

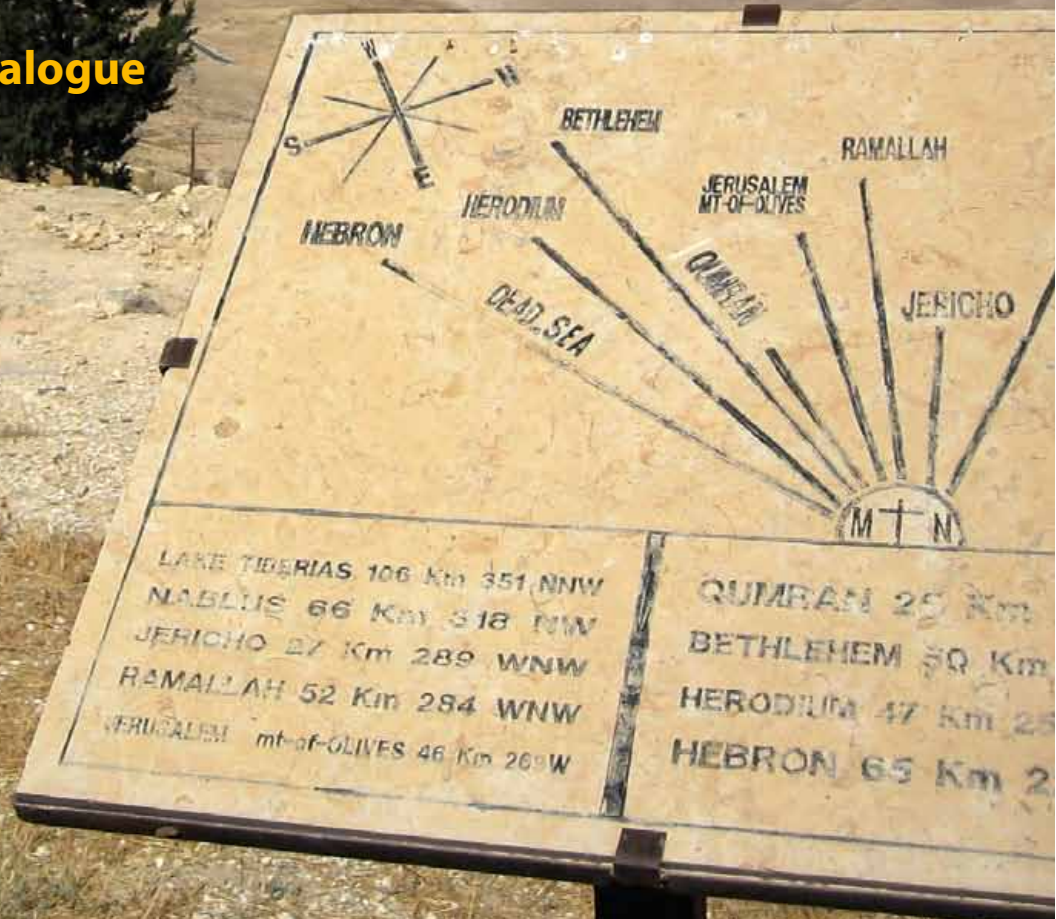
MARIAPOLI

Notiziario del movimento dei focolari

In Jordan Looking to the Promised Land

From Pope Francis
A Private audience
for Emmaus
and Giancarlo

**«Friends» in dialogue
in Sarajevo**
To heal
the wounds



Mariapolis

Year XXX n 9 **September 2013**

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Looking to the Promised Land

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Spirituality

Where peace begins

Building peace requires a love that is so strong that it is capable of loving even those who don't reciprocate, capable of forgiving, of going beyond the category of the enemy [...]. It asks us to transform ourselves from cowardly people, most probably concentrated only on our own interests and our own things, into little everyday heroes who day after day, in serving our brothers and sisters, are ready to give even our lives for them. And even more, it demands from us new hearts and eyes to be able to love and to see in everyone equal candidates to universal brotherhood.

We can ask ourselves: «Even in the quarrelsome neighbors in the apartment building? Even in my colleagues at work who hinder my career? Even in those who are active in another political party or a rival soccer team? Even in those people whose religion or nationality are different from mine?»

Yes, each one of them is my brother and sister. Peace begins precisely here, from the relationship that I am able to build with each of my neighbors.

«Evil begins in the heart of man – Igino Giordani wrote –, to remove the danger of war we must remove the spirit of aggression and exploitation and egoism from whence war comes: we must rebuild a conscience»¹.

Chiara From: *Love of neighbour*, Chiara Lubich, Citta Nuova, Romae november 2012, pag. 120 [comment on the Word of life for january 2004 «I give you my peace» (Jn 14,27)] 1 I. Giordani, *The uselessness of war*, Città Nuova, Rome, 2003, p.111

New publications *With the volume entitled **Reciprocal love**, the reader is offered a collection of documents of Chiara Lubich on the new commandment of love, a theme that will accompany the members of the Movement during the entire year. There are various documents that have never been published before. One is amazed by the insistence of the Author from the time that she discovered the command of Jesus (Jn 13,34; 15,12): it deals with a fundamental event that she has shared many times.*

Chiara Lubich noticed that Jesus had kept this command «in his heart all his life so as to reveal it before dying». She underlines the circumstance in which it was said – the Last Supper just before freely giving his life up for us – and the fact that Jesus calls it his and «new», thus giving a particular solemnity to this Word.

The texts show us that, in such a command, there is all the life of God: reciprocal love when lived, is the place of the presence and the knowledge of God Trinity. This also manifests the law of life of the Church. The theme therefore answers to the deepest longing in the hearts of the men and women of our times and Chiara indicates a simple and luminous way to realize it.

Florence Gillet

CAPTIONS PHOTOS SPIRITUAL THOUGHT Paris, 17 december 1996. Chiara receives the «Unesco Prize for Peace education» © C.S.C archives

The order of Pope Francis

Go ahead with joy

Maria Voce and Giancarlo Faletti were received in an audience with Pope Francis last September 13

© l'Osservatore Romano x 2

An encounter characterized by welcome, cordiality, communion. This is the way Emmaus and Giancarlo described their first private audience with Pope Francis.

Giancarlo: «We were moved to be passing through those halls where Chiara passed through many times in the past and we had also heard from her about the emotion of waiting ... and we were right there! We entered this room full of "sun", welcomed by the love of the Pope: a great presence who showed much interest, listened intently, commenting on all the details, while we spoke of each activity. Practically speaking, we had gone through almost all the realities of the Opera. But there in the grace of the moment they appeared even more in all their power and in their dimension of service; because on one hand we talked about the Opera, the families, the youth, the priests, the religious, the Bishops, etc., and on the other hand all these resounded in the Pope in his dimension of universal ministry. It was an occasion for him to get to know our Movement better and for us to perceive what he feels for the Church and for humanity».

Emmaus: «When for example we told him about a meeting of 60 students who were studying Economics, who came together in Madrid to deepen their knowledge of the Economy of Communion and to understand also how economics can serve evangelization and create a new world, he commented: "Oh the economy, the economy, if not where do we go? What does the economy do? Away with the elderly, away with the children, and where will the world go? Without communion where is the world headed to?". As we leafed through the album that we brought for him on the life of the Movement in the different environments, he recognized many people, commenting and approving. Regarding the culture of encounter he strongly said: "It is useless to think that in order to meet we must first solve the problems! We must meet first and then we will solve the problems".

The he shared his appreciation for the Movements.

We continually asked him: "Do you have anything to say to us, would you have some guidelines for us? and he repeated many times: "Go ahead, go ahead. Thank you for all the good things that you are doing!". Talking about how difficult it may be in certain situations to be radical in living the Gospel, Pope Francis expressed the hope that he nurtures with regards to the Movements.

In the end, when he greeted us, he gave us a blessing for the whole Movement.

He then repeated once more his invitation to go ahead with courage and with joy, "because a Christian without joy...", he didn't even consider it. Then he stood up, we greeted each other, we knelt down and he gave us his blessing, and finally he told us: "Arrivederci! See you again!"».

prepared by Aurora Nicosia

the people of Chiara

Zoom in on the Middle East

dialogue the primary option

The prophetic dimension of the charism of Chiara Lubich emerges in all its power

Commentary on the trip of Maria Voce and Giancarlo Faletti

At the conclusion of two days spent with the members of the Focolare of the Near East and North Africa – it was the 31st of August – , Emmaus surprised the audience.

