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NEWSLETTER OF THE FOCOLARE MOVEMENT

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Eli Folonari

**The great
art of «standing
beside»**

**Mariapolis
Newsletter**
from paper to
the web

**Law and fraternity
in Brazil**
«We can do
something!»

Recognize the Holy Spirit present in our neighbours

The Holy Spirit author of our sanctification is very much present in the spiritual thoughts of the Collegamenti CH where Chiara, starting from her personal experience, explains how to allow the Holy Spirit to fill us with His gifts. Here below is a passage dated September 15, 1983¹

Under the impulse [of the Holy Spirit] in the twenty centuries of life of the Church, we have had miracles of light, grace, radical conversions and renewal. We think of all the Councils; we also think of the various spiritual Movements that he brought about exactly when they were needed. (...)

And taking into account our limitations, did not something similar happen to us, to our Movement, when this divine Spirit invested us with the gift of a charism? (...)

Didn't he give us the courage to speak to the crowds, something we would never have imagined doing? Didn't he give us the strength to leave, at least spiritually, and often concretely, not only our own neighbourhood, but also our country and our continent, to bring the fire of his love to the furthest regions of the earth? (...)

If something or a lot has been renewed around us, was it not through the work of the Holy Spirit, who knows how to renew the face of the earth? Yes, he is the one who did it. It is his task to give a strong impulse, to make things happen, to activate grace, which is the divine life that Jesus gained for us. He is the one who gives us strength and courage. And so, if this is true, and if we owe him so much, then it's our duty to make more space in our spiritual life for the Holy Spirit. (...)

We are temples of the Holy Spirit. (...) [But] he is also present in the soul of every one of our brothers and sisters who are also temples of the Holy Spirit or at least destined to be.



Towards the centenary of Chiara

Through a letter addressed to the Focolare Movement, dated December 7, 2018, the day of the 75° anniversary of Chiara Lubich's consecration to God, the President Maria Voce announced that throughout 2020 we will celebrate the 100 years since Chiara's birth

«We are approaching 2020, in which we will celebrate the Centenary of Chiara Lubich's birth – Maria Voce wrote. Such a commemoration certainly presents a unique occasion to thank God above all for the gift that Chiara has been for us and for many people throughout the world. In fact, we were all conquered by the charism that God had given her and which has profoundly changed or continues to change our lives. It will also be a favourable moment to let many others meet Chiara who is alive today in her Movement [...] Together let us ask, starting from now – the President concluded – for an abundance of the Holy Spirit, for us, for all that we hope to realize, but above all for all the persons who will have the chance to get to know Chiara and her charism».

In the coming months the Focolare communities in the world will be meeting to plan together how to celebrate this anniversary.

At the international Center, a commission was set-up (centenario.chiara@focolare.org) to be able to share the initiatives planned, to ask for advice or to receive informative material.

Our website too – www.focolare.org – will be dedicating a space for the Centenary of Chiare where we will be presenting the various activities.

And if this is true, don't you think this is an extra reason to love every neighbour even more? (...)

Let this be the thought that enlightens the next part of our journey:
Honour the Holy Spirit by loving, respecting and serving all our neighbours.

Chiara Lubich

1 From: CHIARA LUBICH, *The Holy Spirit*, edited by Florence Gillet and Raul Silva, New City UK, 2018.

Eli Folonari

The great art of «standing beside»

**On November 26
Eli Folonari
left us.
The gratitude
of the entire
Focolare Movement
goes to her because
its history, its
development
would have been
different without her
presence beside
the foundress**



«We don't realize how much we are supported by the others, especially when there is Jesus among us». This phrase that Chiara Lubich wrote in her diary on August 26, 1980, could fittingly describe the journey of Giulia (Eli) who for 50 years lived beside her.

In order to better understand who she is, who Eli was in the «design» of God, we must go back in time to «that young girl from Brescia, holding a degree in Economics from the Catholic University of Milan and with a secure future in the solid family business of a well-known wine business, who on September 12, 1951, knocked on the door of the focolare in XXI Aprile road in Rome. She brought with her just a small suitcase. and nothing else». That young girl was Giulia Folonari. She never looked back.

The eldest of eight siblings she came from one of the most well-known families in Brescia, At 25 years old «I was quite an independent girl – as she described herself: at twenty one I already got my driver's licence, something that was uncommon for an Italian woman in the Forties.



The words of Emmaus

«She heroically lived everything that Chiara asked of her. In a special way she was entrusted with the aspect of communion which is translated into communication: which means to see to it that everyone is informed about everything, at all times. She did this to the extreme. I saw her always close to Chiara, always there to support her, to be her friend, sister, and also as a trusted advisor in the many things to



be done. At the same time I never saw her taking the place of Chiara: she did everything so that Chiara and the Charism that she was sharing could reach everyone without any screens. This, I think, is the fullest realization of her "design": she made everyone who came to Chiara one heart and one soul».

A Franciscan priest whom I knew, Fr. Angelo Beghetto, spoke to me about a very interesting Movement which had just started in Trent. "On the same day he told me - a young lady belonging to this Movement will come to speak in our convent. Would you like to come and listen to her?" "Sure - I answered». It was Valeria Ronchetti (Vale). «I was shocked by the words of this young girl. I said to myself: so the Gospel can be lived today too, something which I thought seemed impossible». I asked for an appointment with Vale which took place in the house of the Hon. Enrico Roselli, a friend of the Movement. From him I learned that this summer they would be going to the Valley of Primiero. She found a way for her family

to choose to spend their vacation in a location nearby and from there she went to Tonadico to find out where this group was staying. It was at the «Baita Paradiso». As soon as she found them she remained with them up to the evening. It was precisely there that she first met Chiara. She shared: «She was coming out of a small church; I greeted

her and she looked at me with such a penetrating gaze that reminded me Jesus' gaze for the rich young man: "And looking at him, He loved him". I will never forget that gaze».

Just a 1 minute encounter, which then enveloped the rest of her life.

When she went back to Brescia, Roselli told her: »I don't know what you are still doing here. You finished your studies, you don't need to work: there is Chiara here on earth and yet you remain in Brescia? «So I went to my mother: «I would like to go to Rome: I met some young girls who want to

live the Gospel seriously». My mother stared at me: But what has come over you? What are you thinking? To go to whom? And who are these girls?», leaving me quite discouraged. Just a little over an hour later my father came to know about it: «You want to go to Rome? Well, there is a document that I need to be processed in the Ministry, so you go and take care of it ». I was so happy, and the following morning, at seven o'clock, before he regretted his decision, I packed a small suitcase and took the train to Rome [...] and this is how I arrived in focolare». It was September 12, 1951.

Incidentally Chiara went to live in that small focolare for a few days at a time. Giulia was very comfortable living there. The Movement was still far from being approved. Rather, it was precisely during those months that the most difficult and delicate phase was starting, as its case was passed on to the Holy Office (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith).

It happened then that: «Christmas was approaching. One Sunday we went to the Catacombs of St. Calixtus. I went to Chiara and told her: "I want to enter the focolare". She replied: "Do you have the written permission of your parents?". So I wrote to my father telling him that I had found my way and a new spiritual family, and so since Christmas was approaching I told him that I would not be coming home. I learned that, when he received the letter he went to consult fr. Caresana (the parish priest of Brescia, who was the spiritual director of Giovanni



«**T**he fraternal love in my focolare is more than just a reality. It is here that I draw strength to face the crosses of each day, after the direct union with Jesus. Here one takes care of the other's needs. Here we go from wisdom shared spontaneously [...] to practical advice regarding one's health, one's clothes, the house, the meals, to continuous and daily assistance, made up of sacrifices that often are not counted. Here, in short, you are convinced that you will never be judged by the other, but loved, forgiven, helped. Here even the smallest betrayal is unthinkable. Here the celestial lifeblood flows».

Chiara Lubich - 26.05.1971

Battista Montini, the future Paul VI, for many years), who was against the Movement, but who answered him in this way: "A daughter like her, alone in the big city of Rome!... But if you say no, who knows where she will end up! It is better to say yes and not to contradict her, maybe then she will come back». Eventually, aside from Giulia, three of her siblings - Vincenzo, Camilla and Bruna (later called Eletto, Virgo and Veri) would take the same road to the focolare. Also her mother Speranza would later become a married focolarina.

She received her new name »Eli«, during that period. Chiara gave her that name so as »to always have in in front, that God whom

even Jesus had lost when he cried “My God, my God why have you abandoned me?” (*Eli Eli, lamà sabactani?*)”. She then explained to me that for every person who is suffering, undergoing a trial, I must be like the God whom Jesus lost when he cried out».

Chiara soon called Eli to be beside her, first of all due to concrete circumstances, then permanently, except for short periods, like in 1960/61, when she became responsible for the Movement in Belgium, Holland, Luxembourg and in England. From then on Eli shared with the foundress the many moments of joy and great novelties that have marked the development of the Movement, with its openness, the meetings with the Popes: from Paolo VI to John Paul II, and with personalities from various Churches, Religions. She accompanied Chiara in her visits all over the world, standing beside her during the years of suspension and of very harsh physical and spiritual trials in the '50s



John Paul II, Chiara Lubich, Eli Folonari, Enzo Fondi

personal love for Jesus Forsaken, supporting Chiara up to her last breath in a very profound loss whose dimension we will only fully understand in Heaven. She was the one who gathered up the final «yes» of Chiara when she was told of her imminent departure from this earth to reach her final home in the «Bosom of the Father».

Fifty years with Chiara cannot be described nor summarized in just a few lines. It was an entire lifetime spent in continuous giving of oneself to God through a Movement that



During one of their trips, from 1967 to 1972, to Istanbul with Chiara Lubich to meet the Patriarch Athenagoras



In a meeting with the ecumenical network of Movements «Together for Europe»

until her final illness. We could see how Eli knew how to share her sufferings consuming them burning them in the fire of her

the foundress described as a «supernatural family that must surpass the natural family in love and unity, so as to be as much as possible similar to the way of life of the Holy Trinity». It is a reality wherein everything circulates in a continuous communion and communication, and which has the universal dimension of the one human family.

It is precisely this aspect of unity and communication, the so-called «Violet», which Chiara in '54 entrusts to Eli. She was the living incarnation of this with her life,

her intelligence, her marked talents as a communicator, and her faithfulness to the charism of unity.

Eli safeguarded and «made use» of such a patrimony through the archives and the various means of communication: from letter writing, which she did up to the end, to Web conferences. She did all this in very close collaboration with those who throughout the years dedicated themselves to the instruments of communication, such as the men and women of St. Claire audiovisual (*Centro S.Chiera*), Città Nuova, *Mariapolis Newsletter*, Collegamento CH ...

But the «network» of Eli went beyond the structures of the Focolare Movement: in 1999 Chiara entrusted to her the nascent reality of «Together for Europe», which today involves around 300 Movements and commu-



Eli, insieme a d. Foresi e alcuni dei primi e delle prime focolarine, con i giovani del Movimento

nities of various Churches in an experience of communion and journeying together.

Eli lived this «emptying of oneself that unites» in thousands of circumstances. It is enough to think of the relationship with Patriarch Athenagoras and the numerous encounters held with him in Istanbul in the '60s, where she was always present, and thus her rapport with the ecumenical reality of the Movement.

When, Chiara left for Heaven on March 14, 2008, it became ever more urgent to gather, put in order, catalogue the vast spiritual and historical patrimony that she left behind. So there was an immediate need to set-up a Center, whose administration was entrusted to Eli, who followed its birth and developments from 2008 to 2014. This is the Chiara Lubich Center.

Eli was a transparent channel of the patrimony of Chiara, both in the public sphere as well as in the private one, with her descriptive vivacity and with the wealth of its significance.

In 2009, in one of her last interventions in Castel Gandolfo, she was asked: «Today, how do you live unity



with Chiara who is in Paradise?» Eli answered: «I try to be always in union with God, because even when Chiara was still among us we could not exempt ourselves from living the Ideal ... It was even more demanding. We always had to keep Jesus in the midst, to be love, to love Jesus Forsaken. I would say that it is the same thing, to maintain this relationship with God, which Chiara had taught us [...]. It was a life-long lesson which maybe now we have learned how to do a little and so let us continue to live in this way. The substance, in life, is the same as before».

In her final years, as her illness progressed Eli eventually lost the ability to communicate, bearing witness in an extreme way to the mystery of Mary Desolate, whom Chiara said is the special model of communicators: »Being love, the way she was love, they will be able to discover the golden thread that passes among all people and to reveal to many that vision which is more true and more profound of that reality which is capable of seeing the love of God over and beyond the complex drama of human existence. Their words then will be like those of Mary, who in the *Magnificat* saw beyond the events and prophesied the marvels that God would do through His Son: "Ut omnes unum sint! (That all may be one)"».

*prepared by the editorial board
(taken from her profile read
during the funeral)*



The gratitude of the editorial board

«We don't know how much we are supported by the others, especially when there is Jesus in the midst among us»¹. Also for those who have worked for the Mariapolis Newsletter, these words of Chiara can be taken to heart when thinking of Eli who, throughout the years, was our «solid rock», as she personally followed the magazine up to 2014, from its draft mockup to its final version.

Mariapolis has grown under her guidance, with her suggestions, her indications, modifying texts even up to late at night. Her handwritten messages were true lessons in charity, style and professionalism! She always brought us Chiara, the Charism, having lived so close to the «source».

She would regularly meet together with the various communication realities, to ensure that all were united as one body in expressing themselves. With her one always felt «ready», because she saw us and made us this way, nourishing us with her trust, her demanding wisdom which pushed us to «do the Work of God well». We became aware that nothing is small when it is generated by a Charism. She was always so happy whenever we brought her a new issue, fresh from the printing press.

When she could no longer speak, she tried with great effort to assure us once again of her unity. At this moment when the Newsletter is transitioning from print to digital, and new spaces and contacts of communication-communion are opening up, with immense gratitude we dedicate this last and final issue to Eli. With the certainty that from Heaven, now more than ever, she will accompany us in realizing that «many but one body».

¹ From the Diary of Chiara, 26 August 1980

Our Newsletter

From paper to the web

Mariapolis is printing its last paper issue.

The instrument changes, but not the commitment to nourish the communion in the entire Movement, with the Center and in the world

«A charism is not a museum piece, that remains intact behind glass, to be contemplated and nothing more. The faithfulness, keeping the charism pure and undiluted does not in any way mean to keep it in a sealed bottle, as if it were distilled water, so as not to be contaminated by external things. No, the charism is not preserved by keeping it isolated; it must be opened up and allowed to go out, so that it will come into contact with reality, with people, with their anxieties and their problems. Thus, in this fruitful encounter with reality, the charism grows, is renewed and reality is also transformed by the spiritual power that such a charism brings».

These words of Pope Francis during the general chapter of Schönstatt (3.12.15) cited in the preface of Jesús Morán's book entitled, *Fedeltà creativa*¹ (Creative Faithfulness) could express well the most profound meaning of the journey that our Newsletter is taking. As our readers know, in fact, what we have in our hands is the last printed issue of a magazine whose contents, starting from January 2019, will be available only on the website www.focolare.org, in the section «Mariapolis».

1 Fedeltà creativa, Jesús Morán, Città Nuova 2016



«We must circulate the news which is more ours, more profound and steeped in wisdom, in the most complete way possible. They have to come from the ends of the earth and to circulate to the ends of the earth. In whatever point of the world we are in we must feel that we are all “one”, which means we are all representing the entire Work of Mary, because only in this way we are strong, formidable wherever we are.»

