

“Recognising Oneself, the Statutes: A Path and a Mirror” - Lesson 3, 8th March

The third session of the “Recognising Oneself, the Statutes: A Path and a Mirror” course of the Popular Marian University (UPM) took place on 8th March. It can be viewed here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4F7hX4VEn-s&list=PLKHiBjTNojHqZhJPYUFNZ8fWWsdEv1JJ&index=2>

The topic was "Understanding the Statutes of the Focolare Movement: A Journey Through History and Mission"

The two lessons presented, *Approaching the Statutes: A Historical Understanding* by Lucia Abignente and *The Statutes: Inheritance and Prophecy* by Adriana Cosseddu, offered complementary insights into the origins, evolution, and significance of these foundational texts.

A Historical Journey of the Statutes

Lucia Abignente’s lesson provided a detailed historical overview of how the Focolare Movement’s Statutes developed over time. She traced the path from the early 1947 *Statute of the Focolares of Charity, Apostles of Unity*, approved by the Archbishop of Trent, through successive revisions that reflected both the Movement’s growth and its evolving relationship with the Church. These milestones included the significant 1958 draft, where the name *Work of Mary* first appeared, and the 1962 and 1963 approvals of separate sections for men and women.

The defining moment came in 1964, when Pope Paul VI granted full approval to the Movement, leading to further refinement of its structure. In 1990, after years of dedicated work, the General Statutes were approved, formally recognizing the Focolare as a private, universal association of the faithful. The Statutes were later revised in 2007 to incorporate new developments, including the establishment of Sophia University and updates to the governance structure.

The Statutes as a Living Guide: Inheritance and Prophecy

Adriana Cosseddu’s lesson examined the Statutes through four key dimensions: **legacy**, **identity**, **relevance**, and **prophecy**. She emphasized that the Statutes are not merely administrative documents but embody the spiritual and practical framework of the Movement.

1. **Legacy** – The Statutes encapsulate the gift of unity and mutual love, which Chiara Lubich emphasized as the core of the Movement’s identity. The *Premise* of the Statutes, signed by Chiara herself, highlights Jesus’ presence among those who live in mutual love, making the Movement’s structure a living reflection of the Gospel.
2. **Identity** – The Movement’s diverse composition, embracing people from different vocations, backgrounds, and even religions, is enshrined in the Statutes. The unity of the human family remains a guiding principle, ensuring that the Focolare remains open to all who seek fraternity and peace.

3. **Relevance Today** – The Statutes provide a contemporary framework for applying the Movement’s spirituality in today’s world. Each aspect of life—economic sharing, dialogue, service, and even care for creation—is deeply rooted in Gospel values, as reflected in the different colors that symbolize Focolare’s various commitments.
4. **Prophecy** – Looking to the future, the Statutes serve as both an identity card and a mission statement. They define unity as the ultimate goal—not just among Christians but among all people. This vision calls for continuous commitment to dialogue, peacebuilding, and engagement with contemporary social challenges.

Conclusion

Together, these lessons provided a rich and profound understanding of the Statutes of the Focolare Movement. From their historical development to their ongoing relevance, they remain both a *path* and a *mirror*—a guiding compass for members of the Movement as they strive to bring unity and fraternity to the world. The Statutes are not just a set of regulations but a living testament to a charism that continues to inspire generations.

Texts available here: <https://www.universitapopolaremariana.org/en/>