Everyone was waiting for her comment on the experience lived. Instead she invited everyone to a moment of silence to ask for the grace of peace, «*putting ourselves in front of God so as to place ourselves at his service, telling him to use us as instruments of peace [...] in all these countries*». The following day, during the Angelus in St. Peter's Square, Pope Francis launched the heartfelt and courageous appeal for a prayer vigil and fasting for Saturday, September 7.

The coincidence, if this is what we would like to call it, is quite significant because it inserts the trip of Emmaus and Giancarlo to Jordan within the ecclesial context and underlines how the Movement is an important Christian presence in these countries, where Christianity has become a minority (with the exception of Lebanon and Egypt) and in a multiplicity of rites and traditions that make it a real mosaic. The members of the Focolare who were present during the week of events that characterized this visit came from countries that for dozens of years have been suffering due to wars and tensions, in different ways and often on opposing sides. A real risk exists of all Christians vanishing in these regions, where the Christian faith saw its roots and lived its first experiences. Precisely in those days of their stay in Amman, the Jordan capital, an important conference organized by the Royal House on the challenges the Christians find themselves facing in the Middle East, took place. In his Opening Remarks, Prince Ghazi, personal counselor of the king for religion and culture, had significantly admitted that «*the Arab Christians have become targets in different countries of the zone*». And he further clarified that their suffering is not linked only to contingent factors: «*they suffer [...] precisely because they are Christians*». King Abdullah II emphasized the need for «*concentrated efforts and full cooperation among everyone. We must agree on a code of conduct that tends towards uniting rather than dividing*».

In a moment in which the Churches in the region are committed to defending their identity and their rights and encouraging the faithful not to leave their countries, due to persecution and wars that endanger the present and the future, the visit of the President and Co-President of the Focolare is without a doubt a great encouragement.

«*Allow me to tell you of my joy in being here with you and to thank you for the Christian presence that you bring in this environment. I feel honored to be a part of this together with you*», Emmaus began in the meeting with the local Church of Amman.

And, addressing the members of the Movement coming from Iraq, she said: «*Meeting you for the first time in the airport was a great joy for me. I want to thank you, knowing how much you have lived through, the war and also the difficult decisions that you had to make: to go elsewhere or to remain in your country. I want to thank you for your choice and for what you have done to support the Church and the Christians*».

Next to this presence of the Church, it is necessary to underline how the trip of Emmaus and Giancarlo offered the platform to put into evidence how much dialogue is the primary option in this part of the world. Even if the Movement has been present for only about forty years, it offers an experience of dialogue with Muslims that has a certain relevance and its own specificity. This experience of Muslim-Christian dialogue based on daily life, in order to arrive at collaboration – just as at the meeting in the Royal Institute for Inter-Faith Studies founded by Prince El Hassan bin Talal – and to a dimension of thought, has produced unexpected results. It was not an easy journey, as underlined during the presentation of the Movement in Algeria, done above all by the Muslim members of the Focolare.

There was no fear in sharing also the criticisms, which were resolved by the decision to go ahead together along this road. On the other hand the truth and the concreteness of this experience cannot be hidden. The sharing of a Muslim couple during the events of the week was very moving. «*When we participate in the activities of the Focolare we are neither Muslim nor Christian. We all feel love in our heart. If I am a*

Muslim I must be committed, not in being a fanatic, but in living the life of unity. All the religions are sources of virtue. We cannot keep love only for ourselves, but share it with others. [...] we must begin with ourselves. Since the time I met the Movement I started to pray better. This has helped me to go ahead in my relationships with everyone».

In fact, in these days we could touch with our own hands the prophetic dimension of the charism of Chiara Lubich. This comes forth from many perspectives.

One that is particularly significant is that which I have said to a group of young people in 1969, who were returning from a trip: «In all the zone of the Middle East there are these hotbeds of war, so that peace is always endangered. And so I said: what can we do, we who bring the Ideal of unity? We must see to it that these brothers love one another, this body must be healed. Here lies the health of all humanity».

Without a doubt, the road is long, but also the presence of the Focolare centers in the countries of the Near East can contribute to a future that no one knows, but one that speaks of peace.

Roberto Catalano

Captions Amman, 31 august. Emmaus greeting prof. Amer Al Hafi, muslim, vice-director of the Royal Institute for Inter-faith Study of Amman © photo Claude Gamble x 2

In Jordan

Contributing to a new Middle East

The visit to the communities of the Middle East who gathered together in Amman took place in one of the most painful moments of this region, marked by events that gathered members of the Focolare from various countries, but also marked by surprises that gave the Movement an unexpected visibility.

photo © Dana Shahin x 6

Precisely during those days in which the world and the Church were looking with bated breath at the Middle East, and in particular at Syria, due to the dangers of an attack with incalculable consequences, Emmaus and Giancarlo arrived in Amman, the capital of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan for a visit from the 29th of September to the 10th of October, that made possible a meeting of many members of the Focolare from this part of the world, something that has not happened since 1999.

In that occasion Chiara was in Jordan for the World Conference of Religions for Peace and around a thousand people from the various countries nearby came to Amman for a memorable meeting, during which Chiara defined this region as the «crucible of suffering». These words seemed to be the summary of what various countries are living today now more than ever.

This time too, they came from almost all the nations – except Libya and Tunis – that cover the southern arch of the Mediterranean from Greece up to Algeria. For this meeting, given the actual situation of political and economical instability, they opted for a smaller number of participants with representatives of members of the Movement in the Middle East from every country.

There were people also from Morocco, Syria, Iraq and some from Saudi Arabia: 500 in all, youth and adults, lay and priests, religious and Bishops.

A letter from Syria arrived together with some lucky ones who were able to reach Amman and which was greeted with thundering applause. «You all know that we are living through very difficult times – those who were not able to travel said – a time of war with all its cruelties, filled with hatred and conflicts, a time wherein injustice prevails [...] But in the midst of this suffering we, the family of Chiara with the presence of God who is with us [...] we continue in spite of everything to build bridges of love and unity with the others [...] we sow hope in humanity that is suffering around us, we fill up the sad hearts with the presence of God, we do all that we can to bring love to the others. [...] Today we pray together with you for Peace, which is so much threatened in the world and in the Middle East, [...] so that the love of God will triumph in the world».

In spite of these past and present difficulties in the entire region, all were able to breathe an atmosphere of real brotherhood in these two days. There were Christians from a mosaic of Churches (Catholics, Coptic-Orthodox, Greek-Orthodox and Greek-Catholic, Maronites, Armenians, Chaldeans, Syro-Orthodox and Syro-Catholic), and a good representation of Muslims coming from Algeria, but also from Morocco, Turkey and Jordan. A cross-section which, as Maria Voce said in a spontaneous interview precisely during the opening of the two-day gathering, makes one say that the idea of unity is not a utopia. «Looking at you – the president said – how can anyone not believe in a united world!»

The two days – August 30 and 31 – were marked by moments of reflection and of the communion of life experiences, with broad glimpses of the history of the Movement in the different countries.

Then there was the dialogue with Emmaus and Giancarlo and the moment of the multi-coloured concluding celebration. The experiences of the different countries underline how, even if still small in some cases, the steps taken by the Focolare are aimed at bringing dialogue as the way to peace. It was touching to see that, after around forty years from the beginning of the Movement in North Africa, those who presented the experience of the Focolare in Algeria were for the most part precisely the Muslims which confirmed just how much the Focolare has developed and today includes a majority of members of the Islamic faith.

No less prophetic were the small and big stories of how the Movement started and developed in other countries, most of which have been torn apart at one time or another by the war. In spite of the difficulties, this spirit has found the way to survive and to grow also with activities of social action, aside from the daily commitment to heal the painful wounds.

There were many events in the succeeding days.

A three-day meeting was held for one hundred twenty men and women focolarini, who live in this part of the world. It was an occasion for a profound moment of reflection on what it means to be faithful to the charism of Chiara Lubich in the context of the Middle East today.

Instead, at the Royal Institute for Inter-Faith Studies (RIIFS), founded in 1994 by Prince El Hassan bin Talal, a meeting on interreligious dialogue began the visit to the zone of Jordan/Iraq.

The talk of Emmaus, centered on the experience of dialogue of the Focolare, touched on the most significant experiences on Muslim-Christian dialogue, of which the Focolare has been a witness in these past ten years or so. «I would like to thank you for this heart to heart talk – Dr. As Sadeq AlFapiq, Secretary General of the Forum of Arab Thought and former adviser of the President of Sudan commented. We have lost courage, but this Movement was born in a moment of discouragement like the war. It is during tragic moments that a new hope is always born. Dialogue is a human condition[...] it must reach the roots, that will allow us to discover together what we have in common».