Chiara Lubich

(from 1° and 2° Vademecum of the violet)



you let us meet again in the new web page which can be accessed directly at www.focolare.org/mariapoli. There you will find – as if you are participating in a Mariapolis – the life of the Movement in its plurality and beauty

It seems to us that it is incorrect to say that the *Mariapolis* Newsletter is closing down. This would mean that the «people born from the Gospel», as Chiara Lubich had defined the Focolare Movement, would be without an important instrument of communion – which the newsletter has been up to this moment – that has brought together the life of the zones with the International Center, and also among the zones, increasing the communion among different geographical areas of the world and among the different vocations.

And so the format changes of a Work that is evolving, growing and maturing, who asks itself questions on its priorities and makes choices in view of constantly giving better answers to the demands of a world that is in continual change.

There are many people who in these 30 years of the history of the Newsletter have contributed to its birth, which Chiara Lubich had personally desired, and to its growth with changes made in its graphic design and contents. To them, just as to our readers who have passionately shared its journey and contents, and who have supported us financially, the entire staff of the editorial board wishes to express their gratitude. With each one of

with daily news, that can be chosen according to around fifteen categories. These same categories are helpful also for those who would like to choose only certain news items of which they can be directly informed on their own gadgets: mobile phone, tablet, smartphone, etc. (the website itself is optimized precisely through a smartphone). Every two months, then, a new «Mariapolis» newsletter in pdf format will be available, which can be printed, that contains the major news items of that period.

The same question returns again: «How will those people who are not familiar with the web be able to read the news and to download the Newsletter in pdf format?». Just like in any change, this too includes many challenges, but at the same time also many opportunities. The challenge – for every group, nucleo, local community – is how not to leave out anyone from this communion. The opportunity is that of creatively increasing personal relationships so as to reach out to those who have no access to the web.

And so let us meet again from these printed pages... to the digital ones!

*Gianna Sibelli with the team of the Newsletter
(Franca Cavati, Sabina Bertoldo, Anna Friso)*

60° in Belgium

A wealth for the entire European continent

There were two reasons for this event: to celebrate the sixty years of life in that Country and to commemorate the tenth anniversary of Chiara Lubich's departure for Heaven. There will be meetings and celebrations on various levels, at the same time occasions for new sowing of the charism of unity on a large scale. Special guests for the occasion were Maria Voce, Emmaus, president of the Movement, and Jesús Morán, co-president.

The power of the charism of unity

The little town *Mariapolis Vita* welcomed on November 24, 250 representatives of the religious and civil realities of the Country among whom were two Apostolic Nuncios, five Bishops and various political personalities from the national and local levels. They were presented with the spirituality of the Focolare Movement, which is capable of forming persons animated by the passion for unity and fraternity, committed to



A big celebration in the heart of Europe. The numerous and variegated community of the Focolare Movement in Belgium made an appointment to meet from November 24 to 27 for the 60th anniversary of the presence of the Movement

the renewal of the social and religious fabric.

The round-table discussion was of great inspiration, conducted by Dr. Dominique Struyf, psychiatrist specializing in the accompaniment of groups and religious communities, by the hon. Vanackere, senator and former minister, together with Emmaus and Jesús. The theme: crisis as an occasion for creative faithfulness and of growth; non-violence as an active commitment to bring about positive change in the surrounding realities.

Profound appreciation and support of the Charism were expressed by expressed by Herman Van Rompuy,

first president of the European Council and by card. Josef De Kesel, archbishop of Malines-Brussels, for the refreshing breath of commitment to solidarity, the openness towards the existential peripheries, dialogue and unity, in the context – as affirmed by them – of a Belgian society that is profoundly individualistic and secularized. The Cardinal invited everyone to answer together to these present-day challenges.

A celebration for everyone

Sunday, November 25, more than 600 people enjoyed the festive atmosphere during the celebration of the sixtieth year of the Focolare Movement in Belgium, seeing

the joys and sufferings encountered during its journey as graces from God. To bear witness to this passionate commitment, were two

moments of sharing and dialogue with the President and the Co-President which was centred on fraternity lived in daily life at work, in the family, in society, in situations of suffering and persecution, in the relationships with persons of other religions and different convictions ...

After the final choreography, interwoven with the beauty of the rainbow colours, a participant belonging to the Jewish community commented: »This is the metaphor of what our existence should be! «.

The solemn Eucharistic celebration in the Cathedral of Brussels crowned the day with the remembrance of Chiara Lubich. Concelebrants were mons. Bonny and mons. Van Burgsteden, aside from around ten priests and deacons of the Movement, and Bishop Hoogmartens who in his homily recalled his encounter with Chiara in 1979 and expressed his gratitude for the gift of the charisma of unity.



The interventions of Herman Van Rompuy and of card. Josef De Kesel

Authentic «prophetic minority»

The evening of November 26 was dedicated to a Muslim-Christian encounter prepared together with some Muslim friends. There were around fifty people present who bore witness to fraternity lived in respect for the identity of each one, in a network of relationships that began many years ago and which grew more intense in answer to the terrorist attacks that shook Brussels on March 22, 2016. »You are an authentic “prophetic minority”«, affirmed Jesús. Everyone agreed to continue to walk together, in the way that God will suggest.

In joyful jubilation on the 27th of November, dedicated to the intern members of the Movement, everyone made a pact using the same text which was signed by Pope Francis in Loppiano last May 10. Emmaus and Jesús also signed it thus becoming full pledged citizens of the Mariapolis Vita.

«In these days we discovered the variety – by age, religion, origin, culture – of Belgian society. This is a wealth and a witness for the entire European continent», The words of Emmaus, entered deeply in their hearts.

Tomaso Comazzi, Cris Hoffmann





Scandinavian Countries

The great plurality of a «little flock»



The Focolare community of the Scandinavian Countries: Norway, Denmark, Finland, Sweden, had the opportunity last November to meet with Emmaus Maria Voce and Jesús Morán

Emotions and joy were felt in this first visit to the zonetta of the President and the Co-president who were in Sweden on the occasion of the meeting of Bishops of various Churches (see pages 34-35).

Among the 130 persons present - with ages ranging from just a few months to 90 years old - some had to travel for two days to meet in Stockholm on Saturday, November 10. It was a family gathering.

The first focolare centre in Sweden was opened precisely in Stockholm in 1966 upon the request of the Catholic Bishop John Edward Taylor. Today the people who share and live the Ideal of unity are a multicultural group, made up more or less in equal parts of Lutherans and Catholics. They are most concentrated in the bigger cities or spread throughout the vast natural territories. Many of them live quite far from the focolare centres of Stockholm and Oslo (Norway); focolarine and focolarini, and also intern members and adherents, regularly visit the cities where there is no focolare centre to meet the small and faithful local communities.

After a brief presentation and the sharing of some experiences, they had an hour of dialogue with Emmaus and Jesús. Eva and Elizabeth, women Volunteers asked the question: How can we arouse the perception of God in people who live in a society wherein religion has no relevance and how do we face the scandal of sexual abuse within the Catholic Church; Elias, a young Syrian father who has been living with



his family in Sweden for four years, spoke of the situation of Christians in the Middle East and the obligatory decision, for many, to leave their Country; Giovanna, an adherent, shared about the love for one's enemy, while Christine, a married focolarina, asked a question on the need to be authentic persons in order to start a dialogue; and finally Astrid, from the focolare centre in Oslo, wanted to know how to increase the unity among the different Countries that make up the zonetta. The answers given were encouraging and gave hope, in a harmonious and open exchange.

Jesús underlined a characteristic that distinguishes this community from others: a great plurality for such a little flock, made up of persons from various Countries, vocations, Churches, Religions, generations, migrants and non-migrants. «You live this reality among you, and this reality will become the fire which will melt the ice and cold» – concluded Emmaus.

The meeting began in the morning, with Maria Verhegge and Henri-Louis Roche, delegates for the zone of Western Europe, during which they tackled topics that emerged during the meeting of the delegates at the Center last October which also included the theme of the year, the intervention of card. Pino Petrocchi on the Church and the «Pathways for a United World» project. Then Åke Bonnier, married focolarino and bishop of the Lutheran Church of Sweden, updated everyone on the meeting of Bishops of various Churches and took the opportunity to thank all those in the community who had given their time and talents putting them at the service of all.

The solemn Pact to «do one's part so that love will reign among us» sealed this moment of family.

Katarina Miksits, Patrick van Bladel



New publication

An adventure in unity

As a young priest he experienced the great transition brought about

by the Second Vatican Council; in his thirties he left for Brazil to become the parish priest in a region that was a social hotspot; how he strived to keep the compass pointed straight to the Gospel in a moment of social ferment and at times also of confusion; how he plotted the course to incarnate the charisma of unity through an innovative and participatory pastoral practice; then he left everything to be among the builders of the nascent little cities of the Movement first in the area of Recife (Mariapolis Santa Maria) and then near San Paolo (Mariapolis Ginetta); how he developed, in unity with the Work of Mary, a style of presbyteral life steeped in communion which had more and more influence in seminaries and dioceses: all of these can be found in the autobiography of one of the pioneers of the Priests' Movement, fr. Enrico Pepe. It is entitled *Un'avventura nell'unità* (An adventure in unity) (Città Nuova 2018). Surprised by the positive echoes this book has generated he told us: «I simply tried to see the actions of God in persons and situations and to correspond to them, always in obedience to the Gospel, to the Ideal, to the Bishops». Smilingly he added: «God corrected me once in a while when I wanted to escape or to choose the easier path».

fr. Hubertus Blaumeiser

New Families

From the Czech Republic to Guatemala, to recognize each other and to meet one another



For the first time the annual meeting of the Secretariats of NF were held simultaneously in two strategic places in the planet (the Cities of Guatemala and Prague) so as to be of better service and closer to the world of the family ready to face its challenges and supporting its potentialities

In order to more adequately meet the expectations of the New Families Movement spread all over the world, and to strengthen the unity, also in the operative aspect of its administrators, the annual meeting of the New Families Zonal Secretariats was held for the first time this year (1-4 November), outside the Roman walls, simultaneously in two different points on the planet linked by *skype*: Prague (Europe) and the City of Guatemala (Central America).

With a programme prepared by an international commission, the event – which had to overcome the intertwining of time zones and of languages - brought together on the same wavelength the 110 participants who gathered in Prague from 13 European Countries and four from Africa, and the 65 who were in the City of Guatemala coming from 11 nations of the American Continent.

It was a great opportunity to deepen, from this very vast point of view, the service that the family offers to the world in all its varied facets. It was also a chance to start the collaboration and synergy among nations.

Facilitated by a symmetrical process of the programme, each one present was able to personally experience the richness of the many peoples represented, with the joy of their common objective to be «families for the families», journeying towards the building of a united world. As the events unfolded, hearts and minds became more open to the whole of humanity, in a consequent process of «going out of oneself» in order to embrace the world of the other. The Center of the Movement symbolically found a home in the hearts of each one, so much so that everyone, with greater awareness, assumed the co-responsibility of serving the family in its



Città del Guatemala



present-day peculiarities, searching together for the answers in creative faithfulness to the Charism

The theme on the Holy Spirit, the soul of the Church and the world and applied to the life of the family, was very much appreciated by everyone. It was prepared with the support of reflections and experiences of married couples from various Countries:

a compendium that will help us to meet the challenges of the family today and to reinforce its vocation as a living cell of the Church-humanity.

The work done in the various workshops were effective and very stimulating, centred on topics suggested by the different territorial areas. Some of them were organizational in nature such as the New Set-up, the role of the NF Secretariats, creating a network, involvement in the diocese, etc.; while others centred on the emerging priorities such as education, the new generations, the accompaniment of married couples in crisis and those on the verge of separation, offering to the participants a privileged vision, albeit not exhaustive, of the reality of the family lived in the 24 Countries represented. A lot of interest and curiosity was generated by the presentation of the «Pathways» project which was born from the Genfest in Manila and embraced by the entire Movement since the youth are also part of a family and will be forming the families of tomorrow.

If we could define the meeting in Prague with one word, it would be: «recognizing each other», while that of Guatemala can be identified with «meeting one another».

«Recognizing each other» in Prague among the Rumanians, Czechs, Slovaks, Hungarians, Italians, Rwandans, Burkina's, etc. The multiplicity of languages did not stop the joyous realization that Dutch and Egyptian families are facing the same search for ways to meet the needs and expectations of those around them. And on this backdrop, the participants discovered together the importance of a network of families from different nations who are at the service of all. The exclamation of a French couple was very



significant: «We are not just friends, but truly siblings, we are “families for the families”».

«To meet one another» from the north to the south of the American Continent, to share our diversities and potentialities: this was the message that emerged from the City of Guatemala, made even more meaningful by the presence of some descendants of the Mayan indigenous peoples, leaders of NF: an interweaving of peoples and of hearts, in which the love of God had smoothed difficulties of all kinds that allowed their participation.

Both in Guatemala and in the Czech Republic, everyone left with a renewed faith and gratitude, with the joy of being the builders of a planetary network of unity.

Central Secretariat of the New Families

«The have dislodged Jesus» «Know how to accept» the gen4 challenge

This year too as Christmas approaches there is a lot of buzz among the gen4 boys and girls who are serious in sharing with others the invitation to welcome Jesus in those who are suffering



Pope Francis, during the Christmas of 2017, invited us to see to it that: «Our heart is not closed like the houses of Bethlehem were»¹. Taking this invitation of the Pope seriously, with the support of their assistants, the involvement of their parents, teachers, classmates, their activity called «They have dislodged Jesus» (Hanno sloggiato Gesù) (HSG) is orienting itself towards supporting projects of hospitality to help those who are marginalized or who suffer due to wars, injustices, those who are homeless or are forced to leave their homeland.

In this unique «framework» of hospitality, they have set-up small workshops to make little statues of Baby Jesus to offer in the streets, the town or city squares, in the most varied places so as to share with everyone that the real meaning of Christmas is Jesus who is born for everyone, today like yesterday, and that He is waiting for us to welcome Him in all those who are in need. They went beyond the indifference of the people, the difficulty of getting permission to set up their stand in public places. «Why do we need to bring Baby Jesus out in the streets?». A little girl answered: «Because there are people who don't know Jesus and so we let them

¹ Christmas Message, Vatican, 25-12-2017



meet Him». They prepared some Christmas songs or skits that tell the story of Jesus, organizing parties for families, for children, or they go to visit the homes for the elderly...

The action of "HSG" conducted by the littlest ones, brings with it the profound values of Christmas: giving oneself, gratitude, unconditional love, generosity. This indirectly also reinforces these values in adults and in families. The fabrication of the little statues promotes manual, creative and imaginative skills, collaboration, planning and self-expression. It develops in the children a sense of active citizenry, solidarity, fraternity, also through the fund-raising activities that provide concrete answers to the needs of children in different parts of the world.

It stimulates the desire to give. Many people in fact, spontaneously leave a donation to support these initiatives. Experiences have been shared by adults who have received the message from the little ones on how, with love, they would like to find a home for Jesus at least this Christmas. «It is really life-changing to enter a supermarket and be welcomed by these children who smilingly offer you Baby Jesus», exclaimed a gentleman from Florence. «We think we can find everything in a supermarket but I never imagined that I would go home bringing Jesus with me!».

Last year they were able to gather € 8,130,00. The gen4 boys and girls were thus able to send their concrete love to many children to help them to go to school, to buy their clothes, food, medicines, in India, Pakistan, Syria, Venezuela, Bolivia, Angola, Brazil. The letters and the photos of the "HSG" Action 2017 speak of the communion of goods that was done



«They have dislodged Jesus»

«Christmas is approaching and the city streets are decked in lights. A never-ending line of shops, limitless but exorbitant wealth [...] aimed at Christmas as the biggest earner of the year. But no one thinks of Jesus. "He came among them but no one welcomed him", "There was no place for him in the inn"... not even on Christmas...».

