

## 70th anniversary of the Focolare Movement, commitment and responsibility towards the many challenges of today's world

“After 70 years we can start again. This does not mean that we look at the past with remorse, but that we go back to the origins in order to give again new splendour and concreteness to the ideal of universal unity that Chiara has left us as a precious inheritance”. This is what Maria Voce, first president of the Focolare after the foundress Chiara Lubich, said, expressing the sentiment of two million adherents of the Movement.

A direct link up via internet with small as well as numerous groups, in houses or theatres, last week brought together friends of the Focolari in 192 countries, in situations of normality as well as of emergencies because of natural catastrophies as in the Philippines and Sardegna, or situations of war and violence, as in Syria, Iraq, Thailand, Central African Republic, Nigeria, or in places with social unrest for a variety of reasons. Many initiatives have taken place on this anniversary, amongst which was that in Trent, the city where Lubich was born, promoted by a collaboration of the Focolare, the Local Council, the Province, the University, the Trentine Co-operative and local Church.

In 2013 the Focolari proposed as a first objective to go to the centre of the spiritual richness that Chiara Lubich has left us and consigned to our times, take up again in our daily lives the “pearl of the Gospel”, reciprocal love, lived amongst all and with everyone, a contribution which will enrich humanity with vitality, light and brotherhood in the world.

The Movement today has more than a thousand social activities, non-governmental organisations as AMU and New Humanity, associations as AFN (18,600 adoptions at a distance in 53 countries), international networks of students (Abba School, University Institute of Sophia amongst others), persons committed in many spheres of human activities, like the Political Movement for Unity (30 schools of participation and active citizenships in Italy) or the Economy of Communion (700 agencies in the world) or projects of Education. There is a diffuse network of volunteers working in different situations: prisons, socially deprived areas, illegality, immigration and others.

Listening to the humanity of today and meeting those who are poor materially and spiritually is a process that had marked the same origins of the charism of the Focolare Movement.

On the 7th December 1943, Chiara Lubich was alone in saying her “yes” to God in Trent which was destroyed by the war. It was the beginning of a story and of a passion: that of unity and universal brotherhood. Now there are many on the same path, not only catholics but members of other churches, other religions and those with non-religious beliefs.

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