious men

New wine in new wineskins

For the first time the Consacrated women and the Religious men of the Movement spent two days together in their respective annual meetings. They were 240, coming from Italy, different European countries, Africa, the Philippines, China



In the year dedicated to Unity, the novelty and the thousands of facets of the charism of unity became more evident thanks to the communion expressed in the richness of the male and female presence. Different and yet complementary ways to see and to live the Ideal of Chiara Lubich, was a living proof of unity in diversity. The freedom and the joy of being sons and daughters of Chiara was experienced in the communion of our charisms, clarified and placed at the service of the Church.

The presence at the meeting of Cardinal João Braz de Aviz, Prefect of the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, confirmed this shared journey. In his intervention, and in the dialogue that followed, referring to Pope Francis, the Cardinal affirmed with clarity that the individual spirituality is no longer enough, even if it remains valid and its fundamental

elements are still necessary: «We need to put new wine into new wineskins, strongly aiming at the quality of the relationships in communitarian life. We must – the Prefect said with courage – tear down the personal and individualistic structures that we have built, so as to be in the novelty that is being asked of the Church today,

like for example, the way of living the rapport of authority-obedience. The rapport of superior-inferior destroys fraternity. The real authority is that which takes the last place and serves evangelically». And still more: «We must be experts of communion, overcoming criticism, petty quarrels, dislikes etc. We must go to the existential peripheries together, putting aside our ego. We must be courageous and to evangelize together, with the richness of the diversity of our charisms».

Starting from the Trinitarian light, the man-woman relationship can also be better understood, which is also valid for



consecrated life. «Just as in the intimacy of God there is both unity and diversity, so it is with man and woman, there is the relationship of unity and diversity. The other is necessary to me in order to love and diversity enriches unity».

The theme of Emmaus on Unity: *our charism*, has opened up the horizon of this reality, through the three key words: Unity is truly a gift that comes from God as an authentic, marvelous, constant stimulus to our commitment, it makes us understand the responsibility we have and it puts in front of us the goal, laden with objectives to be reached with the grace of God.

During the days spent together, another strong moment was the theme presented by Renata Simon, responsible at the Center of the Movement together with Francisco Canzani, for the aspect of «Wisdom and Studies». Using the writings of Chiara, both well-known and unpublished, she highlighted the profound roots of our dialogues, reviving the awareness that our life of unity can be seen in the dynamics of dialogue. A root that is capable of overcoming every difficulty is the constant relationship with Jesus Forsaken, who made himself nothing in order to redeem everything. The rich communion that followed re-echoed the power of this challenge, both within our religious families as well as in the Church and in society.

A religious woman: «I am grateful for the gift of unity, and I am ready to make the commitment, as I am always more drawn to our goal. The strong point of

conversion was during the first day when we were invited to remain in the silence that comes after the cry: my cry, the cry that gathers, because afterwards, that silence is Jesus the Risen One, the wisdom that speaks. To gather first my cry and then that of the others made me experience the need of knowing how to be empty».

The dimension of unity that many live in the local communities was also beautiful: «We are a small local community, rich in vocations and with men and women religious; we meet in a parish, so that whoever would like to participate can feel free. We try to be a living heart. We are preparing the Mariapolis of the zonetta and we religious have also been entrusted with as aspect. We are always working for the whole Movement and for everything».

A note of hope for the future. Some experiences of the young religious were also presented, when they met in different places after the meeting last September 2015 in Rome with Pope Francis. (see Mariapoli n. 10-11/2015) Significant was the experience of Spain. The consecrated women and the men religious of the Movement there, without appearing on the forefront, but working in the background with passion, serving and loving, were able to organize a Congress on behalf of the Spanish Conference of Religious with the participation of 250 young men and women religious.

Sr. Antonia Moiola, Fr. Salvo D'Orto



School of ecumenism

The outposts of unity

At Castel Gandolfo 70 persons of six Churches share the joys and challenges in the shared journey towards unity

It was the perfect date chosen for the twenty-first school of ecumenism held in Castel Gandolfo from February 4 to 7. It was precisely on those days that the whole world was watching a great gesture of unity, long-awaited for a thousand years: the meeting between Pope Francis and Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and the whole Russia.



In dialogue with the Waldensian theologian Paolo Ricca

An event that inserts itself in a present that is rich in signs of reconciliation and communion among the Churches. In June 2016 the Pan-Orthodox Holy Synod will be held which, after thirteen centuries, will reunite fourteen Patriarchs and Churches. 2016 also marks the beginning of the year commemorating the 500 years of the Protestant reform which, for the first time will be celebrated with an ecumenical spirit. On October 31, Pope Francis will take part in the ecumenical liturgy at the opening ceremonies promoted in Lund (Sweden) by the World Lutheran Federation and the Pontifical Council for the promotion of Christian unity.