Chiara Lubich

for the poorest children in the form of toys, clothes, money, etc. There is no limit to the capacity of a child to become aware of the needs of the poorest and to develop this dimension of giving. In Africa too they prepare the little statues of Baby Jesus and whatever amount they raise is sent to Syria and the gen4 girls of Jerusalem send their money to Africa.

The gen4 centres are waiting for your suggestions to identify specific activities/projects that may be the recipients of the funds that will be collected.

*The Gen4 Centers
(prepared by Rosi Bertolassi)*



Teens for unity Step by step towards «Zero Hunger»



Brasile

**Think big
and begin small,
look at the world but
start from your own
neighbourhood**

#ZeroHunger
G E N E R A T I O N



India

All over the world, the Teens for unity have started to come up with ideas and give life to the project «Zero Hunger», with the support of the FAO who is encouraging especially the youth and teens to personally commit themselves to realize (see *Mariapoli* n.1-2 and n. 7-8/2018). The Teens for unity have accepted this challenge and have begun their journey along these eight «coloured» Paths (see *Mariapoli* n.5-6/2018) so as to defeat hunger and the reasons that cause it: yellow, for example, is the path that leads to peace and green that of ecology, because conflicts and the environmental crisis are among the primary reasons for hunger; black is that which invites us to look around in the cities and to do something so as to go towards the goal of 2030.

«As soon as we heard about «Zero Hunger» – they wrote from **La Spezia in Italy** - we thought of the families in difficulty in our Town. We went to the Mayor who, enthusiastically advised us to link up with an already ongoing project called «Zero Waste». We proposed to start a collection of basic food items to give to poor families and so we went

door-to-door to gather whatever they could give. After the first collection, others followed, which has led to a collection of around 300 kgs of food items which we turned over to the Red Cross, who has the responsibility to distribute them to indigent families identified by social services».

In **Mumbai in India** too the starting point was to identify the poor in the city. Poor not only of material things but also those poor in health, friendship. After meeting around eighty teens afflicted with



Aids who are living in situations of dire poverty, the Teens for unity wrote a letter to 600 families of various religions who live in the enormous condominiums in the area, explaining to them their dream of a world without hunger and proposing a used newspaper collection which would then be sold to generate funds. More than 50 fami-

lies agreed to join the action expressing their gratitude for this project. The activity was repeated, encouraged precisely by the families in the neighborhood. many of the teens shared this experience in their own *WhatsApp* groups. Now other groups in many parts of India are repeating similar activities.

If we are able to do an activity for an entire neighbourhood, why not involve the entire Town? This was the idea of three brothers from **Cesate in Lombardy, Italy**, who presented their idea to the Mayor: to make Cesate a «Zero Hunger Town»! Together with her, they thought of activating a synergy among the Town, the parish and the school, extending the project also to nearby Towns.

The teens talked to the parish priest and to the priest responsible for the oratory about Project «Zero Hunger» who were very happy about the proposal. They planned a strategy to reduce waste in their refectories. The parish priest asked the teens to write an article for the local newspaper. With regards to the schools instead, they have planned that every year



on October 16, the World Day of Nutrition, they will organize a «Zero Hunger Day» to encourage the reduction of wastage during meals.

It is precisely in synergy with the organizations in the city that this action brought ahead by teens from **Lebanon** started. In collaboration with Caritas, they gathered together more than sixty elderly who live in situations of solitude and financial difficulty. They prepared and served them lunch and organized dances and games. At the conclusion, one of the young girls asked the animator of their group if they could do this every week. «But we need a big budget to do this» she replied. «You adults – the young girl said - always think about big projects, but we must begin with small gestures». Involving one of her friends and other adults, they began a small activity: they prepare a meal together every two weeks which they bring to a family in difficulty, spending the afternoon with them.

Anna Lisa Innocenti

In the Mariapolis «Foco»

«God is the gold of this city»

**On a ship full steam ahead...
towards new horizons.**
**This is how the inhabitants of the little
town of Montet described the visit of
Emmaus Maria Voce and Jesús Morán
last October 25 to 29**



foto - © G. Stevani



foto - © L. Klaassen

the dialogue with the President and the Co-President of the Focolare Movement. «To tell you the truth: I grow happier each day... even with tons of problems! But the problems are not obstacles to happiness» was the immediate reply of Emmaus who then explained how happiness can coexist with worries. Rather they can become a stimulus for new growth that comes from finding the solutions.

The metaphor of the ship expresses very well the reality lived with Emmaus and Jesús «onboard»: the experience of a strong presence of God, generated in the simplicity of the focolare life among everyone - this is how Emmaus summarized it - that blew out the sails with the breath of the Holy Spirit. A new enthusiasm and new answers for the present and for the future of the little town, which resulted from the meetings with the gen schools, the people of the community, with the focolarini and the focolarine undergoing a formation and with the permanent residents.

With the gen girls and boys. Happiness and problems - an impossible union? «I could ask you many beautiful questions on theology, the life of the Ideal. But I want to know: how are you? are you happy? do you have any problems?». This is how a gen boy began

About 28 youth, coming from 15 nations attended. They listen attentively, some with translations. Their questions about politics, the youth today, dialogue with religions, personal commitment, living the charism of unity... inspire answers that confirm and accompany the concrete commitment to a united world that they, the youth, have taken with courage and joy, together with the adult generation. Emmaus highlighted precisely this living together among the generations in reciprocity as the characteristic of the little town.

The gen boys and girls then said: «We feel the responsibility and the duty to follow and bring ahead the Movement. One of the points that impressed us the most was to discover our friendship with the Holy Spirit, who accompa-

nies us in every moment as if He was in our pocket».

During the meeting with the council of the little town, in answering to the question about the difference in the service that a little town offers to the Movement as compared to a zone, Emmaus underlined the need to participate in the life of one another, above all with the nearby zones and zonette, to be proactive, exchange programmes, share respective priorities. Therefore we need to aim always more towards the «together» because the little towns are at the service of a vast zone even if they are small. They are like a vortex that draws in whoever passes by into a powerful experience and then opens up to the world. Jesús emphasized the novelty this

year as compared to last year: the presence of the persons responsible for the zonetta of Geneva and four couples of married focolarini who, in spite of living in Milan and Verona, are linked in various ways to the little town.

With the focolarini and the focolarine undergoing a formation they shared their experiences that had encouraged the work of God. The questions asked ranged from authority to the communion of goods. With regards to the decreasing vocations in the Movement Emmaus said among other things:

«In the plan of God there are glorious phases and phases of weakness that are needed in order to go ahead. So I see this period as one of a positive crisis, a passageway [...]. We have to aspire for the growth of the Kingdom of God. If the Kingdom of God grows because of us or of other Movements or Associations we have to be happy just the same because the Kingdom of God is growing».

The permanent residents are a varied group in terms of origin, age and experience. What emerged was the importance of the authenticity of relationships in daily life. A question regarding the need for the circulation of news was answered by Jesús who said that it is not a matter of knowing all the details but in getting everyone involved. If one part is not involved then it is not complete.

The conclusion was very moving when Emmaus shared her personal experience of these years as President.

Before leaving, she cited Chiara Luce and spoke about the Synod of Bishops on the youth that had just ended: «We leave from here with this wish: to run towards the goal, and our goal is sanctity». «We found Jesus here [...]. We saw Him in the joy, in the fruits, in the responsibility of everyone». «God is the gold of this city».

Denise Roth, Markus Näf



The warm welcome between Palmira Frizzera and Emmaus Maria Voce

foto - © L. Klaassen



foto - © T. Arzuiffi

With the «permanent» residents

Meeting of delegates 2018/2

Listening to today's humanity

After the meeting of September with the representatives of Asia, the Americas and Oceania, another meeting was held in October for Africa, Europe, and the Middle East. In between these two meetings only the delegates from all the zones met together

The meeting of the 238 delegates and representatives of the Focolare Movement of Africa, the Middle East, and Europe with the General Council began on Wednesday, October 3. After the first meeting for the Americas, Asia and Oceania and the second exclusively for delegates (see box), this third meeting was the next step – affirmed Jesús Morán – of the one “worldwide focolare meeting” that we are forming in these days». Maria Voce launched an invitation

to all the participants: to open oneself to the Holy Spirit, to his new surprises so as to understand together where he would like to lead us».

A Growing Family

While in the past only the delegates of the different geographical zones participated, this year members of the zone council were also present:

families, priests, youth, men and women Volunteers, consecrated women and men religious, focolarini. The effect of this choice was a strong awareness that each one is co-responsible, like in a natural family, where the joys are multiplied and the burdens and sufferings are shared.

The «Family of the Focolare Movement» was revealed to be growing in various ways.

First of all in **maturity**: the variety of the members of the Movement who participated gave value

to the fact that the Work of Mary is not directed and governed by just the focolarini, but each one is ready and prepared to give his or her contribution always keeping in mind the good of the entire family. The best example was given by the youth, who offered an option for the whole Movement with the programme «Pathways for a United World» (see page 30-31).



Emmaus Voce, Jesús Morán and card. Pino Petrocchi



For the delegates Joy and freedom

In between the two meetings for the representatives of the Focolare Movement all over the world, a five-day meeting was held exclusively for the zone delegates with the General Council.

It was an experience of the global and local dimensions brought together in harmony by a strong interior life and communion.

The topics discussed were quite varied: from the communion on personal spiritual life to the first steps that must be done to prepare for the next General Assembly in 2020; from the work on the vision of the presence and the development of the Movement, with a future global mapping out of the focolare centers in the world, to the deepening of the role and the task of the delegates themselves.

In everyone, there was the desire to give the Holy Spirit complete freedom to act, encouraging collaboration and communion also among the different zones, and to take more advantage of the experiences and talents of people who may not belong to our inner circle, but who often have much to offer.

Emmaus Voce and Jesús Morán affirmed this in their conclusion. «We were invested by the experience of the Spirit – the President confirmed – because together we looked at a Work of God in progress». The salient points mentioned, which we can only list out in a brief and concise manner, have to be put into context. But even like this, they already give a glimpse of the work of the Holy Spirit who highlighted the very role of the delegates called to create a real and true focolare life with their zone-centers, or the particular vocation of the focolarini «to generate the Movement», to make it more universal and to keep Chiara's prophecy alive.



In **agility** and **flexibility**. To be more mature, more surer of one's identity and vocation allows us to better and more swiftly answer to the needs of society today. This is true not only for the relationships among the different vocations and generations but also for the different geographical zones, that carry out transversal collaboration.

It has grown in **ecclesiology**. This was noted among other things by the renewed flourishing of the Parish and Diocesan Movements, in the new prospects that are opening up around the religious who share the spirituality of unity, but above all in a renewed «passion for the Church», that Chiara Lubich prophesied already in 1966.

On a wider level

The Movement, faithful to its history, grows as it breathes in a wider, transversal and international level! After years of foundation and deepening of its own identity, what has emerged in the different geographical areas is the wealth of a family that is ready to collaborate and listen to the great questions of humanity today. With this impression one could summarize the two-day meeting of the zones of Africa, the Middle East and Europe with Em-

maus Voce and Jesús Morán, Friday October 5 and Saturday, October 6.

This was made evident by the reflection on the roots and soul of **Europe**, inspired by some questions regarding the «European Mariapolis» in preparation for the summer of 2019 (see sidebar). In the same way, it was evident in the proposal of the **Middle East** to set-up a network of representatives of the Movement in all the Countries involved in the movements of migrants. «If the Pope sees a sign of the times in the mass migration of peoples», Emmaus commented, «we must ask ourselves: what is God telling us? In what way can we understand, interpret, cooperate in the design of God through our Ideal of unity?». An ad hoc commission has been formed to try to coordinate the activities of the Focolare Movement both in the countries of origin as well as in the countries that welcome them.

This was evident too during the dialogue with the zones of **Africa**, where the Movement – paying special attention of not being identified solely with social work, even if it is necessary and useful to open the way for the charisma of unity –



saw the emergence of initiatives such as the school of «Formation to *leadership* of communion», a high-level course that aims to form a new generation of African *leaders* who will know how to manage their destiny without falling into the trap of corruption and tribalism.

The «new set-up», which has been ongoing for some years now, is becoming more and more the necessary preparation for the «Family of the Focolare Movement» in order to face that which it is called to do in the globalized world of today: to bring back the life of unity to humanity.

*prepared by the editorial board
(taken from the reports in Mariapoli online by
Joachim Schwind)*



Towards the European Mariapolis To showcase the «family»

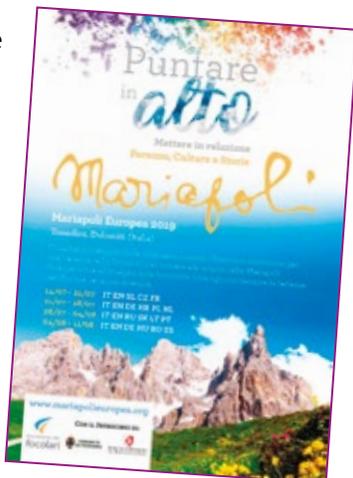
**60 years after the last international Mariapolis, the summer of 2019
will once see the Dolomites as the new theatre of a long and special Mariapolis**

The Mariapolises of the Dolomites, from 1949 to '59, belong to the «genome» (DNA) of the Focolare Movement. From those «vacations» in the mountains experienced by the first focolarini and focolarine, were born the typical meeting for the Movement all over the world.

The four European zones asked themselves what could be the contribution of the Focolare Movement to Europe which today is very much divided, the answer was clear: to showcase the «family» that we are, in all its diversity and sometimes opposing viewpoints, but nevertheless an open family. This is exactly the experience that the Mariapolis offers!

And so the idea of a «European Mariapolis» was born and developed. From July 14 to August 11, in each of the four weeks, 600 people will be participating coming from the different European Countries. For the main languages, English and Italian, other three or four languages will be added each time. (see box)

For the preparation, some groups have already been set-up with members from various Countries: they will be planning the programme, and its contents, coordinate the logistics, set-up communication channels...



Lisa Hofer from Bern, one of the ten members of the programme team said: «We come from various Countries; during our first meetings in Vienna, last June and November we had the chance to get to know each other personally and as the representatives of our different culture». The entire team said: «They were days of open communion, reciprocal respect...



Vienna. the programme team, from the left: Niko (Berlin), Nuno (Madrid), Lisa (Bern), Ana (London), Kacper (Warsaw), Tina (Lubiana), Maria (Vienna), Peter (Vienna), Aurelio (Rome)

we entered into each other's world. It is a step forward to lose one's ideas and to discover completely new horizons. It was a real and true beginning for a project of building a european family and we would like to invite everyone to build it with us through this historical event. Let's aim high!».

Maria Magerl, Peter Forst

Translations provided (aside from English and Italian)
from July 14 to 21 Slovenian, Czech, French
from July 21 to 28 German, Croatian, Polish, Dutch
from July 28 to August 4 Russian, Slovakian, Lithuanian, Portuguese
from August 4 to 11 German, Hungarian, Rumanian, Spanish
for more Information: www.mariapolieuropea.org

In profundity

Mary a laywoman

A theological-sapiential in-depth study of the visit of Pope Francis to Loppiano and its repercussions for the journey of the Movement in the “post-Chiara” period.