Another important moment was the meeting with the local Church, organized within the ambit of the Year of Faith, wherein the President of the Focolare Movement shared the contribution that the spirituality of communion can bring to faith: a talk that was accompanied by some local experiences. And still more, moments with the members of the Focolare of Jordan and of Iraq and with the very young ones.

Surprises were not lacking: the brief but cordial audience granted by His Royal Highness King Abdullah II to Maria Voce and to Giancarlo Faletti was a source of pride and joy for all the members of the Focolare in Jordan and the meetings with Prince El Hassan bin Talal, brother of King Hussein who had governed for almost half a century, and with the Princess Alia and the Greek-Orthodox Bishop of Amman were also very important.

As a conclusion, there was a meeting with the communities of Jordan and Iraq, who continued the communion that was started in the preceding days, giving Maria Voce and Giancarlo Faletti the possibility of getting to know more in depth the vitality and the challenges in which they live in.

*An intense trip with regards to the programs that took place, but also intense because of the depth and the problems they had to face which offered to all those who participated the certainty that a united world is possible and also sketched a *roadmap* towards realizing the challenge that all the members of the Focolare have to face: to contribute towards building a new Middle East.*

Roberto Catalano CAPTIONS The meeting with the local church. The audience of His Highness King Abdullah II

With Pope Benedict

On the 1st of September a joyful surprise for the focolarinas of the Mariapolis Center of Castel Gandolfo

© l'Osservatore Romano

During the summer months the Mariapolis Center of Castel Gandolfo is at the disposition of the Holy Father. For many years the friends of John Paul II were housed there, various intellectuals who met with him in the nearby pontifical palace and who updated him about the developments in the fields of science, ethics, philosophy, etc...

Benedict XVI also wanted to gather together a group of professors, his former students, and young people who brought ahead his theological thoughts.

A meeting that always concluded with the coming of the Pope to celebrate Mass in our chapel and to have breakfast with all of them.

This year the group was invited to go to him in the Vatican, Sunday the 1st of September.

To our great surprise, three of us were also invited to go together with the professors to attend the Mass. The Eucharistic celebration took place at the Church of the Governate, behind the St. Peter's Basilica, from where one can see the house where Pope Benedict now lives.

There was an atmosphere of great recollection and emotion. At the conclusion, he stopped to personally greet all those who were present, around seventy people in all.

When he saw us he welcomed us with open arms, with an expression of surprise and joy, which was echoed by the voice of Bishop Georg Gänswein, who exclaimed: «Mariapolis Center!».

His first words were: «Good morning! Thank you for your hospitality, thank you for your ministry... for everything ».

We brought him the greetings and the love of the entire Movement. Then we told him a little about the meeting in Jordan with our members of the Middle East and the Holy Father immediately said: «It is a very important Christian presence... are they suffering? » And we: «We try our best to support them». And he said: «Now more than ever. Greet all of them, everyone for me». When we greeted him and said:

«Holiness, You have remained in our hearts» he replied: «This is important, thank you!».

His gaze was serene and profound: his union with God was visible.

The morning ended with a group photo around him, on the steps of the Church.

Elisa Perico

Echoes of the Collegamento CH

The Collegamento of September 14 was– already from the cover –truly engaging and exciting. The event linked to the trip to Jordan and the audience with Pope Francis brought a new powerful vibration to the family of the Opera throughout the world. Here are some of the numerous messages we received.

What an extraordinary experience with the Pope and how in tune they were! It was a very strong experience to find ourselves in that reality that our brothers in Syria are living. We too would like to be instruments of peace. We are ONE! *The community of Santiago del Chile*

In Thailand it is 3 in the afternoon.

What a great joy to be a part of this unique family of Chiara. We are touched with the images. We are with you in living for peace.

Focolare Dialogo in Chiangmai

There are five of us here in Reykjavik in Iceland and we want to assure you that we go ahead together with all of you towards *Ut Omnes!* *Fr. Denis, Zosia and Sebastian (family-focolare) Wilma and Christina (volunteers)*

Thank you especially for the translation in Mandarin. We are all the more convinced that a united world is possible, count on us! *Community of Hong Kong*

Dearest Emmaus, a very big thank you for your answer on how to act with our people who are living in places where Christians are under pressure or are persecuted. The Holy Spirit is really needed to enlighten their choices. *Tomeu - Karachi (Pakistan)*

We went back home filled with strength and hope. We want to live spreading love wherever we find ourselves and to generate God in our midst.

The focolare with the community of Bethlehem

We are touched! You have let us relive the strong experience of Amman with all the graces received! Peace is already a reality among us. We were together with all of you in bearing witness to the action of God in history. More than ever we want to launch ourselves on the frontline to give and radiate peace to everyone... A special thank you for the Arab translation which allowed for a greater participation in various points of the country, generating enthusiasm and bringing joy and hope to everyone!

The «peaceful ones» from Egypt

Here it is 3:30 am! I followed this Collegamento with joy..

How much life and how much God entrusts to each one of us wherever we are. We continue to pray. Thank you Emmaus, thank you Giancarlo, for the instruments of peace and of dialogue that you have been.

Felipe from the cittadella El Diamante of Mexico

From Burundi we are in 200 to thank you for this experience of planetary communion.

The community of Bujumbura

At Mariapolis online: www.focolare.org/notiziariomariapoli in the window of the Collegamento CH you can view the Collegamento or download it

events

Learning Fraternity Education online

Behind the scenes at the International Meeting «Learning Fraternity».

The impressions, the projects, the results of a work done together with the zones and the center.

The link with Pope Francis

The Company «Teatrodaccapo» finished dismantling their scenery at such a late hour. There are five of them, but each one knows very well what he or she has to do so as not to disrupt the work of the others: rather, all of them know how to put everything in order so as to make the task of loading and unloading as smooth as oil.

It is Friday evening, the 6th of September, and at Castel Gandolfo the evening concluded with the performance entitled «Fantastic Pinocchio» for the participants of the International Meeting on Education«Learning Fraternity». At the same time, at St. Peter's Square, preparations are going on for the big vigil for peace announced by Pope Francis for the following day.

They seem to be two distant events, in reality Castel Gandolfo and St. Peter's Square are not really too far apart... Some days pass and at the Mariapolis Center stands are being dismantled, the grounds are being cleaned after weeks of intense work. Also in the offices of the centers boxes and computers are put in order, folders and impressions are collected.

A young priest from Uganda, in fact, is rediscovering how to help the 5.000 teens in his parish that he has been following for some years; a Swiss teacher is in the process of finding his professional identity, knowing that he can act «through prayer, by living concretely, through theoretical and empirical work». A lot of life has been placed «online» during this Meeting which took place from the 6th to the 8th of September at Castel Gandolfo and which saw four educative agencies of the Opera working together: New Humanity, Teens for Unity, EDU and AMU.

It was like seeing in that big hall the little secretariat of New Humanity, animated in these past few months by the coming and going of all sorts of people who collaborated for the Meeting, working themselves to the bone, making all kinds of sacrifices.

Certainly it was not easy to put them all together in the same rank, after so many years of getting used to working alone.

It was not easy to put theory and practice together, but in this case it also meant team work, appreciating the contribution of each one without hindering the work being done, but doing it in such a way that every choice was a result of a relationship built.

«The preparation and realization of the workshops and also of the plenary sessions, gave everyone the possibility of experiencing and living a “new methodology” in the organizing of the meetings done at the Center and in the launching of unified projects to the Zones» - Roberto Borri and Cecilia Landucci, of the indigo commission of New Humanity shared.

«The presence of Jesus in the midst that we tried to live first of all among the organizers, was felt by the participants who all left with the commitment to “jump into” the local realities so as to light up living cells that are able to launch the evangelical revolution in education».

It is a work, therefore, that began with a continuous dialogue with the Zones, gathering the first ideas and proposals, up to the preparation of a program that was really shared by all.

One of the impressions that came from the continents confirm all this: «It was a great joy to have seen the power of the Ideal expressed by the One Opera, united and complete, that powerfully enlightened a sector of society and is incarnated in the world. And from the perspective of education, a light can reach all persons and their entire behavior. [...] There is hope! Thanks to each one of you! All the Africans were very, very happy, they were touching the stars!».

«The reports expressed a real fraternity proclaimed not only by words: one and the other are brothers and sisters to love, and the relationship with God who is love, fidelity, goodness, is reflected in the relationships of all human beings and brings harmony to the whole creation».¹ These are the words of Pope Francis which he said precisely during the days of the Meeting, and all the participants took them as

their own, sending the Pope a message to tell him this and signed by everyone, expressing the desire to work together wherever they are.

