

Community Gathering in Curryhills

The Focolare's first community meeting of 2025 took place on Sunday, 19th January, at the Focolare Centre, Curryhills. It was a heart-warming and spiritually enriching gathering centred on the theme of *Living the Word*, a cornerstone of the spirituality of unity.

Sinead and Stefano warmly welcomed participants from across Ireland, inviting everyone to begin with a "Time Out" moment to pray for peace. The cube of love was then rolled, followed by group charades creatively interpreting Gospel phrases. A children's video presentation of the Word of Life introduced small group discussions, where participants shared personal experiences of living the Word. These sessions revealed many practical insights and renewed commitments to the Gospel. Marian and Brendan further enriched the day with an update about the Christmas "Backpacks" project.

A central point was the reflection on *The Effects of Living the Word*, drawing on Chiara Lubich's insights. Chiara often emphasized that the Word of God, when lived, transforms lives and communities, fostering unity, reconciliation and acts of service. Living Gospel phrases like "Love one another" deepens connections and brings the presence of Jesus into communities, creating a culture of mutual love.

This led seamlessly into Joan and Padraig's input on the *Week of Prayer for Christian Unity*, which began that same day. They shared its historical context, this year's theme, *Do You Believe This? (Jn. 11:26)*, and their experience at a gathering of Anglicans, Catholics Lutherans, Orthodox (Syrian & Romanian) in Abbey Presbyterian Church (Findlater's). Padraig said, *"there was a beautiful choir and a homily from Bishop Dónal Roche. It was a great public expression of our common Baptism, the sacramental bond of unity that exists among all Christians & an opportunity to proclaim the Nicene creed together."*

A poignant moment of the day was the remembrance of **Bruno Carrera**, a founder of the Focolare movement in Ireland, who recently passed away unexpectedly in Australia. Bruno's profound impact on the community was evident as members shared heartfelt memories of his life and faith. Padraic Gilligan's moving song in Bruno's honour deeply touched everyone present.

The day concluded with tea and warm conversations, leaving participants grateful for the shared faith and a renewed commitment to living the Gospel together.