Jesús Morán to the delegates of the Movement in Castelgandolfo,
September-October 2018

The visit of Pope Francis to Loppiano, on May 10, 2018, merits the special attention of the Movement, with regards to the preparation, the realization and the ulterior deepening of the event. And so, at the conclusion of the visit, both in Loppiano and at the Center of the Movement, gathered together in plenary, and strived to draw conclusions from what he said on that occasion. Given the importance of the event, it was deemed necessary for a particular in-depth study which was

entrusted to Jesús Morán and to a small group of his collaborators, to be presented to the Movement. This study should be able to gather the wealth of the Pope's words. During the summer, Jesús was able to present his theme to a group of Bishops who were meeting in nearby Graz, and also to the priests-in-charge of the branch of the priests and deacon focolarini and Volunteers, of the religious men and consecrated women, enriching his theme with what emerged in the dialogue with them.





Loppiano, 10 May 2018. The talk of Pope Francis

The whole theme is made up of three chapters aside from the Introduction and Conclusion: 1. The chronological history of the event; 2. Theological deepening; 3. Sapiential deepening.

The visit of Pope Francis to Loppiano was for many observers, members and non-members of the Work of Mary, an event of Church in the truest sense of the word, an epiphany of that which the Church should be today and therefore an event of grace that goes way beyond that which we can grasp initially.

His prepared talk was enriched by numerous spontaneous interventions which in themselves could be considered as a talk within a talk and which seemed especially significant because they were evidently the expression of what the Pope understood at that moment. So it was truly an event of Church that involved all those present including Pope Francis himself.

The first part of his talk can be considered as a *vademecum* for a community that has decisively made the choice to follow Christ, while the second, with the underlinings about the formation, throws us with renewed enthusiasm towards a future with

a vast and cutting edge horizon. Because it can and must be a true frontline laboratory where the cornerstones of the pontificate of Francis can be profoundly experienced, which are, first of all, ecclesial practices full stop, and in particular the theology of the People of God, communitarian discernment and synodality.

As a consequence, it means, for all of us, a decisive growth as a church and as a

people, overcoming the excessive fragmentation that is very often encountered and can arise from our historically well-defined structures, in their relationships at the top, which may not always be effective at the service of communion in the Movement.

A very interesting part of Jesús' theme is where he makes a comparison of the historic visit of John Paul II to the Center of the Movement in 1984, in the presence of Chiara Lubich, and this visit of Francis to Loppiano. He underlined how this last visit is consistent with the «post-Chiara» phase that the Movement is living. It is the phase wherein the realization of the charism and its incarnation in history becomes more visible.

The Pope's surprising and very significant concluding affirmation caused a jolt of joy in all of us: «Mary was a laywoman. [...] There is a great inspiration here». In fact, immediately after his visit, the Pope tweeted that he fully appreciated the ecclesiological value of the charism of unity: «In Loppiano everyone feels at home! Inspired by the charism of unity of Chiara Lubich, we search for new ways of dialogue and communion».

Raul Silva



Pathways for a United World

To read the reality and to let ourselves be called to action

A proposal of the Youth for a United World to «go out» together with the whole Movement and also with others, to read the reality and allow ourselves to be called to action by the problems of the world today. «Pathways for a United World» is a course within the «United World Project» (UWP) which was presented during the meeting of delegates

Inequality, conflicts, violence, environmental disasters, corruption ... With «Pathways for a United World (Percorsi per un mondo unito)» that we launched at the Genfest, we would like to propose a journey which, step by step, will contribute to building a more united world. How? By putting fraternity and reciprocity of all our actions, as suggested by the formative itinerary and action plan of «Many roads for a

united world». Chiara indicated this to the Youth for a United World on the occasion of their birth at the Genfest 1985 and which was taken up again in that of '90 (see sidebar).

Every year we will take one objective regarding a concrete aspect, a «colour» in its prophetic, cultural dimension and that of its incarnation, discovering what it can personally tell us, but also what it can give to society: to the economy, politics, justice etc. From there we want to trigger processes of change in us and in the world around us.

We propose a strategy that is to be carried out on the local level, but with a dimension and impact that is global:

LEARN

ACT

SHARE

At the centre of the gen2-youth for a united world, we are working with some students of Sophia to prepare a small kit which, year by year can offer ideas to develop and the put into action in three points.

With the United World Week, we give visibility to the experiences on the aspect that has been chosen for that year, and we will launch the next pathway. The special envoy for the year could be the continent which – according to the «world in colour» indicated by Chiara – has that specific colour: North America (red), Africa (orange), Asia (yellow) Middle East (green), Latin America (blue), Western Europe (indigo), Eastern Europe (violet).

The strong point so as to create a network and thus have an impact will be the possibility to share what has been lived in a strategic way so that all our actions, even if on the local level, will have a global dimension. We can use all the means of social media aside from the official website: www.unitedworldproject.org/.

At the Genfest in Manila, we launched the first aspect: **Pathway of Economy, Work, and Communion**, with a slogan that defines our objective: «No One in Need».

We propose to work on four fronts this year, individually and together: Inequality / Poverty; Consumption; Production and Work; Investment and Finance.

Chiara at the Genfest of 1990

«And here they are to follow the most varied “roads” to cooperate in building unity in the world. Thus they have, according to their possibilities and the needs of their environments, mended tears, erased divisions, they have thrown themselves into the most diverse cracks that divide man against man, one group against the other: they have followed the toad of unity among peoples, among races, among the rich and poor, among the various ethnic groups, among the generations ... This led to the marvellous and fruitful blossoming of constant daily and committed actions».



The itinerary

- 2018-2019** *Pathway* Economy, Work and Communion
- 2019-2020** *Pathway* Human Rights, Peace, Legality and Justice
- 2020-2021** *Pathway* active Citizenry and Politics for unity
- 2021-2022** *Pathway* Dialogue among Peoples, Cultures, Churches, Religions e differenti mentalità
- 2022-2023** *Pathway* Human Rights, Culture of life and Protection of the environment
- 2023-2024** *Pathway* Art, Beauty and social Harmony

pathways@unitedworldproject.org

Some first steps have already been made: the youth of Brazil with the «Day of Renouncing» have pledged to gather funds for the projects of the national EoC as an answer to poverty. Particularly fruitful and well-received is the collaboration with «Prophetic economy», where the pathway was successfully presented. The Teens for Unity have adhered to the project of FAO «Zero Hunger Generation» to contribute to the attainment of the UN's aim of «Zero Hunger», by 2030.

In North America, they are working together to prepare the United World Week 2019.

*international Secretariat
gen2-youth for a united world
(prepared by Umberta Fabris)*

Abbà School

Key word: incarnation

Finding the keys for the incarnation in *Paradise '49*: a new challenge for the Abba School which held a formation meeting with the «externs». Present in 251 from October 29 to November 4 at Castel Gandolfo

«The problem, in our academic institutions, is passing from the intellect to the heart. In this school it was easy for me to understand with the mind and at the same time to let what I understood sink down to the heart, because it was not just listening to someone talk *Paradise '49*, I was immersed in the experience itself of "Paradise". Now from Heaven we return to earth, ready to face the challenges and the problems with the light received and understood. For me it a new beginning. This school has pushed me to live

and to love more deeply». This is what prof. Justus Mbae, present rector of the Catholic University of Eastern Africa of Nairobi, expressed at the end of the meeting of the «externs» of the Abbà School in Castel Gandolfo from October 31 to November 4. His words reflected the experience of many and the journey they ncompleted.

The first such meeting was called by Chiara Lubich herself twenty years ago when she invited a group of academics to St-Maurice, in Switzerland to work beside the members of the Abbà School in differ-

ent fields of knowledge. Today there are 23 disciplines represented and the persons who have participated in the meetings are 264, coming from all the continents. The support of the first members of the School is fundamental.



After these 20 years of work, the lessons offered by the intern members of the Abbà School – that have included, among other things, the composition of the text, the historical context, the literary genres used, the theological and ecclesial dimensions – offered important gateways for a correct understanding of the mystical experience of Chiara and of the text of *Paradise '49*.

In expressing the profound and urgent questions of humanity today, of which those present took mon the task of spokes-

persons, one could feel the need for something new and a key word seemed to be: incarnation. What is the relationship between this light and the suffering that surrounds us in the Church and in humanity?

«Sometimes we think that *Paradiso* '49 ended on September 20 with *I have only one spouse on earth* – fr. Fabio Ciardi underlined– instead this text is found less than halfway through. *Paradise* continued, while Chiara was in Rome (we can see it in the text of the *Resurrection of Rome*). Chiara did not want to look at the city, but felt that she had to let herself be taken up by God so as to return to the world and transform it with Paradise. At a certain point Chiara said: “Now the earth is my heaven”».

A new Understanding of this tw-fold dimension was expressed by Emmaus Voce, who came together with Jesús Morán, for a moment of dialogue during which they listened to and further explained these questions. She began with saying, in fact, that feeling the urgency to answer to the problems of the world and to immerse oneself in these problems of

today, and to study each one's own discipline and the text of *Paradise*, are complementary requirements. They are effective only if they are in synergy, in the same way that Chiara said to Foco: «I cannot live without you», or when in the beginning she would look for the first focolarine to share with them the Ideal. Chiara was never satisfied, but she felt the need to share it, to express it, to correspond to it through reciprocal love and this is what led her to make that experience of profound unity which then led to the Pact and the entrance to Paradise. And so the classroom of life, study and research of *Paradise*, is the entire Movement. All of us are in this reality.

But to do this implies a leap forward, a new maturity which, even if it has been prepared by the love and commitment throughout these years, now asks for a new set-up also from the Abbà School, that involves all of us in a profound exercise of listening to the Spirit, discernment and responsibility.

fr. Fabio Ciardi, Cristina Montoya



Colourful bishops

In Sigtuna the breath of the Spirit...

From November 6 to 9, the 37th ecumenical meeting of Bishops friends of the Movement was held in Sweden

Foto © SegVes



«Every Church throughout the centuries has, in a certain way, become petrified in itself [...]. And so what each one needs is an addition of love [...] for the other Churches and reciprocal love among the Churches, that love that makes us a gift for one another». This is what Chiara Lubich said on November 29, 1998 during the ecumenical Prayer in the Evangelical church of Saint Anne in Augsburg, in the presence of Bishops of various Churches.

Twenty years after, ecumenism has made important steps, starting from the Joint Lutheran-Catholic Declaration on the doctrine of justification signed in 1999 in

that same church; which was then signed by the world Methodist Council, by the World Communion of Reformed Churches and accepted by the Anglican Communion; up to the common commemoration of the 500 years of the protestant Reform in Lund and the meeting of Pope Francis with the Patriarchs and Heads of the Oriental Churches in Bari on July 7, 2018.

It is within this scenario that the 37th ecumenical meeting of Bishops friends of the Focolare Movement was held, a meeting that has been organized yearly since 1982. These meetings are an important expression of that «dialogue of life»

– which includes the whole people of God, from the laity to the Bishops – which characterizes the contribution of the Focolare Movement to the unity of Christians. The latest event was held from November 6 to 9 in Sigtuna, Sweden in the very welcoming retreat house of an ancient Christian foundation. There were 37 Bishops present coming from various Churches and 16 nations.

«The breath of the Spirit, the Church and the world today» the main theme, presented in various profiles: reconciliation (two Bishops from Ireland, one Anglican and the other Catholic), the care for the Common Home (an Evangelical Bishop from Germany and a Methodist from Brazil), renewal of the Churches (a Pentecostal Pastor from Sweden and a Syro-Orthodox Co-episcopo from India). The theme of Emmaus «The breath of the Spirit, soul of the Church, in the experience and thought of Chiara Lubich» shed a very powerful light on the entire meeting.

The breath of the Spirit was in fact felt by all: in the relationships among these «colourful bishops» – as the Lutheran bishop Krause called them, because of the different colours of their habits – in the interventions and dialogues, and especially during the moment of the Pact which they did in the historical Mariakyrkan (church of Mary). «A pact of love – as card. Francis Xavier Kriengsak Kovithavanij explained to the journalists – that encourages us to live in such a way that Christian unity does not just remain a dream but a goal that is coming closer everyday».

Some moments that were called «windows» were



the Christians in the Middle East. Jens-Martin Kruse, who up to a few months ago was the Lutheran parish priest in Rome, spoke of the eternal City as an «ecumenical laboratory». The Bishops of four Churches in South Africa shared how in their Country they celebrated together the 500 years of the Reform. Experiences of the

the members of the ecumenical council of Sweden) participated in an «open» afternoon. They were presented with the contribution of the Focolare Movement to the ecumenical cause and then the celebration of the 500 years of the Reform in Lund with the influential experiences of Bishop Munib Younan, president of the World Lutheran Federation, Card. Anders Arborelius of Stockholm and the archbishop primate of the Swedish Lutheran Church Antje Jackelén who affirmed: «Ecumenism is kept alive by the many experiences and must bear fruit in life and not just in formal dialogue. We can see that the Focolare Movement is very making a very strong contribution in this and there is a hunger for this».

The pilgrimage will continue in the coming years: in Belfast (2019), Trent (2020) and in 2021 in Rome.

Giancarlo Faletti



dedicated to the situation of the Churches and of ecumenism in different parts of the world. The Lutheran Bishop Munib Younan of the Holy Land and the Coptic Orthodox focolarina Sherin from Egypt shared the atrocious sufferings as well as the heroic witness of

vitality of Christian witness in a highly secularized society. The theme of Jesús Morán «Interpreting the signs of the times in the light of the charism of unity», offered a comprehensive key to interpretation.

On November 6 some personalities (in particular

«Together for Europe» in Prague Responsibility is the answer

Prague hosted a group of Friends of »Together for Europe from « from November 15 to 17 to get to know the history of other peoples, and to immerse themselves in their culture, which makes us more European



of 2014), one of the most renowned sociologists in the Czech Republic, philosopher and catholic priest, underlined: «The future of the Church depends on its will to strive for dialogue with those who are searching and to accompany them».

Foto © Heinrich Brehm

The great events of Central Europe – and, in particular the Czech people – served as the background to this new step in the journey of «Together for Europe». Precisely on November 17, the Czech Republic commemorated the beginning of the «sametová revoluce» (peaceful revolution, the so-called «velvet revolution»), that made this Country one of the protagonists of the reunification of Europe – a process that is still ongoing.

170 participants, including a good number of youth, from 21 Countries, of 53 Movements and Communities, of various

Churches: protestant, orthodox, anglican, catholic and free Churches, where the 16 languages spoken were expressed in french, german, english and italian. From South to North, from Russia to Malta, from East to West of the Continent: a European people!

Three high-level personalities in the field of history, theology-philosophy and politics gave a wide panorama on the past and present, with strong messages for the future. **Tomáš Halík** (Templeton Prize Awardee

Faith should not be an ideology of precise answers, because - Halík said - «God speaks also in open-ended questions». According to **Jaroslav Šebek**, historian



and member of the Historical Institute of the Academy of Science of the Czech Republic, a problem of today's times as the «encapsulation of communication»,

co-created by *social media*. «While here during the communist era there was an information desert, today we are in a jungle of information». The result, said Šebek, is the same: «The loss of direction, a greater susceptibility to manipulation and distrust of everyone and everything». **Pavel Fischer**, senator, reaffirmed, the the unity of Europe depends



feel the commitment to go towards the other, to value his experience, making ones own his sufferings and joys. The voice of the youth, as always, was enthusiastic, decisive and courageous: «we feel the responsibility to do our part to build a united Europe in politics, in society and in spirit».



solely on the seriousness of all the processes of local identification and that of the individual person with whom we are journeying together. And «responsibility is the answer» – citing Vaclav Havel. The vision of a united Europe can emerge only if politics respects subsidiarity and promotes the diversity of European peoples, languages and cultures.

