

## The Focolare Movement

**The Focolare Movement** owes its origin to the charism of unity that God gave to Chiara Lubich. Its members, people of every age and vocation, come from different social backgrounds, cultures, ethnic groups and religions. Its various branches are composed mainly of lay people (adults, families, youth, teenagers, children), but also of men and women religious and bishops.

**The Beginnings:** Chiara Lubich, the young girl from Trent consecrated herself to God on December 7, 1943, when World War II was raging fiercely. Soon after, other young women followed her, and the first “focolare” was born.

**Spirituality:** The rediscovery of God-Love is the first key point of the “spirituality of unity”, the specific Focolare spirituality also known as the “spirituality of communion”. Among other things, it demands the practice of “mutual and constant love that makes unity possible and generates the presence of Jesus in the community” (cf. General Statutes). This gospel-rooted spirituality leads to a lifestyle that helps to build unity and peace.

**Specific Purpose:** The Movement feels called to contribute towards the fulfillment of Jesus’ prayer to the Father: “May they all be one” (Jn 17:21) and its goal is universal brotherhood. To achieve its aim, it follows the path of dialogue open to people and entities of every expression and culture:

- it contributes to an even greater unity within the Catholic Church;
- it establishes fellowship and lives the common witness of unity with Christians of other Churches;
- it seeks the deepest possible union in God with all believers through the common commitment to live “the golden rule”;
- it shares the values that underlie the social commitment of those who do not profess any religious faith and collaborates with them in initiatives aimed at the common good;
- it participates in various fields of culture and human realities offering its specific contribution.

**Membership:** The Movement is present in 182 countries in the five continents; its centres are found in 87 nations. It has about 110,000 members, and another two million share closely in its life and support its work. Another million are reached regularly through various activities and social initiatives.

Besides the Catholics that form part of the Movement, there are also 22,000 Christians from 350 Churches and ecclesial communities. The Movement's spirituality and objectives are shared in various ways by more than 7,000 who follow other religions and another 10,000 who do not have any particular religious belief.

### **Structures for formation and witness**

- 25 "little towns", situated in various countries, have different characteristics and are in various stages of development. These are enriched by the presence of homes, schools, work activities and places of prayer. Set up specifically to be places of formation and application of the spirituality of unity, they offer a privileged environment for witnessing the life of the Gospel.
- Mariapolis Centres in 46 countries provide meeting places and formation centres, mainly for Focolare members. The international Mariapolis Centre is in Castel Gandolfo, Rome.
- Temporary schools offer formation courses in ecumenical and interreligious dialogue, in inculturation, and in further knowledge on social issues and the challenges of secularization.

### **Fields of research**

- *Abba School*: Professors and experts in various academic disciplines, that form this study centre, seek to explore the doctrine of the charism of unity and elaborate on its implications.
- *The Sophia University Institute*, situated at the international "little town" of Loppiano (Incisa Valdarno-FI, Italy), is an academic centre for education and research, Its is interdisciplinary, intercultural and intergenerational. ([www.iu-sophia.org](http://www.iu-sophia.org))
- International networks link scholars, professionals, students and workers involved in a various fields, such as communication, law, art, medicine, pedagogy, psychology, architecture and sport, and promote conferences, courses, publications.
- *The Economy of Communion* is an economic current that inspires the management of about a thousand businesses in different parts of the world and promotes an economic practice and culture geared towards communion, gratuity and reciprocity. 16 HUBs set up in 13 countries accompany people with entrepreneurial projects in the first stage of their journey. In 2017, this service was given to about 750 people. Dissertations and doctoral theses are more than 400. (<https://www.eoc-iin.org>)
- *The Movement for Unity in Politics*, a workshop for political reflection and practice brings together politicians from different parties, diplomats, government officials, students of political science and ordinary citizens and promotes the concept of fraternity as the base of institutional, legislative and administrative initiatives. One of its projects: schools of formation to encourage active participation and citizenship in youth. (<http://www.mppu.org>)

- *New Humanity* is an international NGO. In 1987 it obtained the Special Consultative Status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), and it has been holding the General Consultative Status since 2005. In 2008, New Humanity was recognized as NGO partner of UNESCO ([www.new-humanity.org](http://www.new-humanity.org)).

### Projects to promote international solidarity

- More than 1,000 social projects in different countries of the world.
- Approximately 35 projects and micro-initiatives in 30 countries, promoted by **AMU- Action for a United World**, a non-governmental organization ([www.amu-it.eu](http://www.amu-it.eu)).
- 93 projects that support children in 48 countries. Services, such as schools, canteens, clinics etc have been set up in various localities to help children in need. When children cannot be reached through these services, economic help is provided directly to the families. About **11,000 children** benefit from these projects. ([www.famiglienuove.org](http://www.famiglienuove.org))

### Publications

- "Città Nuova" ([www.cittanuova.it](http://www.cittanuova.it)), publishing house in Italy and 19 in other countries.
- "Città Nuova", 32 editions of opinion magazines in 21 languages.
- "Città Nuova online", online newspaper in Italian ([www.cittanuova.it](http://www.cittanuova.it)).
- "NuovaUmanità", a cultural review in Italian published quarterly.
- "Gen's" (5 editions/languages) and "Unità e Carismi" (8 editions/languages), quarterly journals on ecclesial and religious life.
- "Teens", a bimonthly magazine for teens and children.
- "Big" for children under the age of 9 years
- "Word of Life", a monthly commentary on a phrase from the Scripture published in about 90 languages. It reaches a few million people via radio, television, internet and the press.
- The international website ([www.focolare.org](http://www.focolare.org)), in 7 languages, with 13 channels on social networks.
- Collegamento CH/Linkup, a video conference via internet that periodically unites and informs the Focolare Family worldwide (<http://collegamentoch.focolare.org>)
- "Mariapoli", a monthly bulletin of information for the members of the Movement issued in **5 languages** .
- CSC Media, a centre that produces audiovisual material.

**Collective leadership:** The leadership of the Focolare Movement is entrusted to a President assisted by a Co-President and a general Council of 64 members. Their term of office is for six years.

The current president is [Maria Voce](#) and the co-president is [Jesús Morán](#). The Movement is divided into *zones*, territories that vary geographically and culturally.

**Pontifical approval:** The Focolare Movement (Work of Mary) was first approved by the Holy See in 1962 and the Pontifical Council for the Laity approved its updated General Statutes on June 29, 1990. The Movement is recognized as a universal, private association of the faithful with pontifical right. Further amendments were approved by the Holy See on March 15, 2007.

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