Now that the comings and goings of the people have finally ended and the trucks have left, the only thing that seems to have remained is silence. Instead this isn't so, the rest of the work in these offices and all over the world never ends. It continues now more than ever so as to be of service to all humanity, especially to those who are suffering the most.

«To go out» is the password: from the great metropolises to the «existential peripheries», the Meeting has shown that it is possible everywhere to «learn how to live fraternity», so as to reach a more united world.

Paolo Balduzzi

1 Cfr Pope Francisc, *Homily for the prayer vigil for Peace*, St. Peter's Square, 7 September 2013

Big, the new magazine for smart children

The publications will begin in December.

This monthly magazine will replace the Gen4 magazine.

Starting from the thirty-year experience of the gen4 magazine, the first issue of Big – “Bambini in gamba”, will come out in December; it is the new monthly magazine from the Città Nuova Group for children up to eight years old, prepared together with the gen 4 Centers, the New Families Movement in collaboration with Azione Famiglie Nuove (Afm) onlus, Associazione Azione per un Mondo Unito (Ammu) onlus and New Humanity NGO of the Focolare Movement. The idea to launch this new magazine came from the desire to reach as many children as possible, in the schools, parishes, among the friends of the gen4.

Enriched with stories from around the world, games, fables, experiences and trivia, the magazine would like to discover together with its young readers, the beautiful things all around: generosity, solidarity, peace and universal brotherhood.

The common thread that runs through the magazine is the Ideal of Unity of Chiara Lubich (the art of loving, the culture of giving...) and the «Golden Rule» (Do to others what you would have them do to you, that is common in all the principal religions of the world), that is presented through games and cartoons in a language that is open, simple and accessible also to the youngest ones. All the young readers, and especially the gen4, can be the protagonists of the column by sending in stories, experiences, pictures, questions, trivia. To receive the nine issues and the Big special issues just subscribe: the magazine costs 24 euros (only 22 euros for those subscribed to Città Nuova) and the password will allow the reader to access it on the internet, from where one can download designs and games. Other future promotions foreseen for Big and the other magazines of the Group can be viewed and discovered in the website www.cittanuova.it.

Sara Fornaro

For all teenagers

Teens is born, prepared by the Publishing Group Città Nuova and by the Teens for unity Center

A magazine made by teens for teens, with an editorial board composed of adolescents from various parts of Italy – and not only – but together with the journalists of the magazine Città Nuova and a tutor who is an expert in various fields. But all the readers are also the protagonists because they will be able to suggest the topics and to participate online in the debates aroused by the different articles. This is the characteristic of Teens, which has just recently concluded issue number zero, and which will start to come out regularly every two months starting in January 2014. A magazine that values the world of teenagers.

In the opening editorial it is written: «We don't like it when they speak about us always in a negative way: there are many beautiful news about our generation and Teens would like to spread these things as much as possible». It's a magazine that also foresees collaboration in synergy with the different «educative agencies» of the Work of Mary. What will our young readers find in it? Current events from Italy and from the world, hot topics, sports, music and many other things that can be found not only in the magazine but also on the blog, (<http://teens4unity.blogspot.com>), in Facebook, Twitter and Youtube. An editorial staff that is destined to grow with its readers, a magazine open to all teenagers.

If you are a teen, a parent, a teacher, a catechist, a person who has a heart for the new generations and would like to propose it, go to www.cittanuova.it, subscription section/purchase. Or you may inquire at the Teens for unity Center. It's easy to be part of the team!

Aurora Nicosia

at the center

Religious men A step ahead

seventy of them met together at Roverè from August 3 to 12

An experience whose importance will be seen in time. This is what can be said of the meeting of 70 religious men at Roverè, in Trentino.

Last year we saw the positive impact that the visit to the places of the early times had on a small group of religious men under 50 and from here the idea came about to repeat this experience during the annual meeting of the secretariats. During the preparations an atmosphere of expectation and novelty was already created, an openness to the surprises of the Spirit, which came punctually, like for example, the severity of the illness of Fr. Alfredo Dinis, responsible for the religious men of Portugal: it was a sign that God was asking someone to «pay». When we found ourselves in Roverè and unexpectedly four members of the Center could not be physically present, it was clear that we had to rely solely on God who was giving us the chance make us all responsible.

And so it was. The visits to Trent, Fiera di Primiero and Tonadico; the meditations on some powerful themes of the spirituality; the daily communion in eight focolares put everyone in front of a call of God to which each one said a convinced «yes». In this way we all grew as a body.

*The branch of the religious men has made a decisive step forward. A confirmation of this was done by comparing it to the first meeting of the religious men at Monte Bondone in 1967, as shared by Fr. Santino Bisignano Omi. There, upon the suggestion of Chiara, Fr. Novo gathered together 20 religious men to lay the foundation for the branch. They were all Italian and one was from Belgium. Instead at Roverè, we were 70 from four continents with the experience that has matured after 46 years. Like the meeting of Bondone contained the seeds for future developments (secretariats and nuclei; the gen-re; the Movement of the religious men; the magazine *Unity and Charisms*; the centers of spirituality), we believe that the meeting of Roverè contains the seeds of a new life.*

*It is a faith that is well-founded because the vision of Paradise was concretized in projects for young religious, for *Unity and Charisms*, for the Claritas School and other centers of spirituality, for our preparation of the Assembly.*

We lived through the meeting in great peace and tranquility, because Jesus was among us, a unity that reached even a unity of mind, not just regarding the changes to be made in the program, but also in concrete situations.

The experience of the «I in you and you in me» made us grow as a body, a reality that remains alive by keeping in contact even after the meeting.

Fr. Theo Jansen,

In Sassello

New vitality in the youth sector of the branch of the religious

The meeting of 22 young religious men and women in Sassello last August 19 to 23 was an immediate and unexpected answer to the reality lived in Roverè.

The principal fruit, we can say, was the relaunching of the youth sector of the branch of the religious. The whole meeting was in fact, in their hands, both for the content and the style. «Working together to give the Ideal to the young religious made our unity grow and it also made us more aware of our vocation as gen-re», one of them commented.

It has been some time now that we wanted to see the presence of a new generation in the branch. Let's say that we wanted this above all for an «ideal» reason, which means, so that we can live a trinitarian relationship among the first and the second generations, source of the Spirit that makes all things new. And Sassello gave us precisely this gift. An impression: «A moment of Heaven that went beyond all my expectations. How much the Lord and Chiara Luce transformed us in these days! The communion was so alive: inspite of the diversity of our vocations, mutual love truly made us one!».

Fr. Theo Jansen, Fr. Andrea Patané

At Loppiano A variety in communion

A group of consecrated women for an experience of sharing among different charisms

In August a course was held in Loppiano entitled «The New evangelization and the life of communion» with the presence of 20 consecrated women among which were some young religious women who were meeting the Ideal of unity for the first time and also a superior general. There were also three missionaries present - from Syria, Angola and from Chad -, two religious from Myanmar and one from Romania. There was a special grace, because immediately everyone grasped the importance of living mutual love so as to be true citizens of Loppiano and to share the experiences lived.

The sharing of Anna Sorlini and Violetta Sartori, focolarinas of the early times of the Movement, enchanted everyone with concrete facts, pearls of a Gospel lived, expressing their radicalness in living for «Ut Omnes». It was a strong witness for the young people! All this love, with Jesus in the midst allowed each one to share one's own experience, to share the difficulties and at the same time the gift that she had received or was receiving. The experiences shared by the families, by the gen boys and girls, the dinner in the various focolares, underlined how to live our daily life in the light of reciprocal love.