In this «European laboratory of unity in diversity», built by communion, dialogue and conversations and encounters, one could

At the conclusion, the warm welcome of the community was opened to an afternoon rich in dialogue with around fifty representatives of various Movements in the Country, making these days even more unforgettable.

Two appointments have been set for 2019: On **May 9** – Feast of Europe – will be celebrated in different Countries with the most varied initiatives such as the day for «Together», prepared by a chain of prayers on a European scale within a time frame of six weeks. Then from **November 7 to 10**, the tenth anniversary of the initiative will be celebrated in Ottmaring, the

birthplace of «Together for Europe».

With regards to our commitment for the European continent, in answering to a letter of card.



Bagnasco, president of the Episcopal Conference of Europe (CCEE), Maria Emmaus Voce recently wrote: «Because of the charism of unity that animates the Focolare Movement, we feel particularly called to contribute [to the psirit of solidarity in Europe], by promoting dialogue, reconciliation and the fraternal and supportive coexistence among the Peoples of Europe, so that the profound Christian values of the Continent for the good of all. To this end we have been bringing ahead for almost 20 years, together with Christian Communities and Movements from East to West, the project of "Together for Europe"».

Beatriz Lauenroth
www.togheter4europe.org

10 years of Sophia

The dream of Chiara is becoming a reality

The Sophia University Institute is celebrating its 10th year.

A meeting with the Center of the Movement to identify its specific contribution in the elaboration and transmission of the charism of unity.

In front of the questions that the Work of Mary is facing in the world, what is the specific role of the University founded by Chiara? How can it contribute to the elaboration and transmission of the culture of unity? What kind of University will Sophia represent in the future, and what commitments on the academic and structural levels will it undertake?

These demanding questions opened the meeting of a delegation from Sophia – the dean Piero Coda and Daniela Ropelato, vice-dean, the vicepresident of the Administrative Council Nicola Sasso and Delia Pairetti, management coordinator – with Emmaus Maria Voce, Jesús Morán and the Center of the Movement on November 13, 10 years from the inauguration of the first academic year in 2008. Almost three hours of sincere and profound dialogue, that took its cue from the present profile of the Institute, from its principal objectives carried out in the light of the Strategic Plan 2014-19, followed by an analysis of the immediate and mid-term prospects, up to presenting some fundamental questions.

The consolidation of the academic courses offered with 500 enrolled, five on-going Masteral Degrees, with numerous

agreements with other Universities and courses in English; the Doctorate school with more than 70 PhD students and the establishment of permanent research Centers; the development of the publishing house and the scientific accreditation of the *Sophia Magazine*; the development of the Library with almost 20,000 volumes; the «Summer



Rocca di Papa, 9 dicembre 2007. La consegna a Chiara da parte di mons. Vincenzo Zani del documento di erezione dell'Istituto Universitario Sophia, firmato in Vaticano il 7 dicembre 2007

School» in Latin America, in Asia, in Africa; the progressive standardization of the academic procedures and services. These are the things that indicate a growth that has gone beyond expectations, especially if it is compared to what Pope Francis outlined in the recent *Veritatis Gaudium*, the new Apostolic Constitution on Church-run Universities: we can say that the prophecy of Chiara has hit the target in the academic world.

The new scenarios that we can foresee are just as ribust: the forthcoming branching of the Institute into two Faculties that will be



November 2018. Students and professors of the Sophia University Institute

able to provide distinct diplomas for masteral Degrees in the different disciplines, based on the common culture of unity; the planning, in suitable times, of the Triennial Degree of the first «interclass» cycle; the opening of a local headquarters of Sophia in Latin America and the Caribbean, whose feasibility study is already in an advanced stage. These commitments are made to meet above all the thirst for wisdom characteristic of the youth all over the world – this year we have the first student from Austria! – who do not look only for technical competence in the different professions, but also at the questions of many adults, who are already protagonists in social, economical and political life.

Obviously, there are also problematic and critical points to overcome: there is an urgent need to increase the registrants to the masteral Degree programme; there are requests for new vocational formation, without the need to be in residence and available online; effective partners are needed also for the financial aspect and an attentive analysis must be done with regards to the overall picture of the human resources.

But the meeting last November 13 also inaugurated a new phase, as underlined by Emmaus Maria Voce and Jesús Morán who, at the conclusion, indicated the horizon for the coming years. «My optimism is based on the understanding of the greatness of the Charism – these are the words of Emmaus. The Pope in Loppiano on May 10 said that we are just in the beginning: so we

can say that Sophia is also just beginning, but a promising start, if we look at all that was born up to this moment. The impressions we have received are very positive and confirm this...». Jesús added: «Chiara could not but dream of a real and true University at the service of the great resources of the Charism, for the Church and for humanity. The University is not something extra... We are dealing with the persistence of the Charism, with its cultural incisiveness. That is why it is essential».

The mandate is precise: the true function of Sophia is emerging in relation to the *mission* of the Movement and the cultural challenge of the Charism calls out to each one of us.

Daniela Ropelato

The source and the frontiers Sophia is 10 years old

The volume edited by Città Nuova, offers a piece of the vitality of the Sophia University Institute. A balance sheet of its 10 years, between faithfulness and innovation, witnessed by reliable contributions, accompanied by the inaugural address of Chiara Lubich.



New Humanity and V° Dialogue

Together to face the challenges of contemporary society

In mid-November, the awaited meeting of those responsible for the Inundations with the Secretariats of New Humanity in the world

«This is the beauty of these synergies because it is truly the Movement which is moving on particular fronts to look at the sufferings of the world and decide: "What action can we do to answer to these sufferings?", and to make a decision together». It is the 18th of November and we are almost at the end of four days of a truly special Congress that brought together the persons responsible for the V° dialogue (Inundations) and the Secretariats of New Humanity in the world. Emmaus Voce said these words during a meeting that

was historic, felt, wanted and awaited by the zones and the Center. This meeting put together these two realities of the Movement, two faces of the same medalion: from November 15 to 18, the Mariapolis Center of Castel Gandolfo enjoyed the presence of life and thought, mind and arms, action and contemplation, in order to look at the world starting from unity, and to offer a contribution that is worthy of this vision.

«The first thing that we want to say is that if we are here it is because each one of us has a relationship of love

with the Ideal. If we look at time, money, the kilometers that each of us travelled in order to be here, we will understand that there is a passion, an intrinsic motivation, and we want to start precisely from this answer of love and from this passion». The meeting, opened by the four people in-charge of these realities at the Center, started with these words, to which the word «gratitude» was added and «passion» underlined: the first for having received the Ideal, for the gifts of the Holy Spirit which is never repetitive; the second for rediscovering



that spark which gives enthusiasm, which makes us look around at what is happening, fully aware that we are born for a united world. It is this awareness that has drawn us together: we are living in a particular historical moment for the world and for the Church, wherein the Movement is called, above all its agencies more directly involved in culture and in society, to show that unity in diversity is possible, building networks among every-



highlighted the challenges present in all ambits, from political to social and economical, but there is also the beautiful, courageous, but sometimes difficult life of our communities, called to go precisely there where

the international Centers, who participated in part of the Congress presenting the work already in action for «Pathways for a United Word» within the «United Word Project».

And then, how can we forget the many occasions for much spontaneous communion during the breaks, at meals and informal moments, to intensify the chances of getting to know each other and to plan together, which made everyone discover a family that makes a home for humanity within and without; a family that is able to search for those «seeds of the Verb» of the Charism present also in other realities working for the common Good of humanity.

Now there is the desire to go ahead in this process of unity, striving to identify the priorities among the problems and to find in the «wisdom of the poor» the method to be credible in front of the world.

Paolo Balduzzi



Da sinistra: Luca Moser, Fanny Bava (Umanità Nuova) con Silvia Cataldi e Mario Tancredi (Inondazioni)

one, and there are many who are working for the unity of the human family.

The journey of the synergies that is going ahead at the Center and in the zones was a great encouragement in the preparation of the whole Congress: 148 participants from five Continents, who are often faced with the great contradictions and open conflicts in their Countries. The «world tour» that opened the sessions

there is Jesus Forsaken. «We are few as compared to the needs of the world, but many because we are a network, and this is our strength». This is how Emmaus and Jesús encouraged the audience, at the conclusion of the programme that went from meditations, group workshops, *focus* on the civil vocations.

A particularly significant moment was that with the gen boys and girls from

Prophetic Economy

Believe, Collaborate, Change

#PropheticEconomy is more than just an event, it is a journey taken together with Associations and Movements who want to give an answer to the cry of the earth and the poor

Foto © Prophetic Economy

«Hope» is the word that could summarize the work done at the Mariapolis Center of Castel Gandolfo from November 2 to 4, 2018. Seven organizations¹ in a network to gather the good practices of alternative economic models oriented towards integral human development and

and to ask for justice. Those involved include economists, environmental activists, entrepreneurs and students, people of different cultures and religious beliefs. An audience of 500 participants from five Continents.

«The new idea at the base – affirmed Luigino Bruni, one of the promoters of the project – was to put together ecology and economy. Today we can no longer talk of poverty without talking about climate. The cry of the earth and the cry of the poor are the same. The prophecy gives voice to the invisible ones». This



is also what Jeffrey Sachs, world famous economist present in the meeting, affirmed: «A prophetic economy means that it operates with the vision of prophets, in the vision of justice, of peace, to satisfy the needs of the poor, a vision of the protection of creation».

The Focolare Movement «gave a home» to this project,



sustainability, with special attention for the poor. Each one is working in building the common Good under different profiles in order to change the rules of the game

¹ Community of Pope John XXIII, Nomadelfia, catholic global Movement for climate, ATD Quarto Mondo Movement, Association World of Community and Family, the Slot-Mob initiative and the Focolare Movement with EoC and Teens for Unity





working to put together the realities of those who courageously offer concrete examples and not dreams. Experiences that can be defined as prophetic, but also already in action in the present, were shared in the plenary sessions, group work, and in creative and social *workshops*.

«The idea was born during some meetings with committed people – explained Bruni. It was also born from a maturation of our experiences in the Economy of Communion and in the dialogue with culture that has been ongoing for the past 27 years. [...] In order to understand the present charismatic Movements, like for example the Focolare Movement founded by Chiara Lubich, we need to think of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel..., this kind of people who had a gift of light, able to say new things and to possess a different language for the poor, etc. It is from here that we understood that maybe the idea of "prophecy" could be the most suitable word. We already talk about civil

and social economy, but we wanted to highlight that there is a way of doing economy that is born from charisms».



«The time has come to rethinking the world, not "for" the poor, it is not only with their participation, but we must begin from them – underlined Jean Tonglet of ATD Quarto Mondo. Our knowledge remains incomplete if it is not irrigated by the wisdom

of those whom we want to liberate from misery and who are the first to know what it is and to fight it day by day».

The presence of the youth was truly prophetic, as they were given the same voice with the same dignity as the adults: «What fascinates me about this meeting – said Carlo Petrini, founder of Slow Food – is the inter-generational element, not a meeting of specialists and not even of a certain age group. The fact that the young generations are here together with the adults, shows how important is the dialogue among them today».

prepared by the editorial board

«Prophetic Economy Award»

The «Prophetic Economy Award», presented during the meeting, is given to those who have shown examples of prophetic economy in daily practices. There were 135 applications received. The jury included the economist Zamagni, who defined them as different in terms of the object but they have in common the tentative success of being able to concretely show that when there is a will then it is possible to change the course of events. The fact of awarding the practice and not the project is in itself something new.

I the first three chosen were:

- 1 Community of San Jose of Apartado – Colombia;
- 2 Njo Jevve – Benin;
- 3 Tecendo Brasil – Brazil

Per vedere i video delle buone

pratiche premiate: www.propheticconomy.org/award



CaL in Brazil

«We can do something!»

IV Congress «Law and fraternity» held in the superior federal tribunal of justice in Brasilia: a seed of hope in this moment of profound crisis



In the heart of the judiciary of Brazil, the Presidents of the two Supreme Courts opened the Congress, reflecting on fraternity with their



profound words. «If we squeeze the Brazilian Constitution completely, one word emerges: fraternity», they declared.

There were numerous youth present who found the stimulus to continue their studies and to get involved with passion in the judicial activities; there were also many encounters with open-minded people, who welcomed fraternity as the way towards achieving true justice in the face of the many challenges of today.

The Congress, from November 7 to 9, was organized together with other groups: two associations of justices, the association of public defenders (lawyers who defend the poorest); IEDF (Institute of Law Studies and Fraternity), who are in the frontline in teaching disadvantaged youth and teens their rights. Three youth shared how it changed their life thanks to this group: a very moving moment.

Evenin Avila, among the promoters of IEDF, told us: «The greatest challenge is to find

the motivation and strength to continue. I thank Communion and Law, without you this project would not have been launched. In this Country that has the biggest surface area in the world, where there is the most water, where there is strong entrepreneurship, the most fertile lands, it is not logical to have so many poor people who suffer. We can do something, we cannot change the world but we must help people to reflect. We can do this thanks to Communion and Law».

The contribution of professors of various Universities has helped to highlight the academic pathways already taken.

Some of them met, and they have decided to build a «network» so as to extend throughout the entire Brazil the Chairs dedicated to fraternity in law.

Maria Giovanna Rigatelli

The next appointment of CaL will be in Parma, on December 14 to talk about «Dignity and human rights: foundation and "door" to acceptance». Organized together with the association CIAC, which is involved in integration, the Convention hopes to look at the contribution of law so that every person can be respected in his or her dignity and thus build a just and fraternal society, in an open dialogue among Universities, those working in the field of law and justice and activists of associationism.

Health Professionals in dialogue

The art of healthcare today

To deepen the art of healthcare today, the international school for the Inundation in Medicine (HDC) held a meeting was held in Spain

The «Summer School 2018» promoted by the Health Dialogue Culture (HDC), found a home this year at the Mariapolis Center «Loreto» of Castell d'Aro, in Catalonia from September 27 to 30. Four days during which we «recharged the batteries» so as to face the more or less difficult and stressful realities that each one lives daily, even if imbued with love: studies and exams, work and shift duties, etc. We deepened the art of healthcare today; how to practice it by seeing in our patients, in the relatives, in a colleague, a brother or sister with whom I can build a fraternal relationship. This enriched the meaning of our profession-vocation that made us architects of a more united world, in moments wherein the anti-values seem to take the upper hand.

Intense days rich in wisdom. The participants, coming from various parts of the world (both students and young professional in the science of health: nutrition, medicine, physiotherapy, dentistry and acupuncture), were around twenty. The Congress would



have benefited from a wider participation, but nevertheless the small number had its advantages thanks to the bonding that was created being in a small group. International experts also came to speak. The moments of discussion were important, whether programmed or spontaneous, wherein each one was free to share something: an experience, a question or a doubt.

Moments of relaxation and games were not lacking, with exercises guided by a physiotherapist and a tour of the very beautiful Barcelona, with the visit to the museum in the hospital of San Páu, a place of historical importance and even emotional for every student or professional in healthcare.

This third edition of the «Summer School HDC» was truly a gift on the academic, professional and personal levels, both for the group that prepared it as well as for the participants. The aim, as expressed in the title: «The art of healthcare today: healthcare professionals in dialogue» was realized. The only thing left to do is to go ahead towards the fourth edition.

Alejandra Gimenez



Democratic Republic of Congo The vital «chaos» of a growing community

Lubumbashi, important mining city with a million and a half inhabitants, in the South of the Country, is home to the women's focolare center.

