

**The Focolare Movement expresses gratitude
towards Mgr. Livio Maritano who passed away.**

The death of Mgr. Livio Maritano, Bishop Emeritus of the diocese of Acqui was announced today.

Mgr. Maritano's relationship with the Focolare Movement became particularly significant after he met Chiara Luce Badano, a young member of the Movement, who lived in his diocese and suffered from a terminal illness. He came to know her during the last part of her life and was struck by her radiant Christian testimony, *"by the depth of spirituality, by the great love for God that gave her the strength to face her illness"*.

At the news of his passing away, Maria Voce said: *"He was able to perceive sanctity in Chiara Luce's everyday life"*.

After the death of the young Badano, while verifying the growing interest that continued to emanate, he recognized in her life signs of universal holiness that touched the hearts of many, especially of young people. Thus, he saw in Chiara Luce a model that could be offered to them, as Benedict XVI pointed out on the occasion of her beatification. Later, it was Mgr. Maritano himself who related her experience to many in various places all over Italy; he was called by many to speak about her.

Mgr. Maritano met Chiara Lubich several times. His esteem for Chiara and her charism, which he saw incarnated with particular intensity in the life of the young Chiara Luce Badano, led him to keep in touch with the founder of the Focolare Movement even through an epistolary relationship.

"The Focolare Movement remembers Mgr. Livio Maritano with gratitude and appreciation", Maria Voce said. "We unite ourselves in prayer to his family, friends, the diocese of Acqui and the whole Church".

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