

Focolarini in St. Peter's Square to thank Benedict XVI

Maria Voce together with many other members of the Focolare Movement will be present at the last general audience on Wednesday, February 27

Focolare members will be present in large numbers for the last general audience of Pope Benedict XVI to show him their gratitude and closeness. Maria Voce and the members of the general Council of the Movement will also be present.

In a letter sent to all the Movement, the President put forward the Pope's resignation as "*a calling from God to a new and greater measure of unity*".

Comments, expressing support and appreciation for Pope Ratzinger, came from many followers of the Focolare Movement, even from non-Catholics.

Galia, an Orthodox from Moscow said: "*I feel so sorry for such a great loss. I hope that the step taken by Benedict XVI will be an example for the new pope of love that does not fear sacrifice*". Ali, a Muslim from Morocco wrote: "*We lose someone who worked for peace and unity in the world*".

Abdou, a Muslim from Algeria remarked: "*Such an important act is of unique originality. It should serve as an example to all humanity*". Racim, also a Muslim from Algeria, said: "*I would like to thank him for all that he has given. I expect the next Pope to have always this fraternal and open attitude towards other beliefs, so as to build a world of universal brotherhood*".

Metta, a Buddhist from Thailand said: "*Having lived with fellow Catholics, I am fully aware of the fact that the essence of this ministry is spiritual, but that many skills and competences are also needed. I will be with him and with the other Christians through my prayers. I will also pray for the election of the new pope so that the Church may continue her work for the benefit of all humanity*".

Among the friends of non-religious convictions, Armando, an Italian: "*I appreciate the Pope's humility and sincerity in mentioning the cause of his resignation and the present difficulties in the Church*". Luan and Donika from Albania said: "*We hope that the future pope will continue on the path of openness towards other Christian denominations and other religions, as well as towards people with different beliefs*".

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