Amisa Tabu lives here and shares with us the life of this community that radiates its action in eight provinces in Katanga and Kasai

Amisa, how was the Focolare community born in this territory?

30 years ago, some missionaries came to Lubumbashi and gave life to a small community which was 2,000 km from Kinshasa, and in 2011 they requested for the presence of the focolare. When the Movement gave three lines of action: «go out, together, suitably prepared», with the invitation of Pope Francis to go towards the «existential peripheries», we felt called to do so because «we were always the same people». We understood that it was not enough to tell people that God is Love, but we now had to make this concrete. The

push given by New Humanity was important for us: bear witness to the Gospel lived in the various work environments, such as healthcare, education, the exercise of justice, business, etc. Living in this way we realized that the community began to grow. The ideal of life that we were proposing suddenly became attractive.

What is the focolare place in a growing community?

We keep our doors always open. Chiara Lubich left us with her testament «always be a family». The people must be able to make the experience of being a family whose supernatural bond must exceed that of a

natural one. This was the experience we lived with André Katoto, a married focolarino who with his family spent the last days of his life in the focolare. For periods of time they had to move Goma, in the north of the Country for the Movement; now, gravely ill he expressed the desire to die in Lubumbashi, his native



Amisa Tabu with André and Julie Katoto in focolare

city. The whole community gathered around him providing for all of his needs. He died in an atmosphere of sacredness, thus sealing his consecration to God (see *Mariapolis* 10-11/2017).

Hospitality is a living part of our culture. In focolare we don't have a fixed schedule



Il Genfest a Lubumbashi

and everyone comes whenever they can. For us it is a way live «inculturation»

In Lubumbashi there is only the women's focolare center, right?



Yes. But the men's focolare is well represented by four married focolarini who come every week to meet in our focolare where we have reserved a place for them with material for formation. Aside from this, in our many activities we have learned to delegate, trusting in the people of our community, being beside them. This has led to the revelation of many talents and everyone feels that they are protagonists.

Africa has been called the continent of hope because of the numerous presence of the youth...

In 2016 we organized a week long school with around a hundred youth who became aware of their vocation and began to live for a united world attracting



others to do the same. On May 6, 2018 during the local Genfest there were a thousand youth. In the international one in Manila 14 of them took part together with 5 adults; the community helped to raise funds for their trip. In the last Mariapolis, among the 400 participants, 350 were youth.

Another initiative is the one of «children for peace» (we held two events, with 1,000 children in the first and 600 in the second). With the technique of the «art of loving», the children are formed with that mentality which makes them grow as «new men».

What do you do for the local Church?

In July 2017 we held two schools in the minor and major Seminaries, with 140 participants. It was followed by a retreat/school for 104 priests coming from different dioceses of Congo (see Mariapolis n. 7-8-9/2017). We feel the support of the Church. Some priests promote the spirit of communion of the Movement in their parishes.

And for society?

We are striving to develop the project of Economy of Communion. There are 44 entrepreneurs who are attending our formation courses, like the one held in Nairobi in 2015, and they have begun to get involved and commit themselves.



Some focolarini with fr. Angelo Pozzi, salesian, among the first missionaries who brought the Ideal to Lubumbashi.

The social and political situation of the DRC is not one of the most reassuring: there is violence and corruption. It is therefore necessary to insist on the formation of «new men» with the instruments that have matured in the experience of the Focolare Movement.

When the focolare center came to Lubumbashi the community had only about a hundred members, now we are around 500 with the blossoming of vocations in the various expressions of the Movement.

a cura di Gianna Sibelli

The «scent» of a Presence that attracts

After what was already published on the temporary focolares (TF) in Africa and the Middle East, let us now go to other worldwide contexts where this remarkable experience is repeated by persons of varied vocations who just with the power of their witness bring to the communities – involving them as protagonists – the message of unity that comes from the Gospel



Paraguay. «In Ciudad del Este – wrote Silvano Malini, italian focolarino in Paraguay – the frontier city between Paraguay, Brazil and Argentina, a temporary focolare was set-up composed of eight members from Brazil, Paraguay, Italy and Ecuador.

To build the focolare meant for some to remain in the farm to cook, go to market, clean the house, welcome visitors, etc. while

for others it meant taking turns in visiting families. A rule valid for everyone: be ready to love the other unconditionally, sharing joys and sufferings: a communion that was very much awaited by everyone.

In Foz de Iguazú, a university city in Brazilian territory, it was possible to meet Max, a young man from Haiti who was retraced through *Facebook*, to visit Bro. Joaquim who was recovering after an accident, to participate in the birthday celebration of Fr. Zenón, who is in an institution. Talking with the bishop Mons. Dirceu and with Adnan El Sayed, a Muslim, the idea came to organize an interreligious event on Mary – to whom the Qur'an dedicates an entire chapter – and to create a permanent group to plan common activities with Muslims and Christians. A few days after, such initiatives were already taking shape.





Taking advantage of an evening, someone thought of having a barbecue: it was just what was needed to highlight the atmosphere of family and the joy of meeting new friends.

In Comandante Andresito (Argentina), an important meeting with some priests and friends, old and new of Gustavo Retamar - a pillar of the Movement in the Nineties who joined the Focolare in his youth and up to now keeps the teachings of Chiara Lubich in his heart.

After spending ten days, dense with encounters, activities and plans, the TF that came to life in this trinational territory came to an end, leaving in everyone the "scent" of Jesus who had made his home in our midst, called to come by the reciprocal love among everyone. A Presence that will remain as the answer to the existential questions of many locals who contributed to the fulfillment of this extraordinary experience of the Gospel».

Papua New Guinea. A leap across the planet and here we are smack in the middle of the Pacific ocean. From the Philippines, a family-focolare - Ethel e Lito - and two priest focolarini - Am and Joel - have arrived

to spend ten days as a TF which was highly requested by the Bishop of Daru Kiunga, mons. Gilles Kôté. In fact, armed with great courage, went to the international Center of the Focolare Movement to ask for help in bringing the spirituality of communion to his diocese. The cathedral is built in a forest, an hour by plane and four by car from the capital of Port Moresby, surrounded by formation houses, the seminary, a school and a farm. The first five days was dedicated to priests and lay leaders from the various pastoral units, some of whom had to travel



for eight hours. The programme consisted of a forum which allowed everyone to express themselves bringing new ideas and contributions, followed by five workshops on topics such as the family, youth, cultural and traditional practices. Then the meeting was opened to everyone. «The participants - wrote Ethel and Lito - aware of being in front of something new, were grateful for having had the chance, together with the TF, to immerse themselves fully in unity».

Malaysia and Singapore. Two focolarine made up the TF of Kuala Lumpur: Aileen from Indonesia and Catherine from Vietnam, living with various families there. «We put ourselves at the service of the community – they wrote – with visits and private talks in preparation for the Mariapolis. It was moving to see how these people took from their hearts the wealth of the spirituality of unity that they live everyday and with courage they offered it to others. It was their experiences that bore the most fruits». During our three-weeks stay in Malaysia, one of our stop-overs was in Johor, where there is a beautiful community. There we were joined by Antonia Testa, focolarina doctor from Rome (see *Mariapolis* n.3-4/18 pag. 49) who came with her colleague for some conferences in Malaysia. It was a great opportunity to let her meet the community



Malesia e Singapore

just a few days, after the focolare center was transferred to Yogyakarta, in Indonesia. During the community meeting, made up of all the branches of the Movement, the Nuncio, mons. Marek Zalewsky, who is also entrusted with Vietnam, was also present».

Kazakhstan. Another «strategic» TF was realized at the end of June in Taldykorgan, composed of Jarka (focolare of Prague) and Agnieszka (focolare of Moscow). The invitation to extend their stay for two more weeks after the Mariapolis came from Bro.

Luca (see *Mariapolis* n.1-2/17), who had offered them some places to stay in his convent-parish, just as he had given to the 35 participants of the Mariapolis. Throughout the first week, with the invitations received from many families, they were able to share the spirituality of unity to many people including some who had come back to the Church just this year. In the second week the TF was enriched by the arrival of two Franciscan nuns who came from Almaty to hold a summer school for children of the parish. There were also several meetings with those who were with the Movement for a longer period of time. «From the expressions and experiences of these people – they wrote – we



Malesia e Singapore

and also to participate in the mariapolis in Myanmar. The experience of this travelling TF ended in Singapore. Here too there is much life and a great joy for the presence of the focolarine who were coming back, even for

realized that we had before us a particularly fertile ground to welcome this new life that they were deepening. We received a confirmation of this from a message we received from Astana after a celebration in which we too participated. It said that Kazakhstan would like to be a Country of unity and harmony among all ethnic groups and religions».



Santo Domingo.

At the conclusion of this symbolic world tour, let's return to Latin America to talk about the TF in Santo Domingo made up of two focolarini: Renato from Italy and Vicente from the Canary Islands, with Anselmo, a Volunteer from Spain. The need for a TF was expressed by some Dominican youth who wanted to know more about the vocations of the Work of Mary. Five of them - three university students and two highschoolers - came from the school «Cafè con Leche (Coffee with Milk)», an educational project supported by various agencies among which is the AFNonlus, that has 600 students from four to twelve years old. The others came from different cities such as La Romana, Cacata, etc. In focolare they distributed the colours and this is what they did: they took turns in cooking, they cleaned the house, etc. with the commitment to live in great reciprocal love and to keep their heart open to God. «During the presentation of the different vocations - Renato shared - Angel,

a married focolarino from Santo Domingo linked to the focolare of Havana (Cuba) also came, since there is still no permanent men's focolare center. He presented the profile of Foco as he shared his vocation and explained how he remained a part of the focolare even if he lived faraway with his family. Anselmo, a Volunteer, showed how his vocation brought him to strive to build a new society by drawing strength from the life of his nucleo. The days were spent in simplic-

ity, dense with spirituality and communion. We visited the women's focolare center and, with them we took a walk to the port area where we saw amazing ships from the past. When the moment arrived for us to leave, everyone shared their wish that this experience of TF can be repeated for the youth, for themselves and also for others who, like them feel called especially by God and who want to respond generously to His call».

But it doesn't end here!

From the zones and zonette of the world we are already gathering requests for Temporary Focolares for 2019. Based on the proposals that will be presented, each one can offer, through their respective zonettas, their eventual availability to participate, thus allowing for a suitable programming of this extraordinary irradiation of the Gospel: ut.omnes@focolare.org.

prepared by Anna Friso

Ginette Hoffmann

The first focolarina of Luxembourg

«I want to love Jesus with all my heart, my soul and my strength and to love all those that His will places in my path». This is how Ginette told Chiara Lubich of her desire to enter the focolare and added: «I ask Him to give me the grace to love Him for the rest of my life and to grant me the grace never to forget that I have chosen him forsaken as my Spouse». She was the youngest of eight siblings. Ginette grew up in a family with solid values. And as soon as she met the ideal of unity, it became the passion of her life. After the school of formation in Loppiano her first destination was the Philippines, the Holland from where she went on to open the focolare center in Denmark.

For her, life had meaning only if filled with acts of love, even when, after 30 years spent in the «frontiers», she returned to Luxembourg where she continued to weave a network of contacts with people to whom she shared the *Word of life*. Being an expert in seven languages, she was a precious contribution for the translation of formation material.

In 2004 a serious illness manifested itself which she faced with great courage. Believing in the spiritual power of suffering, she felt like a little well from which anyone could draw pure water, the fruit of her suffering transformed into love. She knew how to suffer with those who suffered and to support anyone in difficulty.

Three years ago the illness resurfaced. Ginette accepted this unexpected news with a new «yes» to the Spouse. There were very difficult months during which she suffered also spiritually due to the continuous pain and the strong medications. But thanks to the support of the focolare and the closeness of the

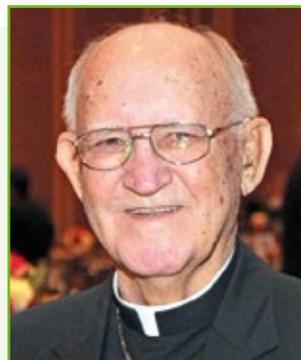


community she was able to overcome this trial.

During her last day on earth – the 27th of September – she assured a focolarina that she was ready to meet Jesus. She was 76 years old. Her funeral became a celebration of resurrection, a grateful remembrance of an extraordinary person who fourteen years ago wrote: «Happy and decided I take flight toward my wedding in heaven, carrying just one precious piece of luggage, that of loving to death Jesus in the person who is beside me in the present moment, to bring to Him the world in my arms».

Mons. Charles Grahmann

Bishop of Dallas, a great friend of the Focolare



Born in Texas (USA), Charles spent his childhood in the family farm together with his 10 siblings, of which three have also chosen like him the religious ministry. Auxiliary bishop of San Antonio with the motto: «Walk humbly with your God» (Mi 6,8), in 1982 he was called to serve the new diocese of Victoria; in 1990, until 2007, that of Dallas. While in San Antonio he met the charism of unity, a spiritual strength that would sustain him for the rest of his life, especially during the tumultuous times of his episcopacy in Dallas. Jesus Forsaken became his only treasure.

The *focus* of ecumenical and interreligious dialogue of the Focolare Movement encouraged him to form a group of ministers of other ecclesial groups who would meet regularly in

the spirit of communion and of dialogue. Four of them, whom he considered as his «brothers», began to participate with him in our international ecumenical meetings, giving new meaning and life to our common journey towards unity. Putting into practice the words of the pact of reciprocal love was for him a fundamental commitment which was reflected in his support for the many humanitarian initiatives in the world: a «passion» that led him to taking care of the poor and the migrants while he was in San Antonio.

When he retired, in spite of his health problems, he continued to maintain his commitment to the «Pact» through the numerous relationships he built throughout the years and up to 2017, he continued to participate and be present, even if just briefly, in the Mariapolises and community meetings in the city of San Antonio, where he spent his final years. Everyone considered him as a true father and brother. On August 14, at the age of 87, he concluded his earthly journey to go home to the Father.

Celi Fuentes

sr. M. Luc Vadelorge

«Walk in the light» (Jn 12,35)

The eldest of five siblings, she became a nurse and then the directress of a nursing school. She responded generously to God's call embracing the religious life in the congregation of St. Thomas de Villeneuve (France). In 1973 she wrote to Chiara: «It has been four years that I have known the Ideal of unity and I want to live it in every moment. It has given me the



possibility to remain faithful to my vocation- which I had chosen three years ago, at the age of 31. An ideal which has given me a greater love for my congregation and my founder and which has transformed me through reciprocal love and made me love the others with a merciful love just the way they are. An ideal that makes me live with Jesus Forsaken welcomed and loved for himself. That makes me live in unity with the whole Work of Mary and with all the sisters, a unity that gives me peace, strength, joy and which leads me to a greater simplicity, patience, trust and serenity in the events or relations with people».

For 20 years she was in Senegal: a rich and fruitful period because of the presence of Jesus in the midst with the faraway focolare center of Man, with the women religious in France and in Senegal, and with the men religious of the OMI animated by the spirituality of the Focolare Movement. She worked with congregations, associations and people of good will to make known to the government the good works of missionaries. In 1991 she set-up a service for people with AIDS. Her dedication was rewarded in Dakar when she received the medal of the city of Paris. She also received the Cavalier's Cross of the Lion of Senegal and in 2004, in France, the Cross of the Legion of Honour.