Among us there were the religious women, consecrated women belonging to secular institutes and the Ordo Virginum, a variety in communion.

sr. Antonia Moiola

At Loppiano Think globally, act locally

The prospects that emerged at the meeting of the Zone responsables for the priest focolarinos «Think globally and act locally» was the *leitmotif* of the meeting of 60 Zone responsables for the priest and deacon focolarinos who came to Loppiano from the 20th to the 24th of August. To welcome us were the renovated venues of the «Vinea mea», our School for priests, deacons and seminarians. In the letter of Emmaus for the 16th of July we asked ourselves: at what point is our commitment for «Ut omnes» within the Church, in the parishes, among priests? The communion on these and other themes was encouraged by the choice – something new this year – of starting our life and the work we do from the Big Zones. This brought forth a rich experience of unity in diversity. Among the highlights of the meeting was the *skype* link-up with Fr. Klaus Hofstetter, Sameiro Freitas and Marco Bartolomei of the Central Secreteriat of the New Parishes and Diocesan Movement, who were gathered together in Cadine (Trent) with 160 committed members. There was a waterfall of experiences which showcased the many ways that are already existing to put the Ideal at the service of the local Church, in synergy with all the realities of the Opera. A very special gift was the presence of Giancarlo Faletti, with whom we established a lively dialogue regarding the new set-up of the Opera. He invited all of us to become always more «protagonists», lighting up many cells with Jesus in the midst and encouraging the development of the local Communities everywhere. Among the prospects that emerged: a meeting for priest focolarinos «Under 50» belonging to the European Zones, in Loppiano this coming November 5 to 7, and the desire to form, in the summer of 2014, temporary focolares in some countries, where the priestly reality of the Opera is just starting, so as to have places where one can breathe and make others breathe the life of the Risen One.

Fr. Hubertus Blaumeiser

Other meetings for priests

In Loppiano, Sassello and Einsiedeln

Aside from the School for the Zone responsables for priest focolarinos, in the newly renovated «Vinea mea», the eighth edition of the formation Course for seminary educators was held from the 15th to the 27th of July.

In Sassello to participate in the programs of the week «Following the footsteps of Chiara Luce», 20 gens, 15 priests and 20 seminarians and young people «in search », came together from 13 countries last August 13 to 16 to build the «Gens Construction Site ».

The enchanting little city of Einsiedeln in Switzerland welcomed 60 priest volunteers from 11 European nations who were in-charge of a nucleus.

There is a more extensive report of this event at www.focolare.org.

Meeting of the Diocesan Movement

To leave a mark in the Church and in society

After 40 years life goes ahead and the commitment with the whole Opera at the service of the local Church develops

Since 1979 there has been no meeting for the animators of the Diocesan Movements present in Italy. In Nocera Umbra, at the end of August, 500 persons half of which were youth, met together, all of them protagonists, to deepen the theme «Identity, method of apostolate, prospects of incarnation». Coincidentally, this appointment fell on the fortieth anniversary of the birth of the Diocesan Movement. During the convention what Emmaus and Giancarlo had wished for the Congress of those committed to Movement last April was palpable: the one Opera that lives in a local community.

We saw a reality that concretely leaves a mark not only in the Church but also in society and in the territory. Persons of all the vocations, who work with joy and commitment for children, teens, youth, adults, who give the Ideal of unity generously. From the experiences of its birth in the '70s one could see the power of Jesus in the midst among the first priests, who attracted young people; and today this has become a collective experience of a body.

Bishop Michele Secchia of Teramo, one of the dioceses where the Diocesan Movement is present, delivered the opening remarks. Mons. Giuseppe Petrocchi, bishop of Aquila, answered to the questions regarding the contribution of the charism of unity to the Church, opening up pathways for a fuller incarnation of the Ideal in the structures of the Church and of society.

In the workshops held by sector (children, youth and adults), there was a very rich and fruitful exchange from which one could see the depth of the formation both ideally and humanly, of the numerous people that each Diocesan Movement reaches.

The conclusions drawn at the end of the Convention, elaborated with the delegates of the Opera of the zones who were involved and the local secretariats, highlighted the contributions of this reality: the whole Opera in all its expressions is called to renew the Church, and the Parish and Diocesan Movements are specific instruments to do this.

The final Mass was celebrated by Mons. Gianfranco De Luca, bishop of Termoli, who once again underlined the importance of «living within» so as to be able to launch ourselves outwards.

Fr. Klaus Hofstetter, Sameiro Freitas, Marco Bartolomei

in dialogue In Solingen

In search of listening

A study week-end for the evangelical intern members of the Movement of Germany

For more than ten years the Evangelicals of the Opera in Germany would meet for a week-end of study to deepen together the theme of the year particularly from an Evangelical point of view and also to deepen the knowledge of their own Church by visiting significant places.

From September 6 to 8 they met at the Mariapolis Center «Frieden» of Solingen – more than thirty focolarinos and focolarininas, married focolarini, volunteers and some intern members from all the other German zones.

Among the topics taken up there was a sincere and profound sharing on the different meetings with Emmaus and Giancarlo during their trip to Germany or in other occasions. Time was also given for moments that encouraged a personal and communitarian union with God. The theme chosen to study in depth was: «The sanctity of God – sanctity in this world» .

Since the first moment there was an atmosphere of great joy, readiness to give oneself, reciprocal listening, communion of soul, sharing of experiences, open discussion. The presence of the emeritus bishop Christian Krause, who came as a simple participant, allowed for a dialogue with someone «on the outside» who was a friend and who showed appreciation for the Movement, as they tackled certain delicate and complex topics on which there were different opinions even among the evangelicals themselves.

But with the spirituality, we experienced a strong bond that didn't allow us to stop at our differences: love, reciprocal love makes the other very close to me and makes me able to love him literally as myself.

This was precisely the reason and the attitude we had in facing the topics that for 500 years had divided the Western Church: who or what renders us justified, sanctified – saved in front of God? Marilù Fischer – evangelical pastor and a married focolarina – had prepared a path to allow us to come closer together to the «Sanctity – the Saint»: which for some could be something that does not concern their life or maybe it poses a certain attraction but it seems to be unreachable, too great or something perceived as only for Catholics, something old-fashioned and not for our modern times. And from this it is necessary to define what sanctity means today. The passage

from the call of Isaiah (Is 6,1-13) – that presents God to us in all his extraordinariness and greatness and the sanctity that he desires for his people – and the letter of St. Paul to the Romans (Rm 6,1-14;15-24) helped each one to enter into the process, into a journey, allowing themselves to be taken by God who makes us all saints through baptism.

Saturday afternoon, we went on a fieldtrip to Wuppertal-Barmen. There, at the start of Hitler's regime, an evangelical parish had an important role. In 1934 the «Synod of the Confessing Church» under the guidance of Karl Barth, Paul Althaus, Eberhard Bethge, formulated in six articles that which is immutable for an authentic Christian against the «German Christians» - as the official evangelical Church of that time greatly influenced by the regime, was called.

Today that parish is a center of reconciliation and peace; there you will find a cross made from the nails of the Cathedral of Coventry (England) that was destroyed during the Second World War. It was spontaneous to pray together with all those united with Pope Francis on that 7th of September.

Sunday morning, after the celebration of the Holy Meal, we stayed together to conclude the meeting and to draw our conclusions: among all of us there was a greater awareness of being called by God, each one in his or her own path, to serve the Work of Mary together with everyone. We left with a strengthened faith, with the experience of being at home if there is Jesus in our midst, with a new joy of letting God work in us and that it is worth it to live for «*Ut Omnes*»: an awareness that Sanctity – a gift from God – is the vocation of every Christian! We can say that study became meditation, an encounter with God!

Heike Vesper

Sportmeet

Fourth edition of the «Mundialito»

The national anthem and the reading of the «Golden Rule» in the languages of the six teams on the field - Senegal, Ivory Coast, Italy, Macedonia, Morocco and Albania – opened all the *matches* of the Mundialito 2013, the football tournament organized by the Local Authority for Social Services and Immigration of the Town of Verucchio (in the province of Rimini) to promote integration within the territory.

It was an opportunity for growth and comparison to deepen the sense of being equally citizens and to get to know each other reciprocally. Around a hundred players were present in the field, accompanied by a numerous multi-colored crowd.

And, also in Romagna, another appointment with: around 200 teens from the highschoools of Savignano on the Rubicon and from San Mauro Pascoli (in the province of Forlì-Cesena), about ten sports clubs, 40 youth and adults who served as team captains and referees, a lot of music and the «cube of love» set in the sport ambit, were the ingredients of the event «Sports4peace» which took place in Savignano at the end of April. The teens from the various sports clubs of *karate*, volleyball and football of the two cities, usually competing against each other on the playing field, welcomed fully the spirit of the event by living according to the rules of the «cube». This year a Street-Fighting team, considered a violent sport, also participated; these young people also understood the aim of the day and adapted their sport to suit it, so instead of portraying violence, it turned out to be the most entertaining number of the event.

Maria Palladini, Antonio Olivero

«Friends» in dialogue at Sarajevo

To heal the wounds

An occasion to meet for the persons with no religious convictions from Southeastern Europe.

