

Colours of Peace from Loppiano



One
image stood out, the word PEACE formed by the participants themselves on the front of a hill. One sound stood out, the sound of hand clapping to the same beat, a symbol of many hearts together in the boat of life where we are all migrant voyagers. On song for all, Hope is the eternal voice that guides us towards salvation.

The annual appointment came to its symbolic end **beneath an explosion of cannons loaded with colours** – from green to fuchsia, on the first of May in Loppiano, at the International Meeting of Young People for a United World, during United World Week 2017, which was titled **“Pulse: Change your heart, change the world.”** Ever since 1973 when the first edition of the event was held in the small city of central Italy, a colourful crowd of crowd of thousands of young people from Italy, Europe and around the world have descended on Loppiano every May. It is a festive event that is like a model of living in peace with others, beginning from the young people, generations that are interconnected by nature and culture, and more inclined to putting up bridges rather than walls.

Daily events included discussions, testimonies, music, dance, choreographies, all in the name of peace and the construction of a more united world, which has seen the commitment of the young people from the Focolare Movement in collaboration with other associations and movements, such as New Horizons, the Community of San Egidio, La Pira International Centre, Living Peace, Robins, Barbiana, Economia disarmata, Il varco, and Non dalla guerra. There was a significant presence from the Muslim community of Italy, with support from the Imams of Massa Carrara, Teramo, Trieste and Veneto.

The artistic quality was ensured thanks to the Gen Rosso and Gen Verde musical groups, DanceLab Cultural Harmony Association, singing performers Amara and Paolo Vallesi, who

were on their way back from the Sanremo Musical Festival, and numerous other bands from different cities of Italy – all of them united by a strong desire for peace, and by the dream of a more inclusive world, more equal and fraternal. And that enthusiasm, not even the rain could wash away.

While the greats of the world threaten new and ruinous acts of war, which are appalling to most, **on the main stage of the natural amphitheatre of Loppiano, a series of stories “from below”** were being proclaimed, real stories that if they were told enough times would change the course of history. Like the story of Mohamed, recounted by Luca, who had arrived in Italy in a boat after a dangerous crossing. Or like the story of a group of very young Christians from Syria who in a video message expressed their love for their martyred land. The forward gaze of the Harmony Dancelab Association was not a fake facade of pacifism, while it is holding Fine Arts workshops for children of the Palestinian territories with the help of Father Ibrahim Faltas from the Custody of the Holy Land.



Heedless of all the rain, on the first afternoon, the young people began to trace the silhouette of a boat. Or perhaps the rain was precisely the missing detail, since the the journeys of today’s immigrants who are at the mercy of the waves in the hope of finding a peaceful and dignified future, are not void of threats and dangers. This is something that Giusi Nicolini, Mayor of Lampedusa, Italy and 2017 Peace Prize winner knows well.

It’s raining on the hill as the message of peace is being formed, which is the theme of the musical piece by Amara and Paolo Vallesi, and it has become the theme of the day. But the brilliant colours exploding from un-warlike cannons, manage to overcome the grey clouds, the same colours that the young people gather from large sacks, before departing amidst a festive

atmosphere. It represents the promise and commitment to “get their hands dirty” in bringing about a world of peace.