In 2005 she was diagnosed with a serious illness. She wrote to the focolare: «I am very peaceful because I am in the hands of God and I know that everyone is praying for me. I offer everything for the Church, for our congregation, for Chiara and the whole Work of Mary». She recovered and in 2011 she was elected as councillor of the Chapter. But in 2016 the illness returned. Sr Marie-Luc prepared herself for her meeting with God - which happened on July 9, 2018 at the age of 81 - often praying in this way: «God, your grace is enough for me!». It was the Word of life (2Cor, 12,9) of that month.

International Secretariat of the women Religious

Sergio Biagioni

A long and very rich life



Born in Turin 94 years ago, Sergio was a privileged witness of great events that built Italy after the second world war. At 18 years old he refused to enlist in the army and instead joined the resistance. It was during these years of youthful battle for freedom and democracy that he met the charisma of Chiara Lubich. He followed her to the first Mariapolises in Fiera di Primiero. And he never left. He graduated with a degree in engineering from the Polytechnic of Turin. Sergio loved to share anecdotes and never before published stories about the early times, which were transcribed by Gaia Dal Panta, one of the first focolarinas of Florence: his motorcycle trips to bring the Ideal to Grenoble, the first telephone link-ups with all the focolare centers in Italy, his deep friendship with the first focolarini Vittorio Sabbione, Cosimo Calò, Foco, the meals in focolare.

When he moved to Rome he met and married Gabriella. They had three children: Andrea, Maria Chiara and Enrico. From Rome Sergio decided to move to Rocca di Papa, to remain close to Chiara and the nascent Center of the Movement. He worked with Gabriella for the families of the zone. He was a great friend of all the focolarini and focolarine who worked at the Center.

Every work-related move was a chance for Sergio to bring a gift for Chiara. Up to the end he maintained intact his enchantment for the charisma of unity. With Gabriella he was an avid and faithful reader of *Mariapolis* and his eyes would light up when he read a news item about the Movement spread all over the world.

He lived his old age entrusting himself to the will of God and to the care of those who assisted him, with docility and childlike trust. When he understood that his health was declining he confided that he was afraid of dying. But immediately - as he did throughout his life - he threw himself into the hands of the Father and he left for Heaven

like that: serene, surrounded by the love of his family, accompanied by the big family of the Movement. It was October 21.

Maria Voce wrote in a message to the family: «... I have a heartfelt gratitude for his example of an authentic Christian, faithful to the ideal of unity which had fascinated him since he was young. Chiara and many who have already reached the heavenly Mariapolis have surely come to

welcome him. We think of Sergio now in the fullness of joy and peace, with the certainty that he will continue to support you with that love that he has always had for you and for your families».

Cesare Borin

fr. Richard Dupont

Among the first members of the Movement in Québec

Born in Canada (Trois Rivières), at 25 years old Richard made his profession as a Brother of Christian Schools. At 43, in his search for renewal of his Congregation, he participated in a Mariapolis in Pennsylvania (USA) and, he returned to Canada, striving to live this spirit in his everyday life. He played a big role in the spread of the Ideal in Québec, in particular in the organization of the Movement of the religious. In december 1976 he was in Chicago with some of the



religious from Canada and the United States for the «official» birth of this Movement in North America. With the support and encouragement of the international Center, he worked to create a school of formation that was held in St-Jérôme during the summers of 1978 and '79, with the participation of around thirty men religious who later started to meet regularly. What impresses us the most about fr. Richard is the importance that he gives to the presence of Jesus in the midst, which, he affirmed, «transforms every encounter

Elisabeth Bernet-Kollöffel

*Pioneer of the women
Volunteers in Switzerland*



Born in Ramsen, in the canton of Sciaffusa (Switzerland), her childhood was marked by the death of her father due to an accident. She did all she could

to help her mother in taking care of her younger siblings in the flower farm of their family. At 25 years old she went to study social work in a school in Lucerne and there she met someone who spoke to her about the Focolare Movement. Three years later she participated in the Mariapolis of Fiera di Primiero and, attracted by the life of the Gospel she experienced there, she moved to Zurich to be near the focolare center, working as a social worker in different parishes and for the «Pro Senectute».

In serving her neighbours, she felt the call to be a Volunteer: and so the development of this branch of the Movement began in Switzerland. She dedicated herself to the enterprise «Von und Für» («From and For») engaged in the recycling of used items for the Economy of Communion.

At 52 years old she met Paul, who later became her husband. He was a widower with three adolescent children whom Elisabeth took as her own with great affection. After she retired, Elisabeth continued to work in the parish and in

into a moment of Paradise and makes us discover in a new way the charism of our own founder». Fr. Richard in fact passionately loved his founder John Baptist of La Salle and would often cite his words on fraternal love and the life of the Word. In his final years, after spending some time in Haiti, he dedicated himself to the formation of the La Sallian laity, highlighting their specific role in the community and promoting a profound communion among everyone.

On May 22, at the age of 88, fr. Richard died in the residence of Laval, after 71 years of religious life.

fr. Yvon Desormeaux

the Movement. She became a widow and when her health began to decline she agreed to live in a hospice. She was always happy when the women Volunteers went there to have their nucleo meetings. She contributed much in creating communion among everyone, her silences and words always very constructive.

On January 31, 2018 at the age of 87, as she herself had written for her necrological service, «her desire to return to the arms, will come about in peace and in joy».

Ruth Imja Lutz

Danilo Verrini

*The innocence of a
child of the Gospel*



Aside from helping to run the family mill Danilo, from Carpi (Emilia Romagna), also successfully engaged in the textile business. He became a Volunteer and joined the Cooperative of Loppiano of which he became the mayor and later the auditor.

He was a very generous person, together with his wife Adele, also a Volunteer, they got involved in thousands of ways: welcoming all those of the Movement who came to their city; to set up the gym where the Mariapolis was to be held; they gave to the focolarine clothes from Fashion House that they managed with their daughter, many of which were captured in the many videos of Chiara Lubich. When in the early times, an activity of sorting scraps of cloth started in Loppiano, Danilo lent his truck as long as it was needed. Being in constant contact with the focolarini of Loppiano, the truck driver too began to live the Gospel.

During the communion of soul Danilo knew how to express that which was the motor of his

life: the faithfulness to God-Love, which kept him faithful to his family and to the Work of Mary. His words reflected the innocence of a child of the Gospel, without apparent trials, in spite of the crosses encountered in his long life of 91 years, which ended peacefully last July 30.

Siriano Masetti



Sabrina Reali

Always for the others

«I bought this apartment for the sole purpose of offering hospitality to others»; «...today I will meet with the parents

of my students: the only thing I want to do is to let Jesus touch them through my words». This was Sabrina, Volunteer of Ciampino (Rome), who left us on November 8 at just 49 years old. She was gifted with many talents and abilities, which she never held back. Her characteristic was that of cheerful giving; the others always came before herself.

She had found a book of Chiara's meditations at home and she felt the immediate and strong desire to know more about the spirituality of unity, so much so that she committed herself in the vocation of a Volunteer. Her relationship with Jesus became more solid and more profound. The nucleo meetings was one of the most important things in her week where she gave herself totally.

Her illness appeared like a flash from nowhere. She said her repeated and faithful «yes» to God throughout the course of the painful therapy which formed her and prepared her for the encounter with Him. «I must start the treatment. Thank you Jesus! Before I used run at full speed. Now I am forced to go slow, so I can love each neighbour better».

Sabrina lived every step, every difficult and dark passage, in the closest unity with her nucleo and the focolare. «When she received the anointing of the sick - the women Volunteers

shared - she said a spontaneous prayer that we will never forget: "Thank you Jesus for having given me this gift! Thank you because you, my Spouse, calls me everyday. Jesus Forsaken is my consoler, my strength, my all. I say my 'yes'. I am ready to do the will of God in that design of love that He has chosen for me". She continued and turning to us said: "When it may happen that my human weakness will not allow me to say this, I am sure that you will say it for me"».

Anna Rita Rondinara

fr. Benito Gazich

A strong character, full of humanity

On April 11, 2018 at 89 years old, after days of intense suffering consciously offered to God, fr. Benito concluded his earthly adventure. Born in Zara (Dalmatia) the youngest of ten children, he decided to become a Salesian priest at twenty years old. Ordained a priest he taught literature and would later become the headmaster in different houses of the Congregation.

Difficulties and stress were not lacking and at 45 years old he had a nervous breakdown. «The sanctity I was striving for - he wrote - seems to no longer be made for me. I was in this situation when I remembered the invitation of a Salesian friend to participate in a meeting of the Focolare Movement in



Rocca di Papa. I went out of curiosity, more than out of the desire to find some help. The words I heard about God Love penetrated profoundly into my soul and brought out the certainty of God's love for me which I had experienced during my youth. I suddenly rediscovered the joy and meaning of my life as an answer to the love of God. I understood clearly that sanctity is possible also for me, because God loves me the way I am, even with my nervous breakdown. I just had to believe in His love and to love Him in return in the person he places beside me. I felt reborn».

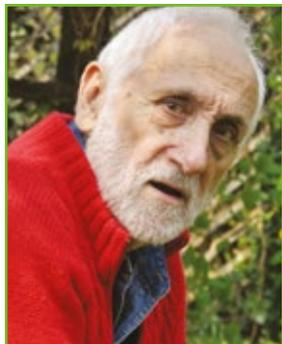
Ruggero Badano

Father of Chiara Luce

On October 13. Ruggero, a Volunteer of Sassello (Savona), left this world at the age of 83 to join his daughter Chiara in Heaven, the Blessed

Chiara Luce. A simple man, a truck driver with great common sense and a man of few words, but always the right ones and said at the right moment. His life was an overflowing of that love that makes no distinctions, precisely because it is rooted in the divine. Ruggero discovered God-Love in 1981 during the first Familyfest at

the Palaetur of Rome, where he participated with his family: his wife Maria Teresa, who would later



It was a rebirth that made him a true witness of the charism of unity in all the circumstances of life, especially in the most difficult ones, which he overcame with the love for and faithfulness to Jesus Forsaken. He was a Salesian o who was happy in his vocation, who fought with his strong and fiery character but full of humanity. He was cordial with everyone, his testimony impressed even his students. He always had a smile, a joke, a story for everyone he met.

In 1994 he had a heart attack: «After the first treatment – he wrote - I was invaded by fear at the thought that I would have found myself in front of God. I felt empty-handed. Slowly a light began to shine: it is enough to do the will of God in the present moment!». Having found peace once again, fr. Benito took hold of his life and threw himself in loving his neighbours. he himself prepared the card that would be distributed after his death in which, among other things, it said: «Father, you have entrusted me with a diamond to enconce in the mosaic of universal brotherhood . I have fulfilled the mission and now here I am at home to sing forever the marvels of your love. Thank you kind and merciful Father, for all and forever!».

fr. Mariano Steffan

also become a Volunteer, and their only child who was nine years old.

For some time his health had become weak, but Ruggero always found the extra strength to bring his testimony together with Maria Teresa, even across the ocean, on how their daughter had found the suitable environment that gave her the strength to accept her illness from the hands of God and to take flight to go to Him at just 19 years old. He also shared how they found the strength and the light to accompany her and to give her back to God Love.

After years of married life lived in reciprocal love and in a growing unity, a few moments before Ruggero concluded his earthly journey, Maria Teresa, reading in his eyes his great desire for Paradise, whispered to him: «Now I will let you go», thus giving him that serenity he had acquired all of his life and in these last months of suffering and renunciations: a man who knew how to rejoice in the little things, making them great.

Pier Paolo Foglino

Gloria Saez de Vicuña

*Her actions for
«That all may
be one»*



Spanish Volunteer of Guereñu (Álava), Gloria, felt the vocation of caring for the sick, so she enrolled in nursing school and entered the Order of the Servants of Mary. But when her siblings who had a congenital disease, lost their ability to move, she had to return home to take care of her mother and one of her siblings. In a Mariapolis she made an experience that can be summarized in one word: «freedom». From that moment on she became the first one to love. She discovered that the charism of unity could reconcile her strong desire for spirituality and a life of service for others: family, work, community, prosiners, etc. After a brief illness, on April 10, 2017, she concluded her holy journey at the age of 83. The Volunteers of her nucleo said: «She was a model of how to live

our vocation, radically and with commitment to the Movement». Her food was the Word, her actions always geared towards that all may be one. Distance was not a problem for her: whether by car, bus or train she would always participate in her nucleo meetings. Faithful to the communion of goods and the distribution of the *Word of life*: she was love for everyone. Even in her illness she continued to love, giving "her all" in the present

moment. Her docotr. relatives and other patients, her friends who came to visit her always left edified. When we would go to visit her she shared with us the moments of her union with God and taking our hand she said: "The day of my departure willbe the most beautiful day of my life". In Jesus Forsaken she was able to overcome all her doubts, persevering up to the end».

Ana Guerrero

Cilly Hachmöller

«You did not choose me, but I chose you» (Jn15,12-17)

Among the first women Volunteers of Cloppenburg (Lower Saxony, Germany), Cilly and her husband Josef, who was a farmer, had six children. The discovery that God is not a judge who punishes but rather is an infinite abyss of personal love – which she realized through her son Clemens, who with his sister Elisabeth became focolarini – was the answer to Cilly's deepest desire. At the same time it was for her a stimulus to answer with all her being to the love of God. her life was characterized by a great simplicity, faithfulness and concrete love. Often, when she came back from a meeting of the Movement, she would use the telephone to renew those relationships that were fragile or broken.

The Hachmöller home was always open, especially for those who were in need of help: a phone call in the night, after consulting with the family, made Cilly open her home for six months to a young man who was picked up by the police. Later, with great faith in God, she moved for to the nascent little town of Montet (Switzerland) to accompany her husband, also a Volunteer, who went to take care of the farmlands there. They stayed for four years. In her last years, due to her illness, she went to live if a home for the elderly where she built friendships with everyone there. Often her nucleo members would go to visit her and take her for walks in her wheelchair, pray together in the Chapel. which were very special moments also for them. She always



thanked everyone with a radiant smile, grateful for every small act of service that she received.

On April 14, 2017, Good Friday, she received the Anointing of the Sick at 3:00 p.m. and after four hours, surrounded by all her children and accompanied by Marian prayers and songs, she peacefully

concluded her earthly life at the age of 86, after opening her eyes for the last time to greet everyone.

Margareta Gehlmann

Aldo Tenti

Interior riches and a big heart

Volunteer of Arezzo, Aldo participated in the life of the Focolare Movement since the start of the '80s. Fascinated by the charism of unity, he wrote to Chiara

Lubich to ask for the direction of his life and she proposed to him this phrase from the Gospel:«The Kingdom of God is in your midst» (Lk 17,20), because of his interior riches and big heart.

He was responsible for a nucleo and a local community leader, and with his wife Giuliana (married focolarina) they gave a precious contribution with their presence and professionalism to the international School of families in Loppiano. The



Agnes Gagliardi Mügler

*Her precious gift
to Jesus Forsaken*



Agnes grew up in the Canton of Turgovia (Switzerland), and she gave up her dream of becoming a teacher in order to learn how to be a seamstress to support the family. She married Mario and they had four children. She met the Focolare Movement, and the spirituality of unity formed her life. Particularly attracted by the reality of Jesus Forsaken, she wanted to orient her life to Him and to become a Volunteer. When her son Claudio died at the age of 18 in a motorcycle accident, she wrote: «He is my gift to Jesus Forsaken, a gift which is greater than all the riches in the world. When I realized this, I experienced an indescribable joy. My motherly heart was crying uncontrollably but my soul rejoiced without end! I could not believe it: I could give to Jesus Forsaken

the most precious thing I had, knowing, with certainty, that Claudio will participate in the resurrection of Jesus».