The commemorative events, will also include that of «Together for Europe» which will be held in Munich (Germany, June 30 - July 2) which hopes to offer an eloquent testimony of collaboration among Christians of more than 400 Movements and Communities of various Churches entitled: «Encounter. Reconciliatio. Future».

Among the objectives of the school at Castel Gandolfo, with seventy participants from six Churches, was that of sharing the joys and challenges of the ecumenical journey of the various Churches, studying in-depth the approach of the charism of unity of Chiara Lubich.

To initiate the work, we interviewed Gabri Fallacara – a witness of the early times – with whom we traced the journey made by the Focolare Movement in the dialogue among Christians since the '60s. Then Renata Simon, focolarina responsible at the Center of the Movement for the aspect of «Wisdom and Studies» shared, through some writings of Chiara of 1949, how dialogue is in the DNA of this spirituality ever since the beginning.

The intervention of the Waldensian theologian Paolo Ricca brought all those present to the painful wounds and the secular division among the Churches, arousing a greater awareness of the importance of the visit of Pope Francis to the Waldensian Church in Turin (Italy) last June 2015. «From what I understood – Pastor Ricca said among other things – the Focolare Movement is a group that anticipates, I think, in its reality, in its composition, that which

we hope will be Christian unity. Rather, what the present Pope described, even if it in brief, as a reconciled diversity [...] the Focolare is exactly this, they are "reconciled diversity" because there are members of different Christian Churches that not only co-exist, but they live unity among them which is practically Christian unity». «Therefore, if I understand it well – he continued – you are the outpost, the frontline of the ecumenical Movement precisely because of the way in which you are made and how you live your vocation». An affirmation which, as one of the participants observed «calls us to an even greater faithfulness to Jesus Forsaken and to merit the presence of Jesus among us, the icon of a "reconciled diversity"».

A focus on the relationship of the Catholic Church with the Ecumenical Council of Churches was the contribution of Rev. Andrzej Choromanski of the Pontifical Council for the unity of Christians. Fr. Hubertus Blaumeiser, priest focolarino and Mirvet Kelly, Syro-Orthodox focolarina, presented an in-depth report on the document «The Church: towards a common vision». The Focolare Movement adhered to the request that Faith and Constitution, the theological department of the Ecumenical Council of Churches, made



to all the Churches, Universities and others to offer an answer. It was prepared by five theologians of the Movement, belonging to four Churches.

Prof. Dimitrios Keramidis spoke of the Pan-Orthodox Holy Synod which will be held in the month of June in

Crete, placing it in the context of the history of the Orthodox Church with its structure and the depth of its doctrine. It will be a very important meeting for the representatives of the fourteen Patriarchates and Orthodox Churches - which can be compared to the Second Vatican Council for the Catholic Church - and he added: «It will surely be also for the entire ecumenical world».

In the moments of sharing we saw with joy that, if in the past the sharing of local experiences highlighted the difficulties and the efforts needed in the search for dialogue, now we can see the fruits that such a common commitment to live in and for the local Church has produced.

This is the «dialogue of life», to which we are committed in this journey together towards unity.

Prepared by Centro "Uno"



NH a totally new New Humanity

New Humanity, the tri-monthly magazine of culture of the Focolare Movement, has changed its design!

38 years after Chiara founded it, the magazine is being renewed through a radical change in its graphic design and undergoing an update of its editorial process. The first and biggest novelty is that every issue will be dedicated to a specific Focus, that is, an important topic that will take up half of the magazine. For 2016 the planned topics of *Focus* are the following:

- NH 221 • Half a century after Luther;
- NH 222 • 25 years of the Economy of Communion;
- NH 223 • A common vision of the Church;
- NU 224 • Science and faith.

Will there be other columns? Certainly. We will continue to publish some essays, chosen from among those sent to the editorial board, in a special column called *Punti cardinali* (Main points). These will be chosen based on their formative relevance, for their original in-depth study, and for the easily understandable style of the language used. A special place then, will be dedicated to our spiritual sources. We will continue to print unpublished works of Chiara Lubich and the cofounders, such as the researches done on *Paradise '49*.

To become a magazine of culture, today, is not easy. Due to the crisis in the publishing world, some magazines have already stopped their activity or are in the process of doing so. It is evident that the cultural instruments – such as *New Humanity* – need to accompany their editorial production with an organized presence on the web. For this reason we would

like to invite you to follow *New Humanity* also on Facebook, Twitter and Linked-in. You will be able to see the new things, to come in contact with its authors, to have some previews, to interact with the Editorial Council and the Scientific Commission. There will be some brief interviews of those who write the articles which will help us to enter into their materials and their interpretations.



The next issue of the magazine, which is coming at the end of March, will be an enjoyable and interesting surprise for everyone!

