

PRESS RELEASE - 21 January 2021

## **AT THE START OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE FOCOLARE**

**From 24<sup>th</sup> January to the 7<sup>th</sup> February the General Assembly of the Focolare Movement will take place on-line. It will be the moment to renew the roles of President, Co-President, the leadership team and will define the orientations and future projects for the next six years.**

The Assembly has been preceded by a series of formative and informative webinars in which all the communities of the Focolare world -wide have participated. Next Sunday, 24<sup>th</sup> January 2021 will mark the beginning of the Third General Assembly of the Focolare since the death of its founder [Chiara Lubich](#). The Assembly which should have taken place at the beginning of September 2020, was postponed because of the pandemic. The Dicastery for the Laity, the Family and Life agreed to its postponement and that the whole event should take place on-line.

### **Participation**

**362 people from all over the world will participate**, representing the different cultures, generations, vocations, church membership and religious faiths that are present in the Focolare Movement. In order to encourage the involvement of as many people as possible, in February 2019, [Maria Voce, the actual President](#), established a preparatory commission. They had the task of collecting suggestions for subjects to be discussed in the assembly, of identifying the names of candidates for the elections and to prepare the program.

### **Elections of the resident, copresident and councilors**

Using a system of on-line voting, on 31<sup>st</sup> January the election of the President<sup>1</sup> will take place. On February 1<sup>st</sup>, the Copresident will be elected and on February 4<sup>th</sup> there will be the elections of the councilors who collaborate with the President in the different roles in the governance of the Movement. She is the one, then, who distributes their different roles.

Another task of the General Assembly is to decide on topics proposed by the Centre of the Movement, presented on the initiative of the President, of the General Council, of a section, branch, or movement. Each participant in the Assembly can suggest that other topics should be discussed.

### **What subjects will be addressed?**

The more than 3,000 proposals that have arrived from the whole world, concerning the subjects to be dealt with in the Assembly and the directions that the Movement should follow in the next six years,

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<sup>1</sup> As it says in the Statutes, the President of the Movement will always be a woman. This is to emphasise the Movement's Marian profile and its predominantly lay characteristic and so "to preserve the design that God had on it since he entrusted its beginning and development to a woman." As it says in the Statutes, "Hers is to be above all, a presidency of love because she must be the first in loving and therefore, in serving her own brothers and sisters, remembering the words of Jesus: "...whoever wishes to be first among you will be the slave of all" (Mk 10:44)

are a true reflection of the liveliness of the people of the Focolare. They also demonstrate the awareness of the [“change of an era”](#) which is already in action, as Pope Francis said in 2018 when he met the Focolare Community in Loppiano.

The many suggestions received have been divided into **four main categories**: the bringing up to date of the charism that has been handed down by the foundress; **the culture that stems from the charism of unity**; the answer to the environmental crisis and the pandemic; working together with the new generations.

In a recent [interview](#) the current Copresident of the Focolare, [Jesús Morán](#), said that there will also be **space for dialogue and discussion concerning the topic of abuse**, both in the six-yearly report of the President which will open the Assembly and in a specific talk of the Copresident.

Although we represent a diversity of voices, yet there is the general **need to determine new and up to date pathways of fraternity**, capable of answering the challenges and the questions of humanity today at both a global and a local level.

News and up-dates on the work of the Assembly will be available daily on [the web page of the focolare](#) and through future press releases.

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