The message of Emmaus

At Sarajevo, upon the invitation of Zdravka Gutic', the present vice mayor of the capital of Bosnia and Herzegovina, committed to the 4th Dialogue, a meeting was held last June with people of non-religious convictions coming from Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

After the war in the '90s in the territory of the ex-Yugoslavia, which left deep consequences on the peoples involved, the external wounds seem to have become scars (the city was rebuilt), but the internal wounds are still bleeding.

«One can still breathe an atmosphere of tension - Zdravka Gutic' told Emmaus last April – because a dialogue does not exist among the political structures and among the people of different faiths, cultures, nationalities». And yet this is something urgent, as the only way to achieve a lasting peace.

Sarajevo – an interweaving of the Christian and Muslim cultures -, with its minarets and its bell towers, is a city that inspires fascination. Today it no longer shows the signs of the four years of bombardment, they are remembered only by the numerous commemorative plaques, the monument to 1500 children killed, the new cemeteries for the thousands who died in the center of the city. And there are economic consequences too, half a million unemployed youth, of which 70% want to immigrate.

In these days there was a profound sharing of the sufferings experienced. Goran shared about the life of the city under siege, and then of his encounter with the Movement saying: «I am a businessman, I am not attracted to spiritual meetings, but in one Mariapolis, an interior process started in me. The human vocabulary is too poor to express that which I experienced».

And Stanislav, a young psychologist: «I am 28 years old and I can say that I can't see my future here. But I can see it! The reality may be difficult but it is not unchangeable. The most important thing is to create a microsphere and from there to act on a large scale. Only relationships based on love can change the persons».

The word «dialogue» lived sounded sacred.

In the afternoon there was a meeting with the community of Sarajevo. Profound experiences. The words of Chiara on dialogue and on love of neighbor re-echoed strongly in all those present. Sonja, a teacher at the Academy of music of Belgrade (serbian): «We too suffered with you, our Association of composers protested, but our voice was suffocated by the *media*. But here in “dialogue” we have a special occasion of being together. I ask myself how we can heal the wounds that exist in each one of us and how we will be able to protect our children from hatred. I think that the way is to bring love to everyone we meet.

I hope I will be able to do this because I believe in the person. The young people need our support, sometimes just a simple, warm word is enough.

This is my way of life and this is why the Focolare Movement is so close to me».

Damjana from Slovenia highlighted the words of Chiara that accompany her in her life as a non-believer: «Chiara told us that it is not a sin not to practice any faith, because maybe we have not had the chance to know it, to perceive it, but that not to love is a sin».

Emmaus, coming to know about this meeting, wrote to this small group: «These days lived together with great openness and welcoming one another is already a sign of new hope for your countries. It is obvious that the ground is ready to welcome in profundity the call to live for universal brotherhood.[...] and this positive current will increasingly grow, spreading trust and multiplying love among all».

Vida Rus, Franz Kronreif

CAPTIONS The present vice mayor of Zdravka Gutic' (on the left) speaking to the lawyer Zdravko Dujmović, one of the pioneers of the 4° Dialogue in Croatia

Open oneself to wider horizons

With friends and those in-charge of the 4th Dialogue so as to answer together to the challenges of the Opera today

A meeting that took place in Ariccia from August 31 to September 1 for «friends» collaborators and those in-charge of the dialogue with persons of non-religious convictions from Italy, to reflect together on how to answer to the challenges that the Opera faces today.

The answers of Emmaus given during the meeting of April regarding our Dialogue on two current topics - the synergy among the various realities of the Opera and the role of the «friends», like the «skin» of the body of the Opera in contact with the outside - generated an enriching communion and new insights.

The letter of Emmaus dated July 12 (see *Mariapolis 7/8-2013*) was welcomed as an invitation to bring values, love to humanity. A comment: «I think that the task of Dialogue is that of bringing back the light to those universal values that belong to all of humanity that today seem to be buried by egoism, false comfort, by lies and the inability to communicate because of being closed up within fences of cultural, social and religious affiliations. From the letter of Emmaus, reading what Foco told Chiara, it comes to me spontaneously to think that he is opening Chiara up to a wider horizon; he brings her there where the heart of the human family beats, in that “That all may be one”. Foco wrote that Chiara cried, and maybe because she, in that moment, in dialogue with him, felt the power of that Paradise on earth and her “small-great” heart of a woman (and spiritual mother of the Opera) perceives the embrace of all humanity that she sees with a new light [...]». Mario Ciabattini, councilor of the Big Zone of Italy, who was almost always present, introduced us to Project Italy, wherein also the activities of the persons of non-religious convictions of the Movement are included. For them the new set-up «is not an emergency measure due to the lack of focolarini, but rather, it is an opening up to wider horizons, with the strength of the entire Opera».

V.R., F.K.

Social School at the Mariapolis Lia

For the integral development of the person

«Where is your brother?».

This is the title of the third edition of the Social School that took place from July 6 to 8 at the Mariapolis Lia and which saw the participation of around 240 people coming from Bolivia, Chile, Paraguay, Uruguay and Argentina, and some representatives also from Brazil and from Holland. The program, which was very dynamic and varied, was based not only on academic presentations, but also on moments that were quite involving (such as a shared *lectio divina*, study commissions for the Inundations, *work-shops*, analysis of experiences, etc.), giving more time for personal and group study, communion and building relationships starting from experiences lived.

Among the themes deepened were, «love of neighbor» as the driving force for an integral development of the person and of society. The brief theme of Mons. Augustin Radrizzani, archbishop of Mercedes- Luján, on the documents of Aparecida and the meditation on the talk of Pope Francis to the Caritas gave a particular tone of communion.

The participants were characterized by their commitment to society in the various fields: from those who worked for the restoration of human dignity among the garbage dumps, or those who manage educative centers in high-risk zones, from the conservation of indigenous cultural heritage to centers for infants, to the rehabilitation of drug addicts, to the centers that promote life, centers for the disabled, low-cost hostels, and also the labour unions, managers of enterprises, politicians.

Among these, there were many new people, or those not yet inserted in any branch of the Opera who came for formation and found a deep encounter with the charism.

«I came here in the midst of a deep personal crisis – as written in one of the impressions gathered –, an endless search of existential and social questions to which I found a strong answer during these days».

Delia Pairetti, Norberto Cartechini

In action

At the Mariapolis Piero

With great sufferings on their shoulders

From August 24 to 29 the Cittadella Piero of Nairobi (Kenya) welcomed a group of 43 youth, former street children, who live in a rehabilitation center where Jeanine, an intern member of New Families also works. They are teens with many problems, who bear great sufferings on their shoulders, that's why Jeanine had proposed that some of them spend a few days at the Mariapolis to experience a different kind of atmosphere.

Sole and Daniela, of the pre-school, were with them. «Everything took place with simplicity – they shared - .

They visited various places and were touched by our way of living and working.

When we reached the small cemetery they were impressed by the peace and as they listened to the brief stories of Giuseppe Pezzina and Josée Kilunga (focolarini who are buried there) they were conquered by «these persons who have given their life for other peoples».

During one of the evenings they also came to know about the life of Chiara Luce through a video; thanking us, one of them said: «This story is really very strong, I learned so much from her: inspite of the sufferings, one can continue to think of the others».

A special moment was the meeting with a group of gen4 who sang songs, shared their experiences on the «cube of love» and finally they gave each one a cube. Some of the youth had tears in their eyes.

One of them told us: «Thank you for sharing with us your way of life».

During the last evening together the youth wanted to give back the love that they had experienced by offering to all the inhabitants of the Cittadella a small program made up of Kenyan dances and acrobatic performances.

«You have given us so much love – they explained – that, since we don't have material things to give you, we thought of offering you our talents».

This visit was truly the suffering Jesus in these youth passing in our midst, a way of going towards the «existential peripheries».

In the end Jeanine confided to us: «During our stay in the Cittadella some big steps were taken by some of them: for example, one of the teens told us about his difficulty with drugs which we didn't know about, he had found the courage to open up. I am sure that this happened because he felt welcomed completely.

Now we are trying to find the right way to help him».

Else Castellitto, Joseph Kinini

Teens for Unity in the Northeast of Brazil

Ten years for a united world

The Forum of the Teens for Unity has reached its tenth year. There were around 400 teens who celebrated this occasion at the Mariapolis Santa Maria in Igarassau

«I leave from here with a new reason to live». «It was a new and completely different kind of experience from my former lifestyle, now I will try to put it into practice». «I learned above all to see Jesus in the others, and to light the flame that is within me».

These are just three of the many impressions gathered at the end of the Forum which, in these ten years, has seen the participation of more than four thousand adolescents from all over Northeast Brazil, becoming the launching pad for the activities of the Teens for Unity of the Zone.