The *Focus*, prepared by Fr. Hubertus Blaumeiser, is dedicated to Luther, at almost 500 years from the beginning of the Reformation. Inside *Focus* you will find writings of two eminent theologians of the ecumenical world, one is Lutheran and the other is Catholic, while Callan Slipper will help us to get to know a new and modern concept of ecumenism. In *Focus* you will also find the «Five ecumenical imperatives» produced by the joint Catholic-Lutheran commission, contained within a wider document.

The adventure of Duccia

In dialogue with Ilaria Pedrini, author of the book *"The other 19th century in the witness of Duccia Calderari"*, published by Città Nuova

What is the value of this book for the persons of the Movement and for those who would like to know about the Focolare Movement?

In the last fifteen years of her life Duccia Calderari lived with extraordinary energy and effectiveness the mandate received from Chiara Lubich to be «a witness of the early times»: there were countless times in which she joyfully and solemnly shared her experience to families or groups who came to Trent to visit «hometown» of Chiara, that experience which started with the well-known story of the «size 42 shoes». We hope that this task will continue, through the pages of this book which – due to the abundance of material from her stories, shared with her unique style

The part dedicated to the essays (*Punti cardinali*) will contain writings of Michele Zanzucchi, Silvio Minnetti and Lucia Abignente. Another pearl is the contribution of Fabio Ciardi, which will guide us, through an original path, to get to know *Paradise '49*. Finally, the next issue will see the debut of a cartoon, by Fr. Giovanni Berti, who is responsible for the column *Murales*, which will encourage reflection, through a satirical illustration.

Christina Roth

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– we hope will be like a sort of autobiography to the readers.

There could also be an additional interesting point: the possibility of going to the roots of the «design» of Duccia in being the first Volunteer of God. In the outline of her personality, in her many interests, in the generosity which made her capable of giving her life for others, in the clear and courageous choices she made, what becomes evident is the personality of a woman that Chiara had beside her and to whom she had written three fundamental – two of which have never been published before – regarding a «design», a «very splendid way», an original, new «vocation».

Aside from this, many will be happy to discover in the biography a strong link, both human and spiritual, between Duccia and Igino Giordani-Foco, with whom she was a collaborator both in the editorial board of *La Via* (in 1950-'52) and also at the «Centro Uno» for ecumenism from 1961 to 1980, the year Foco died.

Did you know Duccia personally?

Yes, I had the joy and good fortune of being in that nucleus that Duccia had chosen to join in the final year of her life, as shared in her biography. From September to December 2008 we would meet every 15 days at her house. They were marvelous meetings, unforgettable, where she brought the Wisdom of the early times.

prepared by the editorial board

the complete interview of Ilaria Pedrini can be found in *Mariapoli* online: www.focolare.org/notiziariomariapoli



Southern Cone and Ireland Two original missions



Experiences in «going out» to the peripheries that have intensified the race towards «that all may be one»



the experience at El Espinal

Southern Cone

«The first surprise was when we went with them to burn the tobacco leaves and to spin wool together. Out of concern for us they said: you will get dirty, you will get tired! But this is what we really wanted: to enter in their lives, to share their sweat of working in the *cerco* (tobacco plantation)». Talking to Marisa Lopéz, focolarina in Buenos Aires, who with other six focolarine and focolarini from various Argentinian cities, together with 35 gen and youth from Argentina and Paraguay, went to animate the mission in El Espinal, a small village in the Cordillera of the Andes. Before leaving, they had intentionally not made any programme so as to allow it to come from the heart of the people. Even this was part of thinking... outside the box!

At the first meeting, just two people came, up to the end of the week when we reached 150 participants. No one ever imagined that in the chapel where the priest came only on Sunday, and aside from the celebration of the Word, the sharing on the life of the Gospel which became

always more profound as the days passed, we would end up dancing the *cumbia* (typical Argentinian dance), accompanied by the musical band which they themselves invited.

In the village, since it was vacation time, there were also many youth who study in the city. Gradually, they too came and joined us: hikes, football games, movies, or just to «be with those missionaries» who are quite special. They were, most probably, the first beneficiaries of the mission in spite of the frequent lack of electricity, gas and running water and the continuous noise due to the renovations being done in the school where we were housed. «Everything was precarious – commented Augustin, in focolare at the Mariapolis Lia – but everything formed part of that “crazy desire to give” that pushed us to go there, and

which at times, surrounded by obstacles, we risked losing».

In those seven days the Providence was never lacking, which – as they said – surprised and moved us.

Several youth expressed the desire to deepen the life of the focolare. And so the focolarini and focolarine had to share their stories while seated on a rock along the river, while walking on the road, while having lunch, while washing dishes or simply while sharing a *mate*. Some youth decided to go to O'Higgins to make the gen experience; a young girl, after spending a year far from God, went to Confession, another hopes to start a group of youth in here place and asked how she could do it.

