

Press Release – October 26, 2016

## **At UNESCO - “Reinventing peace”**

*Paris, November 15, 2016 on the 20th anniversary of the UNESCO Prize for “Peace Education” given to Chiara Lubich.*

Chiara Lubich received the UNESCO prize for “Peace Education” in Paris on December 17, 1996. She was given this prize because as stated, *“In an age when ethnic and religious differences often lead to violent conflicts, this Movement builds bridges between individuals, generations, social classes and peoples”*. On this occasion Chiara had the opportunity to speak about the characteristics of the Focolare Movement in its commitment, *“together with many other excellent and valuable organizations, initiatives and projects, to be an instrument for bringing unity and peace on our planet”*.

Twenty years later, almost a year after the terrorist attack in Paris and at a time when wars and armed conflicts cause horror and destruction in many parts of the world, the Focolare Movement, together with the General Directorate of UNESCO and the Permanent Observer of the Holy See, intends to reaffirm and witness commitment towards unity and peace in the same venue.

Today, pursuing peace means reinventing it while considering multiple aspects: the global economy, the international law and peace education at all levels. Reinventing peace means appreciating cultural diversity, which is the wealthy identity of different peoples; educating new generations in a culture of dialogue and encounter; consolidating pluralism in the context of an urban society; looking at the migration issue with far-sightedness; protecting the environment and our planetary “common home”; striving against corruption and promoting the rule of law at all levels; stopping the increase in military expenditure and the international arms trade; reflecting about the role of Europe and the integrative processes in the large continental areas; working for a new order of stability and cooperation in the Middle East.

The event, which takes place on November 15 at UNESCO, aims at giving a voice to the various ongoing processes, ideas and good practices, which the Focolare Movement, as an expression of a transnational civil society, would like to share with all those who strive for peace. The two main topics on the programme are: *“Peace Education in five fields”* (education, resources and economics, law, ecology, art) and *“What dialogue in a divided world?”*, dealt with by two panels: *“Religions: problem or resource for peace?”* and *“Politics and economy in international disorder”*.

This event is dedicated to the culture of dialogue and peace, that Chiara Lubich greatly encouraged through new inspirations and incentives, because she was convinced that *“Peace has new names”*. And that it requires everyone, starting from international organizations *“to eliminate the category of ‘enemy’- any enemy. It is not enough to exclude war; conditions must be created in which every people can love the other’s country as one’s own, in a reciprocal, unselfish giving relationship”*.<sup>1</sup>

To try and fulfill this objective, the Focolare Movement bases its life on *“the norm Jesus left for humanity: reciprocal love. He knew how necessary it was so that there might be peace and unity in the world, so that there might be one family. Certainly today, whoever attempts to shift the mountains of hate and violence faces a huge and heavy task. But what is beyond the strength of a million isolated and separate people, appears possible to those who have reciprocal love, mutual understanding and unity as the motivating force of their lives”*.<sup>2</sup>

Victoria Gómez (+39) 335 7003675 – Benjamim Ferreira (+39) 348 4754063

---

<sup>1</sup> C. Lubich – Symposium at the UN “Towards a unity of Nations and a unity of peoples”, 28/6/1997

<sup>2</sup> C. Lubich – at the conferral of UNESCO Prize for Peace education, 17/12/1996