

Hungary

The first Hungarian Focolare communities came to life in the 1970's when the country was a People's Republic under Soviet rule. Members of the movement travelled from Vienna to meet those who had encountered the spirituality in Italy and Austria. A men's and a women's focolare consequently opened in Budapest and later in Szeged.

The Movement played an important role in nurturing relationships between different people and between associations, especially in the ecclesial arena, contributing to the preservation and development of the Christian faith in the country. Families and priests were of significant importance in spreading the Spirituality of Unity in various cities.

A sense of common suffering also strengthened relationships between Catholic priests and Calvinist and Lutheran pastors who are presently committed to bearing witness to ecumenical dialogue. Two historical events: in 2000 the first Ecumenical Meeting for Young Christians was organised by the youth movements in the three main Hungarian Churches (Catholic, Reformed and Lutheran Churches); the event was repeated in 2006 with 16, 000 participants.

In 1956, after the tragic events in Budapest, Pope Pius XII launched a distressed appeal: "God, God, God . . . [make] the name of God resound in the public streets, in homes, and in offices. . ." In response Chiara Lubich founded the 'Volunteers of God': a new branch of the Movement made up of lay people committed to permeating every aspect of human life with the Spirit of God. In 2006 to commemorate 50 years since their birth, 12 000 Volunteers from 92 countries met in Budapest, where their adventure began.

Preparations for the next Genfest that will take place on the 1st and 2nd September have begun. Genfest is an international youth festival organized by Young People for a United World (YPUW- youth branch of the Focolare Movement) that started in 1973 and that involves thousands of young people from every continent, cultural background, tradition and religion. The number of participants is multiplied thanks to means of communication. The event presents YPUW's latest events and launches future projects, rendering the commitment to a culture of peace, fraternity and unity ever more visible.

Websites:

Focolare Movement: www.fokolare.hu

Young People for a United World: www.ujifju.hu