She became a widow prematurely and single-handedly raised her four children. Finally Agnes could fulfill her dream of becoming a teacher. She loved the Church and committed to support a seminarian from Kerala (India): it would be one of the most beautiful experiences of her life. With the great desire to go to India for his ordination – she would be able to go twice – she began to study English at 80 years old. Thanks to the love and patience of her neighbours she was able to remain in her apartment up to the age of 92, and then she moved to a hospice in the canton of Zugo. She was still quite independent and continued to help the other patients in need until her strength permitted.

With the gradual loss of her memory, the Volunteers came to hold their nucleus meetings in her room. On June 20, at 94 years old, she left for Heaven leaving in each one a trail of light, for her life lived according to the Gospel.

Ruth Imja Lutz

unity with Giuliana, was a witness for many couples and a rock from which to draw strength to face every suffering together, often transformed into joy because of that reciprocal love that generates the presence of Jesus in the midst.

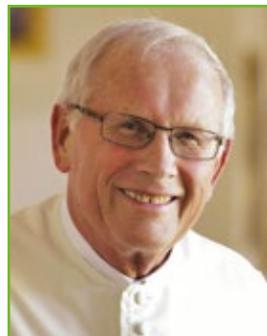
Aldo had all the vocations in his heart, and had a special love for the men and women focolarini who throughout the years found support and shelter in his home, experiencing the family there. A few months before he left this world he wrote in his diary: «... In the midst of visits, medical exams and every possible treatment I found myself in the oncology department. My life has been a long journey: I am almost eighty years old and today, in a special intimate moment with You, Jesus, I offer you my life. I feel that I can do it, I can give it back to you».

He left for Heaven on July 2 at the age of 79. It was a «fulfillment of his design», a fullness of love.

Romano Tiraboschi

fr. Gregor Meisinger

*The spirit
of communion
the center of his life*



Born in Liebenstein 3 (Germany) he was baptized with the name Friedrich, at 19 he entered the novitiate of the Abbey of Schlägl of the Order of Premonstratensian Monks

with the name of Gregor. After his ordination he became the parish priest of Julbach, which he again took up after being the vice-prior and master of novices in the Abbey of Schlägl for two years. He was involved in the pastoral care of the community life of the monastery: that is why he left the vivacity of the parish to pray the Vespers with his brother-monks everyday.

He was a very cordial and serene person, animated by the spirituality of the Focolare Movement and the Cursillos, he initiated many activities of renewal in the parish, putting the spirit of communion as the center of these initiatives. His action reflected fully what Saint Augustine said: «With you I am a Christian, for you I am a priest». His great love for the people made him organize numerous trips and summer schools for children and teens and to develop the care for the elderly and the sick, and to work for migrants. In the past fifteen years he suffered various serious illnesses, the last of which was a stroke that brought him to his heavenly Home on November 28, at the age of 77.

*prepared by fr. Mariano Steffan
and fr. Theo Jansen*



Rosalia Solenghi Bertoni

The [wer of the evangelical «yes-yes, no-no» evangelico

A Volunteer of the zonetta of Bologna, with her life steeped in the Ideal, Rosalia bore witness to the preciousness of her encounter with the charism of unity, which she lived with fidelity. She was avid for the words of Chiara which she fixed in her heart and strived to put into practice. She had a simple yet profound faith, and she entrusted every problem or worry she had to Jesus saying: «You take care of it». This is what gave her the serenity and strength to face all problems with love.

She knew how to listen, she gave advice with the power of the «yes-yes, no-no» of the Gospel, helping many to grow in both the spiritual and human level. She always had encouraging words for everyone and the promise to say a prayer to the Virgin, to whom she had a special devotion, for them. Her last years were full of problems that were a source of her trials; inspite of the fragility and uncertainty of the future, Rosalia entrusted everything to Mary, invoking her name up to the end, with the certainty that on the day of her departure – which happened on August 27, 2017 at the age of 86 - it will be precisely Mary who will welcome her to Paradise.

Daniela Nicolini Palmieri

Clemente (Tino) Lugli

He lived his long life well

An employee of the Italian Railways, during the beginning of the Sixties, Tino participated with Bona, his wife, in the Mariapolis: it was the turning point of his life. His commitment, together with other young couples, to live what they experienced in the Mariapolis led to the birth of a flourishing Focolare community Carpi (Modena).

Tino and Bona became Volunteers of God and their home, which was in the city center, was always open for meetings that needed a suitable venue: the Collegamento CH,

UPM lessons, etc. Tino was also an active member of the parish community, where he worked at the service of others: he was also very diligent in the subscription campaign for *Città Nuova*. All these, as he himself affirmed, were done with the aim of increasing his personal relationship with God and



in the faithfulness of his practices of piety especially the meditation.

Through the years, his certainty that God is Love grew stronger, even in moments of suffering, like the death of his wife and the gradual decline of his health. In his final years he was bed-ridden: the final touch to complete his ascent to sanctity. Supported by the brotherly love of his nucleo members, on July 9, at the age of 91, he was called back to the Father's house, leaving behind a trail of peace and serenity. During his funeral, celebrated in the cathedral, many were certain that this was a man who had lived his long life well.

prepared by Pino Tasca

Zofia Vaukman Tomis

*Jesus Forsaken as
travel companion*

Born in Slovenia in a profoundly Christian family, Zofia was married to Emil and in spite of the atheist regime, they were able, through words and example, raise their four children in the faith. In the parish, the arrival of a priest focolarino led them to get to know the spirituality of unity: the whole family was fascinated by it and together they tried to intensify their reciprocal love which they discovered as the premise to have Jesus in the midst. Silvia, their eldest daughter, felt the call to become a focolarina and the two parents later became Volunteers. Soon in Muta, their city, the first nucleo of women Volunteers was born.

From Chiara Lubich Zofia received the Word of life: »I stand at the door and knock. If anyone listens to my voice and opens the door, I will come

to him and dine with him« (Ap. 3,29) Zofia strived to open the door everyday to Jesus and together with Emil, with great generosity and for many years, they would go to Cirkulane and Ptuj, around 70 kms away, to take care of a group of New Families.



In the nucleo, she was entrusted with the communion of goods, which she lived with generosity and passion even in the simplicity of their life and with great trust in Providence. She is usually the first also during the spiritual communion of soul, sharing with the others her many experiences on living the Gospel. In the Caritas of the parish she was in-charge of the mini-market of clothes, keeping everything neat and in order, giving advice with love to those who came, even outside the regular working hours.

Jesus Forsaken was her travel companion, especially during the years of her illness. She always kept a smile on her face for everyone, profoundly

grateful to God for the gift of the Charism to which she remained faithful up to the end.

On December 15, 2017, at 81 years old, Zofia went to Heaven after a month in the hospital where she was constantly surrounded by the love of her husband, Silvia and the other children with their families. The funeral mass was a celebration of the resurrection participated by many people of the Movement coming from Slovenia.

Katarina Gerzina

Fritz Simonis

*Always
at the service
of the brother*



Born in Heidelberg (Germany), as a child Fritz received a solid spiritual

and moral education. He married Annemarie and together they moved to Waldshut, where he started an engineering firm. They had five children; once in a while they would take into their house and business some problematic youth to help them find a job later in life.

During a visit to Loppiano, the young family came to know the spirituality of Chiara Lubich, that penetrated deeply in Fritz's heart. He commits himself as a Volunteer and strived to work for the glory of God, getting also involved in parish work. With his ability to create relationships he gathered together many people some of whom later became a part of the Focolare Movement. For some years he generously gave his time to coordinate the activities of New Humanity in Switzerland, even if he was living in Germany. He was faithful to the communion of goods and willingly shared all that he had, whether it was some medicine, his summer cottage, or his car. Even in the last few months of his life, in spite of his progressive memory loss, he

never lost his typical sense of humour, remaining faithful to «his» ideal of unity up to the end.

On March 19, at the age of 88, God welcomed him to the heavenly Home, where he will continue to be with us as our intercessor.

Hermann Wagenhofer

Bianca Maria Gianoncelli

Depth of soul, analytical ability and steadfastness in her intentions

Since 1967 Bianca Maria, of Milan, was a Volunteer of the Movement. With professionalism and love she worked as a social worker, her chosen mission in life. Her proud spirituality helped her to do away with all that was superfluous and to focus on the Essential. The strength of her spontaneous character and personality pushed those around her to live a life coherent to the Gospel, that small book which she always kept in her pocket and from which she recited phrases by memory. There was one that was frequently cited maybe because it was the expression of the reality that she herself was experiencing: «I am with you, always, until the end of the world» (Mt. 28,20)



Attentive to the details, gifted with an analytical and perceptive character, she spoke calmly and peacefully. She was remembered for the depth of her soul, the steadfastness of her intentions and her knowing how to «remain standing» in spite of the family trials and those

of her health that characterized her entire life. Especially devoted to our Heavenly Mother she was attentive and generous in the various social and ecclesial activities that she collaborated in, in view of building a new humanity.

In these last few years of her stay in the hospital she made her own declaration of Psalm 15 «You Lord are my only Good». To those

Eloisa Monaldi

«Here I am»(Lc 1,38)

A native of Fermo in the Marches region of Italy, Eloisa graduated in pharmacology in Rome and began to work there. In 1964 she attended the Mariapolis of Assisi, and there she discovered that she had a Father who loved her. «Even if I was not a good Christian, I was



certain that God loved me». From that moment on she threw herself totally in living the love of neighbour putting her time, talent, energies, her bicycle, her car at the service of others. She became a Volunteer. She offered her services to take care of a focolarina who needed assistance for a period of time. This began a long series of concrete acts of love, lived with all of herself and all her beautiful qualities: a harmonious voice, deep and smiling eyes, a certain seriousness enriched by a savoury irony, love for music and good food. In her commitment to love everyone, her family had a privileged place, and were always present in her heart and her prayers.

She made everyone feel important. She would remember the names of everyone she met and the names of their family members. Her often silent presence, her few but necessary words, touched the heart, pearls of wisdom that came from her great love for God and for the neighbour, witness of her knowledge, her inner dignity, her great faith. But above all hers was a life totally steeped in the Gospel. In

who visited her and asked how she was, she would point at the Crucifix, saying that she would like to have wings to fly to Him.

On June 5, at the age of 81, Bianca Maria finally flew to God.

Francesca Scauda Candeloro

her illness she adhered radically to the will of God. In her composure she was always ready to push aside her difficulties so as to listen to that of the others, which she kept in her heart and never forgot to include in her prayers so that these situations could be resolved as soon as possible. She was an example of a fully realized woman, who knew how to build bridges, encouraging others to do the same. On October 11, 2018 at the age of 96, she flew back to God.

Anna Maria Massaro

Our relatives

The following passed on to the Next Life: **Leo, father of Bernard Keutgens**, focolarino in Aleppo (Syria); **Antonio, father of Alberto Lo Presti**, married focolarino of the Roman Mariapolis; **Johann**, father of **Veronika Semmler**, focolarina in Southeast Asia; **Francois Tsamo**, father of **Mathias Awonang**, focolarino in Burkina Faso; **Maria, sister of Nuccio Santoro**, focolarino in Bogotà; **Ju-Shiu Loh, mother of Philipp Hu**, in focolare in Hong Kong; **Angelo**, father of **Franco Micucci**, focolarino in Ancona; **Odette, mother of Cristina Calicchio**, focolarina in the Mariapolis Ginetta; **Paolo, father of Cristina Cattelan**, focolarina, and **Sergio, father of M. Chiara Biagioni**, married focolarina of Lazio North; **Edit, mother of Eladio Minetti**, focolarino in the Mariapolis «El Diamante» (Mexico); **Caterina, mother of Rossana Bongiorno**, focolarina in Brescia; **Maria, mother of Maria José Coelho**, focolarina in Londrina (Brazil); **Roberto, brother of Rachele Assanelli**, focolarina in Brescia (Italy); **Lisbeth, mother of Lisbet Graf**, focolarina in Montet; **Charles, father of Giuliana Taliana**, focolarina in Malta.

Words of Life 2019

January | «Justice, justice alone shall you pursue» (Dt 16,20).

February | «Seek peace and pursue it» [Ps 34 (33),15].

March | «Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful» (Lk 6,36).

April | «If I, therefore, the master and teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash one another's feet» (Jn 13,14).

May | «Peace to you! As the Father sent me, so too I am sending you» (Jn 20,21).

June | «You will receive power when the holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses» (Acts 1,8).

July | «Freely you have received, freely you must give» (Mt 10,8).

August | «For where your treasure is, there also will your heart be» (Lk 12,34).

September | «Encourage one another and help each other, as indeed you do» (1Thes. 5,11).

October | «Guard this rich trust with the help of the holy Spirit that dwells within us» (2Tm 1,14).

November | «Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep» (Rom 12,15).

December | «Therefore, stay awake! For you do not know on which day your Lord will come» (Mt 24,42).

INDEX

SPIRITUALITY

- 2 Spiritual thought of Chiara Lubich. Recognize the Holy Spirito in others
- 3 Towards the Centenary of Chiara. The message of Emmaus
- 4 Eli Folonari. The great art of «standing beside»

EVENTS

- 10 *Mariapolis* Newsletter. From paper to the web

THE PEOPLE OF CHIARA

- 12 60° of the Focolare Movement in Belgium. A welath for the entire european continent
- 14 Nordic Countries. The great plurality of a «little flock»
- 15 New publication. *An adventure in unity*. Biography of fr. Enrico Pepe
- 16 New Families. From the Czech Republic to Guatemala. Get to know and meet each other
- 18 Action «They have dislodged Jesus». «Know how to welcome», the gen4 challenge
- 20 Teens for unity. Step by step towards «Zero Hunger»

AT THE CENTER

- 22 Emmaus Voce and Jesús Morán in Montet. «God is the gold of this city»
- 24 Delegates meeting/2. Listening to today's humanity
- 27 Towards the European Mariapolis. Showcase the «family»
- 28 In profundity. Jesús Morán on Pope Francis' talk in Loppiano
- 30 Pathways for a united world. Courses of action for the Movement
- 32 Abbà School. Key word: incarnation

IN DIALOGUE

- 34 Bishops of various Churches in Sweden. In Sigtuna the breath of the Spirit
- 36 «Together for Europe» in Prague. Responsibility is the answer
- 38 The 10 years of Sophia. The dream of Chiara is becoming a reality
- 40 New Humanity and the V Dialogue. Together for the challenges of society
- 42 Prophetic Economy. Believe, Collaborate, Change
- 44 Comunione e Diritto in Brasile. «Possiamo fare qualcosa!»
- 45 Healthcare Professionals in dialogue. The art of healthcare today

IN ACTION

- 46 Democratic Republic of Congo. A growing community
- 48 Temporary Focolares 2018/2. Asia, Latin America, Europe

TESTIMONIES

- 52 Ginette. Hoffmann. Mons. Charles Grahmann. sr. M. Luc Vadelorge. Sergio Biagioni. fr. Richard Dupont. Elisabeth Bernet-Kollöffel. Danilo Verrini. Sabrina Reali. d. Benito Gazich. Ruggero Badano. Gloria Saez de Vicuña. Cilly Hachmöller. Aldo Tenti. Agnes Gagliardi Müggler. p. Gregor Meisinger. Clemente (Tino) Lugli. Rosalia Solenghi Bertoni. Zofia Vaukman Tomis. Fritz Simonis. Bianca Maria Gianoncelli. Eloisa Monaldi. I nostri parenti
- 63 Words of Life 2019

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