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## **FOCOLARE CELEBRATES LONG-STANDING AMERICAN PRESENCE**

**Lay Ecclesial Movement marks celebratory milestone in North America with enriching programs open to the public.**

**“That all may be one” (Jn. 17,21)** “We were born for these words, for unity, to give a contribution to its realization in the world.” *Focolare founder, Chiara Lubich.*

Many of the lay movements active in the Catholic Church today came to life as early as the 1940s.

**Among the first, was the Focolare** - born in the Northern Italian air raid shelters in the town of Trent during the bombings of WWII. **The young founder, Chiara Lubich**, and her friends read the Gospel by candlelight and set out to live its radical message through their love for one another and for the people of the war torn community surrounding them. As they found a new and richer relationship with God through their deepened unity, the foundation for the first communitarian-based spirituality in the Church was laid.

**Underscoring the spirituality’s role in bringing Jesus’ presence into the world through the love generated among them, Pope John XXIII approved the group as an ecclesial lay movement in 1962 under its official name, The Work of Mary.** From its humble beginnings in Italy, the Focolare and its message of unity has now reached the farthest corners of the globe – present in 180 countries. Today people of all ages and backgrounds are part of this global family that includes numerous multi-cultural and interreligious communities, members of PROFESSIONAL and academic organizations, and networks of economists, politicians and artists working in solidarity and through enriching dialogue to realize the Movement’s goal of universal brotherhood.

Giving special significance to the **50th anniversary** celebration this spring, **Focolare President, Maria Voce and Co-president, Giancarlo Faletti, will participate in the following events:**

- April 3, **New York:** Solemn Mass of thanksgiving celebrated by Archbishop Timothy Dolan at St. Patrick’s Cathedral at 2:00pm. Open to the public.
- April 5, **New York:** Cultural event at Fordham University, with four panels: “The Spirituality of Unity—a Gift for Our Times”; “The Economy of Communion”; “Personal Fulfillment in a Communitarian Spirituality”; and “Love of Neighbor and the Law.” To register go to: [Law.fordham.edu/unity](http://Law.fordham.edu/unity)
- April 7, **Washington, D.C.:** “Out of Many, One: *E pluribus unum*,” a program featuring a multiethnic, multifaith community coming together as one people in the service of unity. Caldwell Hall, The Catholic University of America.
- April 11, **Chicago:** Evening theological presentation at DePaul University. For more information contact: [foc.chicago@sbcglobal.net](mailto:foc.chicago@sbcglobal.net)

For **more information** about these events go to:

[www.focolare.us/us/component/registrationpro/events](http://www.focolare.us/us/component/registrationpro/events)

For those interested in knowing more about the Focolare Movement, its spirituality of communion, and its engagement with various aspects of American culture and life, go to: [www.focolare.us](http://www.focolare.us).