



Press release n.8 – September 2, 2012

The Genfest 2012 held in Budapest came to an end

**With a flashmob on the Chain Bridge on Saturday evening,
and liturgical celebrations on Sunday morning.
The Genfest of the social networks.**

The tenth edition of Genfest, held in Budapest, the city of bridges over the Danube, came to an end. Through the waving of flags and scarves in a large, symbolic flashmob on the historic Chain Bridge, the 12,000 young people present wanted to manifest their commitment towards building relationships of brotherhood among individuals and groups in the 104 countries of their origin. So thousands of bridges, everywhere! Even the message of Benedict XVI augured that these young people would find a "sign of hope" in this beautiful city and an inspiration to dialogue with those from other backgrounds and cultures.

Genfest 2012 made a hit over the Internet: faces and voices present at the Sports Arena, along with messages of brotherhood were launched on the web. Through facebook, twitter, youtube, the official Genfest website and live event streaming, more than 450,000 people worldwide have been reached. The Genfest has been described as "incredible", "strong", "spectacular", it was transmitted in 27 languages through simultaneous translation. Indeed there was widespread participation, the Genfest was built in many places and so were many other "strong ties". One tweet reads: "It's fascinating to see that during these days Twitter is full of beautiful words, words of unity". In an age of niches and individualism, in a society where thousands of ideas struggle daily to get a place on the front page, finding so many people willing to give even a single moment of their lives to read a tweet or write a post is a huge social value that gives hope towards the future of humanity.

The metaphor of bridge building linked the whole programme. The experiences related by the young people spoke for themselves. Bassem of Egypt spoke about the project "I belong", through which he involved people of two districts of the capital city to paint the wall of a school, thereby overcoming the tension caused by the events in Tahrir Square. Willie, the Mexican who saw his cousin being killed in the wake of violence caused by drugtrafficking related how he chose to respond to hatred with love. A young man from Thailand recounted his experience when floods devastated his country in October 2011. Together with many other young guys he rolled up his sleeves and worked hard to strengthen the embankments that fortify the city of Bangkok. Other experiences were related; the voices were many, the choices courageous, very often against the current.

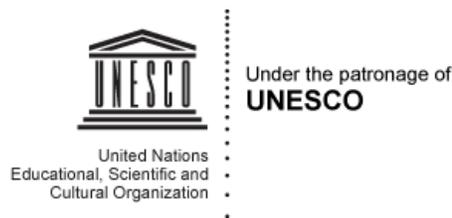
These young people have decided to join forces to work for the United World Project, a commitment that requires the personal signature towards a petition to the UN to establish a permanent international Observatory for promoting and verifying experiences of brotherhood lived by individuals, groups and nations, inspired by the "Golden Rule": "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you".

Maria Voce, President of the Focolare Movement spoke to these youth with very deep understanding and also launched a very demanding invitation: "Look up high! Look farthest away, it's there where you will find the secure refuge. Look at God who is love; he is the only one that does not disappoint you ... ". And she also said: "Do not be afraid. Be yourself and enter personally into society ... Your contribution is unique, unrepeatable ... You are called to spend your life for something great and to leave behind you something immortal. " She suggested that they would start straight away by doing small concrete acts of love that would make a great impact on life and society. She quoted the words of St. Maximilian Kolbe: "Only love is creative." On parting, she expressed her wishes through an idea of Chiara Lubich: "The world needs a supplement of spirit, an extra dose of love; and this is what we have to give to the world".

On an immediate tweet one could read the message: "It 's impossible to remain indifferent. We can change the world, even with small gestures. "

This morning, the young Catholics participated in a very beautiful liturgical celebration held in St. Stephen's Square and presided over by Cardinal Peter Erdö, , while at the same time other Christians participated in liturgical celebrations organised for various denominations. There were also prayer meetings for young people of other religions. At the conclusion of the Genfest, when three other Church leaders from the Orthodox, Protestant and Anglican Churches, and young representatives of other religions and beliefs took their place next to the Catholic Cardinal, the appointment for WYD 2013 in Rio was announced, and there was a minute of silence and prayer for peace, the time-out. "God is the Creator of us all, He is the splendour of the life of all of us" the Cardinal said during Mass - "It is in Him that all humanity may find its unity. In Him we are truly brothers".

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