The gen of Salta made the commitment to go back every month to continue this original «mission» and to build together with the people of the village that «many but one body».

Ireland

«The updating on the Assembly – Aine, an Irish Volunteer shared – gave me a new push to "go out" to the peripheries. But being retired and not having a community of the Movement close by, I didn't know how to concretize it».

An occasion presented itself through a lady whom Aine met while she was still teaching, who asked her if she would like to help in bringing a breath of fresh air to a nearby parish.

«In the past – continued Aine – I would have found a thousand excuses not to be involved: it's not our project, we must give priority to the activities of the Movement, etc. But now I felt that this could be the chance for me to go... to the "peripheries"».

The parish priest explained to Aine that those coming to church were only exclusively the elderly, but that in the neighbourhood

there is a great influx of young immigrant families from Africa, Asia and Eastern Europe, who, although still enthusiastic about their faith, find it difficult to insert themselves in the parish. So an idea came up to celebrate a Sunday Mass for the families, linked to the preparation of the children to receive the sacraments.

«We began with a very small group – Aine shared. Then slowly, getting the children and the parents involved and by going to their homes to announce the project, many parents began to participate with enthusiasm, and their children started to come to the church to participate in the choir. Recently we all met at the parish center for "tea-coffee and cake" and we saw that the persons who have never talked to each other before were exchanging opinions on what was happening in the parish, enthusiastic of how their children would continue singing the choir songs even at home. A Filipino family even offered to give free guitar lessons to the children. In spite of the various countries of origin and the diverse cultures, we are starting to become a parish community. It is still an ongoing experience, with my nucleus and the whole Movement supporting me and giving me encouragement. This is an experience that has opened my eyes to the needs of the people and on the existence – also in the place where I live – of "peripheries", where I can give my small contribution».

prepared by Anna Friso



The profiles of the focolarini are summarized so as to make way also for the testimonies of the other branches of the Movement, with the exception of Giorgio Martelli (Turnea) and Claretta Dal Ri. In www.focolare.org/notiziariomariapoli you will find the complete telegrams sent by Emmaus and the other profiles that are not inserted here.

Giorgio Martelli (Turnea)

On January 26, another «giant» of the Ideal left for Heaven at 88 years old. Among the first focolarini beside Chiara during the charismatic phase of the foundation of the Movement, he left behind a legacy: his profound search to «be Jesus».

Born into a working-class family of Pistoia (Italy), Turnea - the name Chiara Lubich gave him and that described him: *turris eburnea*, Tower of Ivory, taken from the Marian litanies - was brought up with a simple faith, moral rectitude and thirst for justice. At 14 years old he stopped studying in order to work: he continued his studies after the war graduating as an industrial surveyor, and then in preparing for the priesthood. Up to the age of 23 he was active in the Catholic Action where he received a more solid Christian education. He himself commented on that period: «Before me were two aspects of Christian life that were alternatively a more personal aspect of the quest for



a relationship with God, and a more social one concerning the need for fraternity among men, and the justice and struggles to reach them. But these were two

separate spheres». When he met Chiara he discovered that these two aspects were not separate, but the expressions of one reality. «I was a trade unionist – he continued - and I was always fighting with the others who were most often the company owners and managers. I would pound on the table, I quarreled... Then with Chiara what happened was that within me the love of God and the brothers became one. Even more, I understood that the Gospel, the life of God, the Trinitarian life, could solve all the problems of humanity. It was a revolution for me».

In the following months he went several times to Rome where he met, the first focolare men and women. After an internal struggle that lasted a few months, he decided to become one of them, and after leaving his fiancée and family – amid great misunderstandings – he moved to Rome, and joined the first men's focolare house. Subsequently, he lived in various focolare houses in Italy and Holland .



Turnea, first on the right, with Fr. Foresi, Chiara Lubich and some of the first focolarini



Turnea with Paolo Mottironi, present responsible for the men Volunteers of God

In 1968 Turnea he was appointed by Chiara as the first person to take charge of the newborn branch of the Volunteers of God. At their conventions Turnea encouraged moments of debate on issues and queries regarding the concretisation of the spirituality of unity in daily life. He often repeated Chiara's affirmations: The Volunteers in our time have to take after the first Christians. Up to now the men Volunteers feel that he was like a father to them, but above all he was their brother.

In '78 a change. Then archbishop of Florence, Card. Benelli, asked Chiara for help in starting an international center to welcome students of various cultures. And so Chiara sent Turnea, whose spiritual and human profile is perfectly suited to the task that awaited him. Card. Betori, the present archbishop gave an important testimony which he shared with Emmaus at Turnea's funeral, expressing his gratitude for those founding years of the La Pira Center: «his characteristic and concrete contribution permeated by his social

awareness, intelligence and love that distinguished him as a promoter of proactive communion between the various groups and associations of the Diocese».