The gen3 chose the theme to present, the *workshops* to develop and the title «You did it to Me». Each one gave his or her contribution in various ways during the preparation and there were also many difficult moments lived.

A gen 3 who was diagnosed with a tumor offered her suffering so that the Forum could win over many young people.

Here is the logbook prepared by the gen3.

1° day - Thursday July 11, 2013 We began... This evening we started with a beautiful choreography, then we launched the proposal of the Forum... *wow*, there was the immediate support of all the teens.

2° day - Friday July 12, 2013 In the morning, after a moment of reflection on the love of neighbor, the teens participated in the various forums, among which were «Family» and «Saints in jeans», where the educator Luiz Carlos «disturbed» everyone by affirming that it is possible to live a saintly life today.

In the afternoon, all were divided into groups: we visited the «Pão da Vida» orphanage that belongs to the Community of Cuieirasm, bringing toys and items for personal hygiene collected by us. The dance group prepared a *flashmob*.

The evening was a very special moment.

We suggested to take up the theme on forgiving the other, but above all oneself.

We gathered some experiences on how we try to face suffering and then we presented our secret, Jesus Forsaken, «who made Chiara a great winner».

Then all of us went to the church in silence and each one wrote on a paper heart a big suffering that was an obstacle for him or her in loving the neighbor and, tying it to a rock – which symbolized the bad things that one had in his or her heart – we put them all on the altar offering them to Jesus, so as to be free to love.

3° day - Saturday July 13, 2013 We divided into groups for a forum on affectivity and the use of the *mass-media*. In the afternoon the Expo: an exhibit of the activities that the teens from the different localities have done during the year.

In the evening the big celebration for the 10 years anniversary of the Forum of the Teens for Unity Movement! The first protagonists of this adventure explained to us how the idea came about from the desire to have a meeting wherein they could talk about their choice to follow God, but at the same time it must have a style suitable for teens. Just like in all birthday celebrations... there was a cake.

4° day - Sunday July 14, 2013 We concluded with Chiara Luce: each one received as a gift the book with her story. It seemed as if she was accompanying each one, as we all were leaving for our cities. «This is my first Forum. I feel closer to God», this was the greeting of one of the teens.

Ana Lúcia Bandeira, Ivanaldo Araujo

Australia - New Zealand

You are the focolare in Wallis

Ophelie, a gen2 from the island of Wallis (Oceania), coming home for the summer holidays from France where she is studying, wrote to the focolare center the program that she together with her mother, a volunteer, will be doing in the two months that she is home: to meet often with a group of teens to whom she had shared the Ideal last year – and who have started to live it -, choosing from among them those young people who seem to have understood more our spirituality; to start the Youth for a United World group because there are already some teens who meet regularly and do some activities together; to meet for a weekend the children who are already living the «cube of love»; to organize a «gen mariapolis» and... to meet those adults who, seeing this life growing around them, would like to deepen their knowledge of the ideal that they have known for many years now. All these in answer to the affirmation of Emmaus, who told them last year: «*You are the focolare in Wallis!*». Ophelie writes: «Even if we don't have the focolare center here, we have the writings of Chiara, and we strive to build unity among us: isn't this the most

important thing?». *Lucia Compostella*

testimonies

We would like to share with you the telegrams that Emmaus sent for the «departure» of the last four focolarini

Luciano Beltramo

«Mary your 'form'»

Yesterday afternoon, August 24th around 3pm, Luciano Beltramo, a focolarino from Loppiano, peacefully left for heaven following the recitation of the rosary. He was 81. That same morning, during Mass, he had received the last rites.

Luciano began his adventure with the Ideal in the '50's. In 2002 he himself referred to that in a letter he wrote to Chiara when he turned 70: "I received a 'divine push' one day during the Mariapolis at Fiera di Primiero in 1956, while listening and seeing the first focolarine in action. That night only one thought crossed my mind: 'If you are honest, you too should start loving... I felt full of God and during that period the flame of possibly being called to the Focolare began to kindle.'"

In yet another letter he wrote Chiara his words illustrate his adventure of the years following that Mariapolis and his decision to give himself to God (although he was engaged for 3 years): "...something did not sit well with me..., Jesus had chosen us and, despite the many times we resisted Him, He never stopped loving us, until we wore out. So, we separated deciding that both of us would live for Jesus, and only for Jesus. He immediately presented Himself as Crucified and Forsaken in our relatives who were not able to understand our change of heart..., in our local parish priest, although he understood that the choice was for a work of God, when faced with people's questions, he too had no response. I felt I was reliving the early days of the Ideal when you put your backpack on your mother's shoulders, certain however that Jesus would take care of everything.... Since I left home I've been receiving wonderful letters from my relatives, so full of joy because they too had done a real act of love towards God and are truly receiving the hundredfold".

In 1962 he attended the focolarini school of formation at Grottaferrata and one year later transferred to the focolare center in Florence, then Rome and later to the zone of Milan where he spent 28 years. During that time frame, after having received from Chiara a Word of Life "And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home" (John 19:27), he wrote Chiara: "...If I imitate Mary my soul remains in a profound peace and I am able to give Jesus to others." Chiara answered: "In fact your model should be Mary Desolate. It seems you have taken the right road not only because Mary in her desolation is synonymous with suffering/love, but also because Mary is your 'form', she is your Mother. She will bring you to the top of your road and transform you into another Jesus".

From 1996 to 2003 he moved to the zone of Castelli Romani. He then wrote Chiara: "I am going through a difficult period, with an almost constant suffering: anguish, darkness, a sense of failure, fear of being out of the Will of God, solitude, incomprehension... different aspects of Jesus Forsaken.... I feel well only when I am loving. I've experienced greater mercy within, I seem to be able to love more those who made me suffer..." Chiara responded: "I was happy you opened up to me. You say you are going through a difficult moment, in which Jesus Forsaken is visiting you under different guises and you ask what this is. This is our way Luciano, marked with joys and suffering, ups and downs, highs and lows. You have to learn how to live them. And woe to us if these trials are lacking!! These are the things which dig through and reduce our egos. These allow mercy to surface in us."

In 2003 he transferred to Loppiano and again wrote to Chiara: "In this particular period, where I've had time to contemplate the 'things of above,' very often I found myself with my soul immersed in a great peace where the divine reigns and the human is in the background. At times, after having meditated the readings of the day or after having read your writings I am so moved. A certain nostalgic feeling of heaven takes over; I'd prefer to be already in heaven because, during those moments, all things on earth seem to be limited".

It was with this 'soul' that he lived out his illness which led him to the encounter with Jesus and we are grateful to God for the gift of this focolarino and to him for having corresponded to Him with his entire life.

Mabel Vera

«Mother of Beautiful Love»

Mabel Vera, a focolarina from the zone center in Montevideo, Uruguay left for Heaven on August 30th at 61 years of age. She was born in Durazo (Uruguay) in a beautiful and united family, the second of three children.

She met the Ideal in the '70s together with other youth from her city. She continued her involvement with the gen life while studying art in Montevideo. She attended a gen school at O'Higgins and then a Genfest in 1980 held in Rome. Expressing her joy to Chiara when meeting her, she asked for a Word of Life and received: «Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening». (1 Samuel 3:10). Some months later upon her request for a new name, Chiara responded and confirmed «Mabel=Mother of Beautiful Love. Mary will teach you how to get closer to your friends with a maternal love in which all can believe».

In 1981 she began the school of formation at Loppiano and worked utilizing her artistic talents. Within a few months she wrote Chiara saying that in the light of her former life and the existential suffering that she and her «atheist» friends, sculptors, ceramic makers and actors had experienced, to work at the Ave Center was indeed a gift of God: «I want Him now to give the world a new art». On occasion of the day of her final vows in December 1984 she wrote: «Today a new relationship with Mary began. Up to now I went to her with big issues; now I feel Her presence in small daily actions.» Again at the end of 1988 she wrote Chiara: «After hearing you explain the Via Mariae (Way of Mary) and more than ever united to you, I've said to God: I only have one life and you know I want to spend it for You, for your great suffering».

After a short time in Mexico and San Salvador in 1996 she was called to Rocca di Papa to work for the media at the Center of the Work of Mary. «I feel at home here. I've asked Jesus to make me 'transparent' so that my every move becomes 'sacred' so as to work in the 'divine'». Mabel worked at the Chiara Lubich center with great passion to archive and put in order the precious patrimony left by Chiara.

In January, 2011 she returned to Uruguay and launched herself into the new will of God building in a short time deep relationships with old and new friends and with the community of the Movement.