For many years he dedicated himself to that Focolare aspect called harmony and environment and which concerned the construction works, the towns, the Mariapolis Centres, art and social works. It was a role he covered with passion, love and devotion also in the numerous trips and visits to various countries. Turnea endowed his efforts, tenacity and love also in many other fields: at the start of the Youth for a United World Movement, and in supporting the Santa Chiara Audiovisual Centre and the international Gen Rosso band.

Free from specific assignments from 2008,

he continued to give his contribution with advice and ideas. As a priest, he stood by many focolarini, especially those in suffering, and for whom he regularly celebrated the Holy Mass. In 2012 he was struck by a disease that caused a motor disability, which he bore, however, with his proverbial grit and his love for Jesus Forsaken and Abandoned. «He always welcomed with joy all those who came to visit him – Bruno Venturini, one

The Quintessence...

«...for me, the quintessence of being a focolarino is in living Jesus, in all his expressions. At least to strive to do this. It is never complete: I am never happy with how I am living. But I try my best everyday to go back to this idea that Chiara gave me of being a focolarino called to be Jesus. I don't know what else to say. So to work or not to work for the Movement, to judge whether something is right or not in the Movement, has no value. I think that the only thing of value is to be Jesus. Then if advice is asked then you give it, if you are asked to express an opinion then you say it, but what matters is to be Jesus. At least I hope to be ... with the mercy of God and that from all of you ...». (9.12.2014)

of his companions in the focolare and long-time friend shared - he spoke with lucidity, often with much effort, but always imparting a profound message that reflected his total adherence to the will of God».

Clara Dal Ri' (Claretta)

On February 25, another focolarina of the early times left us at 85 years old. Her greatest passion: Jesus Forsaken. And a great love for persons without any religious conviction.

«Anch'io – scrivo a Chiara nel 1999 - vorrei essere ricordata unicamente come "un'anima sposa" di Gesù Abbandonato. Voglio cercare l'Amato del mio cuore. Con l'aiuto di Dio, farò questo». Chi ha conosciuto Claretta – e sono tanti nel mondo ad aver beneficiato della sua azione spirituale e concreta – può ben testimoniare l'anelito che ha mosso l'agire di tutta la sua vita.

Daughter of an accountant and a teacher, Claretta grew up in a very Catholic and socially committed family: one of the eight children was a war orphan. Claretta loved music, studied piano and attended music school. She always had a deep faith, from the time she was a child and she cultivated both at a personal level and through the Catholic associations she joined. She wanted to "know God" and read many books, but that wasn't enough for her. It was her father who introduced her to Vale Ronchetti, one of the very first companions of Chiara, asking her to... convert Claretta! She was profoundly impressed by the life and being of Vale and confided to her: «I want to be like you, help me». And so they began to meet often. Her family, her classmates and teachers couldn't understand the change that was happening in this young girl who always received a 7 in conduct. During a trip to the mountains with around forty focolarine and focolarini, Claretta too had a personal conversation with Chiara who then gave her a Word of life: «Who listens to my words and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock» (Mt 7.24) explaining



to her that the rock is Jesus Forsaken.

She entered the focolare in Trent at 21 years old, and from there Claretta moved to Milan, Parma, Switzerland, and then to open the first focolare of Holland in Eindhoven, in '62. Those were challenging years, but she knew where

to anchor herself. She wrote to Chiara: «I sincerely chose Jesus Forsaken once again and now I am no longer frightened in front of the difficulties because I recognize Him in all these. I feel that now I belong more to Him and this makes me happy».

From '68 to '78 Chiara entrusted to her at the Center, the branch of the women Volunteers, in the phase of its distinction from the section of the focolarine, with its nuclei and its own structure. The answer of Claretta was unconditional. She exerted all her effort, giving herself totally so that the women Volunteers could become true children of the foundress at the service of the Church and of humanity, making them discover that their professional commitments are precious instruments to realize the dream of Chiara to bring the world to God.



From '78, together with Piero Pasolini and then with Arnaldo Diana, she was entrusted with following the newly built Center of Dialogue with persons of non-religious convictions. Claretta accepted this task with joy, aware that something new and essential is beginning for the Movement. In one of the meetings for these people, Chiara in fact told them: «Without you the Movement would lose its identity». Claretta dedicated herself to the development of this Dialogue with all her energies in close collabora-

wisdom, bringing to all her collaborators her heart of a mother and the unity of the whole Movement. But what was most evident in her was the love for the Spouse. «Here at the Center – she confided – one remains standing only if he or she is alone with God. I thought about the Desolate, the one who is alone, who lost everything. I saw that if I am alone with God, there is unity and I can also guess the work that must be done».

From 2012 her health began to decline. She wrote in her diary: «...I understood more pro-



Claretta and Carlos Clarià, with whom she worked both for the friends of non-religious convictions and for the aspect of communication.



Claretta with a group of friends on non-religious convictions

tion with the zone delegates. One of them said: «I remember her firm gentleness that came from the great faith in the love for everyone, no one excluded. She opened up the horizons for us, making us always have a great openness to every human reality».

The testimony of one of the very much alive «militants» in Dialogue who does not share any faith experience was touching. She thanked Claretta for having been beside her, for having accompanied her on tiptoes and for the trust that Claretta had always had in her. «If some of us – she commented - were able to participate in the general Assembly of 2014, it is the fruit of what had been sown by her throughout the years».

From 2002 to 2008 Claretta, together with Carlos Clarià, took on also the responsibility for the aspect of «Unity and the means of communication». She faced this task with humility and

foundly that to love is everything; since I don't work anymore, I can see that what helps me a lot is my trying to love the focolarine of the focolare in the little things that I can do, putting back in its place something, to wash the dishes ... I feel that I can do this with greater attention and care, even if I do things more slowly and with great effort. I can give everything ...».

And still in 2014: «I am happy with my physical condition now, I am ready to remain like this for the rest of my life. I am spiritually ready to keep this sense of emptiness, my inability to think, to meditate because even my thoughts escape me». «Jesus, You are my only good», I continue to repeat this out of gratitude for his love, Jesus has given me peace. I had all the enthusiasm to build the Movement for many years and now my body has collapsed. But I am certain that Jesus is with me».

Alexandre Magno de Araújo

«Whoever loves me, will keep my word» (Jn 14,23)



Alexandre, received the gift of faith and the passion for the Church, and at 23 years old he participated in a Mariapolis, where he felt the call to follow God in the focolare. With the gen in Rio de Janeiro he participated with enthusiasm in countless activities to announce the Ideal of a United World to the youth of Rio and in the surrounding cities. As soon as he finished his studies he left for the School of formation in Loppiano.

When he returned to Brazil he lived for seven years in the focolare of Florianópolis and then he moved to the Mariapolis Ginettea to offer his competent collaboration in the editorial board of Cidade Nova. In 2010 he was in the focolare of Rio, so that he could be near his parents, who due to their health were passing through a delicate moment.

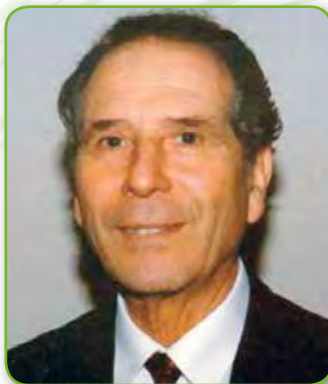
Brotherly, joyful and communicative, Alexandre Magno was able to develop friendships with many. Like a true formator – for ten years he was responsible for the school of the young men who from Brazil were preparing to leave for the school of the focolarini in Loppiano – he knew how to

make us of his educative talents but above all his great ability to transmit values and the love for the truth. He also organized a well attended course for youth and teens on «Theology of the Body» based on the teachings of St. John Paul II.

An expert of ecumenism, in the weekend of January 30 - 31, he went to San Paolo to participate in a Symposium organized by the Brazilian Episcopal Conference. Upon his return to Rio, he visited his parents, played with his nieces and nephews and in the evening he returned to the focolare, enthusiastically updating the other. That same night, on February 2, he flew to Heaven at 53 years old.

Nino Oliva

«Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own»(Mt 6,34)



Married focolarino of Liguria (Italy), Nino left from heaven on February 11 at the age of 94. He met the Ideal in '53 and was greatly attracted to it. His personality, Marian and characterized by interior and exterior harmony which he brought from his land (Sicily), acquire a new light. In his job at the Post Office, he is precise, available for everyone and would never agree to compromise. To make an act of love for a person who was financially in need, he went to ask for a loan from the bank. The bank

employee, hearing the reason for the loan, was touched: and this was how Nino met Ida, his wife who would later become a Volunteer. They were able to transmit to their four children their great capacity to welcome everyone especially the «least».

When he shared in the focolare, Nino would recount simple but precious episodes of love for the neighbour, which were real and true «fioretti». After the death of Ida, his strength also gradually diminished; the focolarini were constantly by his side, assuring him the presence of Jesus in the midst and keeping him updated on the life of the Movement. «During his last days – they shared – his eyes had a penetrating gaze, and in certain moments they conveyed a glance of understanding and when his children came they lit up radiantly. At the moment of his

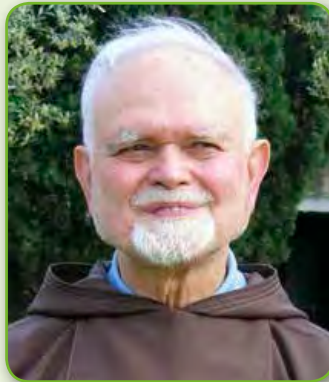
departure, when we whispered to him that soon he would be with Chiara, Nino answered with a caress. He had always asked God to let him die like a "faithful focolarino" and he did».

Fr. Vittorio Della Rovere

That unexpected and immediate way he loved

«A man of God who had given himself without reservation to the others, especially to the weakest, the poorest, those who were in precarious situations». This was one of the immediate testimonies at the funeral of this Franciscan who was not an analytical person but one who with simplicity placed himself at the disposition of whoever came to him in need and he did not rest until he was able to find a solution to their problem.

At 21 years old Vittorio left his village in the province of Udine (Italy) to enter the Order of the Minor Capuchin Brothers. For 22 years he remained a simple supplicant brother, sowing everywhere great pleasantness and joy, until suddenly the call to priesthood came. The discernment for one who is more than 45 years old is not simple, but it meant following the path traced out by God, in continuity of that unexpected and immediate way that Brother Vittorio had of loving and helping every neighbour. When he became a priest he was appointed as hospital chaplain. This was the moment he met the Ideal. He was so much impressed that he immersed his entire life in it. «One morning – he shared – after having brought Holy Communion to the sick, I was about to put the pyx back inside the tabernacle when a telephone call came from the Emergency Room: "We have here a young girl who has tried to commit suicide seven times during this year. Her family situation is a disaster and she doesn't even have shoes to leave from here". It was not my task to intervene in those kinds of situations, but finding myself in front of Jesus in the Eucharist, I took the chance



immediately. I remembered Chiara's experience of the size 42 shoes which she was looking for to give to a poor person, and Jesus answered her immediately. So I turned to Him and said: "You need a pair of shoes size 43". I went out of the church. A

person who was passing by handed me a package containing a pair of shoes. I couldn't believe my eyes and so I asked him what size it was: "43" he answered. I was flabbergasted! It was the answer of Jesus».

The life of Fr. Vittorio was constellated with similar anecdotes, lived in the «perfect joy» of St. Francesco and in the daily embrace of Jesus Forsaken, which released in him the joy of the Risen

One. On February 7, at the age of 84, he went to the House of the Father. At his funeral - jam-packed with people - someone said: «We were close to a saint and we never even noticed».

the international Secretariat of the men Religious

Sr. Erika Schmidt

«Rather, rejoice because your names are written in heaven». (Lk 10,20)

Deaconess of the regional evangelical Church of Dresden (Germany), Sr. Erika met the Movement in the '70s and immediately understood its importance. She committed all of herself in living the charism of unity and since then her life was characterized by the love for Jesus Forsaken and a constant tension to unity, in her community, in the ecclesial community and with the Movement. When she is asked for some advice, she would always answer with a concrete experience taken from the Word of life. In the ecumenical meetings and in



the Mariapolis she was always among the people, to build true relationships with each one through her luminous cordiality. To those she would meet, after having listened attentively to their reply to her question «How are you?» she would then ask: «What can I do for you?».

As deaconess Sr. Erika worked first as a nurse and in the last twenty years of her life as the personal secretary of the Director of the Institute of Deaconesses, who never failed to tell everyone of his admiration for her, underlining her commitment to living the Focolare spirituality.

Up to last summer, Sr. Erika, even if she was already in her eighties, would still play the organ during the Sunday functions with great joy. But in July, an unexpected diagnosis: an illness that does not improve even after the therapy of several weeks in the hospital. She returned to the Mother House on October 21, and there she remained for only a few hours: that same evening with the sisters around her bedside singing a song as a prayer, Sr. Erika peacefully joined the heavenly Father.

Heidi Kutzner

Silvio Cavazzoli

A life of «service»



Charity and attentive industriousness - he was a manager of a knitwear factory - were what characterized his spiritual figure, so much so that it can be summarized in one word: service. As a young man he was a protagonist in the civil, religious and cultural realities in his place. Among

the first in his city, Carpi, to join the Focolare Movement, he then became a Volunteer. he was among the animators of the bookstore «Il Portico», an activity inspired by the ideal. He also worked a lot to help the nascent Little City

of Loppiano. For many years her was a concillor in the Public Hospital of Carpi, where he worked to assist the medical staff and the patients. In the Diocese he was valiant editor of the Newsletter and lector during the liturgical celebrations in the cathedral, and in his parish.

He continued to do all this until his death at 86 years old on May 28, 2015, inspite of serious health problems that he was experiencing. With great love he was able to assist his wife Anna, also a Volunteer of God, during her illness. They faithfully said the Rosary together everyday. The members of his nucleus are grateful for having lived an intense and fraternal spiritual communion with him, which continues up to now.

Antonio Guid

Licia Zulberti

A great store of values

She was a committed member of the Diocesan Movement of Ascoli Piceno (Italy). her first Mariapolis was in 1995: a fascinating experience that swept away the dissatisfaction that she was expereincing, and which gave her the certainty of having «found» her way.

The Ideal made all her talents shine and made always more jovial, bright, welcoming, passionate about the life of the community, one who loved her city; there was no civil or religious activity in which she did not participate. Everyone admired her for her great store of values which she drew from in her daily encounter with Jesus in the Eucharist and with the brothers. Her particular sensitivity made her get involved in the association of «Zarepta» which runs a canteen for the poor.

But the human and spiritual stature of Licia became evident in its fullness when they discovered an illness which was already in the advanced stage. Immediately, she and her husband Alfonso



embraced this particular face of Jesus Forsaken and together, with much peace, they shared this news to the family of the Ideal. with her usual smile, Licia continued to go ahead doing her normal activities and, until she could, she took care of their home furnishings shop, always ready to love every neighbour. The illness became always more manifest even physically, but she always took great care in her appearance so as not to make her visitors feel sad: she never complained or showed discouragement or discomfort due to the painful treatment that she had to undergo. She continued to attend the meetings up to the last week of her life, bearing witness to a wisdom and an extraordinary spiritual richness. When she received the anointing of the sick she said: «If Jesus would come now I would be happy». After a few days - on November 17, 2015 - at the age of 64, Licia flew to the House of the Father surrounded by the love of her husband, her daughters, the local community and the entire city.

From the central secretariat of the Parrocchial and Diocesan Movements

Pierluigi Staderini

A continuous, demanding, never taken for granted, search for unity

Volunteer of God from Pistoia (Italy), he left for Heaven on October 14, 2015 at 77 years old. In the moment of making an important choice in his life, Pierluigi met the Ideal that confirms and illuminates his innate giving spirit. An esteemed and very active teacher, in the professional school where he taught, he took care of each student as if he or she were the only one, and almost all of the young people formed by him were immediately employed upon graduation. With his Mara they had a beautiful and united family enriched by two children: Gianluca and Beatrice.

In his relationship with the Movement and in the nucleus, Pierluigi lived in the continuous, demanding, never taken for granted, search for unity, placing before it every human and professional competence that he possessed.

The passion for the others made him collaborate with «Il Tempio (The Temple)», a community for recovering addicts for whom he «invented» an office for mechanics. Further on, together with

other Volunteers of the Movement, and with the involvement of the local community, he started the Association «Il Tandem», that is still active today, where programmes of formation for young immigrants are

implemented. At the same time, he offered his competent consultation to the «Loreto» School, which welcomes every year in the Little City of Loppiano, families from all over the world. For this School, Pierluigi prepared innovative courses, which obtain also the support of public institutions.

He welcomed and lived his long illness with awareness. When his condition worsened, their nucleo meetings were held in his house. Even if he suffered a lot, he always wanted to stand up to pray together after each meeting. At their last meeting he confided how heavy it was for him to bear this condition of immobility since he used to be very active, but that he offered it to God, in silence, to repay the love of his family that was always beside him.

Fabio Tommasi



Our relatives

The following passed on to the Next life: **Laure, mother of Fadia Haddad**, focolarina in Cairo (Egypt); **Silvio, father of Angela (Agape) Caliaro**, focolarina in Istanbul (Turkey); **Enzo**, brother of **Paola Squillante, Guido, brother of Maria (Erica) Sciolla**, and **Jozica, sister of Tatjana (Jesse) Barbic**, focolarine at the Roman Mariapolis; **Becky, sister of Melinda Michels**, focolarina in New York; **Julio, father of Froi Fajardo**, focolarino in Tagaytay (Philippines); **Michel, father of Gérard Ribeyron and Giuseppe, brother of Gianni Ricci**, focolarini at the Roman Mariapolis.

Errata corrige. In the previous issue it was erroneously written «Marie Louise and Raymond Chevalier, parents of Christianne and of Marie Elisabeth Chevalier, focolarine in France» instead it should be: «**Marie Louise and Raymond, parents of Christianne Chevallier, focolarina in France.**»

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Ai sensi del D. lgs. N. 196/2003 per la tutela dei dati personali, comuniciamo che gli indirizzi dei nominativi a cui viene inviato Mariapoli fanno parte dell'archivio del Notiziario Mariapoli, gestito da PAFOM, esclusivamente per la finalità dell'invio di tale periodico. I dati possono essere comunicati a terzi incaricati per la spedizione.