A year and a half ago, she was struck by an illness and entered into a coma from which she never awakened. Before this incident occurred, during both her focolare retreat and zone council meeting she had said, «I live and offer everything so that Jesus in the midst will be present. I will give my life for this».

In bed, and immobile during these months, Mabel attracted everyone like a magnet. Her eyes spoke of Paradise and each and every person who saw her noted a tangible presence of Jesus in the midst. Many people, including doctors, medical staff and ambulance drivers spoke of the peace that she transpired.

Her passing to the other Life came serenely surrounded by the men and women focolarini who assured her of that unity which was so dear to her. Her family members and many of the Movement in the zone flocked to the funeral, even though a general work strike had paralyzed the city.

Under a clear and splendid sky, uncommon for Uruguay at this time of year, Mabel was buried in a cemetery close to the Mariapolis Center named «Pelican» – a providential coincidence and sign for the community at large.

Wadad Farah Azar

Her name means «faithfulness»

Wadad Farah Azar, a married focolarina of the zone center in Lebanon, reached paradise on August 19th. She would have been 74 on October 7th. As a young bride she met the Ideal during its inception in Lebanon. She and her dear Antoine (a volunteer) formed a beautiful, united family with their 3 children Michel, Loubna and Joumana.

Soon Wadad felt the call to the focolare and spent much time there. She and Aletta Salizzoni worked together cooking and keeping house so that the other focolarine would find concrete and supernatural love which she maintained all her life.

She and Antoine were entrusted the New Families Movement in their region taking every measure to follow everyone, sustaining also couples in difficulty and carrying together the sufferings of many people.

In 1992 Wadad suffered a heart attack, making it worse because of the difficulty to reach the hospital due to the blocked road brought on by a strong winter storm. She then wrote Chiara: «Thank you for showing us how to live in these moments. For many people they are not nice but for me, they were a grace. Mary Desolate was so present especially during the night of my emergency». And she continued, «Tomorrow I will undergo open heart surgery. I will offer everything for you, for the Work of Mary and I feel that I am in the Father's hands».

Although physically weak, Wadad lived more «within», staying in God. Her relationship with Jesus was very deep and simple and her experiences appeared as «small offerings».

In this last period her health deteriorated. She patiently endured her suffering surrounded by the love of the focolare and her family. She was so struck when her daughters and her own sisters expressed their

gratitude to her for being such an example for the whole family. She replied: «Whatever you do to the least, you do to me.» expressing herself in Gospel form.

Wadad underwent a trial of no longer feeling God's presence and to think that she had done everything wrong. Once she communicated these things to Jesus in the midst she found peace again. While in hospital, although very ill, she was conscious and said: «God is taking everything from me but I will consume myself for Emmaus, for the Work of Mary, for my children and the entire world». While reciting the rosary she added, "«For the upcoming celebration in Amman with Chiara, with Emmaus».

One day, right before dying she took some money from her bag handing them to the focolarina next to her saying: «This is my communion of goods». When remembering her recently deceased mother, Wadad confided: «I asked my mother to help me. For forty days she helped me, I was getting better. But, it has been awhile since I've felt her presence but perhaps she wants to tell me 'It is much more beautiful here, you come too!」»

Chiara had given her the Word of Life: "«Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you» (John 14:27). Wadad passed away serenely and at peace, with Jesus in the midst, repeating: «My Jesus, Mary!」»

Brigitte Bolkart

She belonged to the first family-focolare of Germany

Brigitte Bolkart, a married focolarina from Munich was born to the New Life last Monday at 92 years old. She and her husband Albert were the first Family Focolare in Germany.

Brigitte was raised in the north of Germany without any particular religion. During her youth she worked successfully in the world of fashion until she was struck by a grave illness which led to her search for God. She discovered Him with an unexpected intensity one day while visiting a church.

Her encounter with Albert led her to the south of Germany. Soon they both realized, although each one was quite different from the other, how they were meant for each other. In 1955 they married and had 3 children all of whom are in focolare now: Regina in Hanover, Matthias at the world gen4 center and Andreas, married, who lives in Switzerland.

They came to know of the Word of Life and so decided to participate in the Mariapolis of 1959 in Fiera di Primiero. During that intense week they both understood God was calling them totally. Their home in Munich became a central point for many. And for a brief time they offered hospitality to 3 focolarinas while they searched for a house for the focolare. Chiara gave the family the Word of Life, «Love one another as I have loved you» (John 13:34).

For many years Brigitte and Albert were responsible for the married focolarini of Germany and contributed in starting up the New Families Movement there.

Since 1960 Brigitte was part of Bruna Tomasi's focolare. She loved always, ready to be formed by Jesus in the midst and thankful for the light of Chiara's spirituality. In 1964 she wrote Chiara: «I have a great desire to reach perfection and martyrdom seems to be a marvelous grace. I want to love Jesus Forsaken always more concretely but how often my own misery gets in the way of this desire - but this too is Him.» In 1969 Chiara sent Brigitte the Word of Life «Holy Father, protect those you have given me in your name, so that they may be one, as we are one.» (John 17:11)

Very understanding and gentle in her relationships, she could listen well without formulating quick answers. She raised her children to be free yet always sensitive to the sufferings of others. Her joy and humor were contagious and could break through tense situations.

When Albert retired and in agreement with their children, they made themselves available to the Movement and moved to Mariapolis Luminosa in New York and then to Puerto Rico. There they shared their lives with the community in a context of poverty and extreme violence until they too were victimized which forced them to return to Germany. Following this «adventure», the life of Jesus in the midst grew between Brigitte and Albert with a continuous mutual attention and carrying together illnesses and trials which culminated in Albert's passing away in 2007.

For health reasons, Brigitte decided to move to a Nursing Home run by Sisters. Chiara wrote to her saying: «If God asks a lot it is because He loves you so much. Do not be afraid. From heaven, Albert will watch over you.» Notwithstanding her physical weakness and dementia she approached others fully giving of herself. In 2007 she wrote to Chiara: «While casting all my worries to God I experience a new freedom: that of living in God, in his kingdom. We are walking towards that and bearing witness to it by loving each neighbor concretely».

She received an important phone call from Bruna shortly before her death. Brigitte concluded her «holy journey» surrounded by everyone's love; they say her face glowed with the tenderness of God.

Carlo Bresci

«Time often comes back for God»

Carlo Bresci was born in Prato (zone of Florence) in 1938 and met the Ideal during the inauguration of the college in Loppiano.

After a period of being away from the Church, he returned. He began to organize with others, buses to Loppiano so as to let the people of his city and not only, know about the developing Cittadella. And so this was how the community of Prato grew. In '66, when Florence was struck by floods, Carlo was one of the first to work with Loppiano in the kitchen set-up to feed the volunteer workers.

Going ahead in the life of the Ideal, he committed himself as a volunteer and remained faithful to his vocation up to the end. During his wedding to Christina, they received a Word of Life for their family: «On earth as it is in Heaven» (Mt 6,10). They strived to conform to this by extending a generous welcome to their home for many who were in need. Their marriage was blessed with four children.

Warm and welcoming, always ready to be of service, Carlo gave his life to the Movement and for many years was the reference point in his city. He often said that «for God, time often comes back to where it seems to have been taken». At the beginning of the birth of the volunteers, he gave a notable contribution to its development, sometimes taking away precious time from the factory where he worked and from his family. A talented expert on textiles, he worked for many years as manager of a flourishing textile manufacturing business, something which he loved doing very much. Due to the economic crisis he had to leave this job, even as he remained a consultant and collaborator with other factories, sharing his skills and professionalism.

Città Nuova was the primary commitment for him: he worked tirelessly in thousands of ways to spread and make others know about it.

In love with Mary and having reached a ripe, old age, while his strength diminished, Carlo abandoned himself even more in the hands of God, accepting his illness that rendered him an invalid and loving Jesus in the Eucharist. He ended his «holy journey» serenely on January 13, surrounded by his family.

Marcello Catalucci

Anilda Stanzachi Fernandes

Lovable and decisive

Anilda met the Movement in 1989 at a Word of Life meeting.

Immediately attracted by the ideal, she started to participate and committed herself to the life of the volunteers. She was a simple person, decisive and with a very joyful and generous character.

She became a widow when she was 36 years old, so she had to raise her two children by herself: Valdir e Alcioni. Anilda's contribution to her nucleus was great, with her beautiful and concrete experiences, with her communion of soul from which wisdom flowed, both enchanting and enriching, because her words and her serenity were the fruits of a life rooted solidly on the Will of God.

Even if she had some difficulty in reading, she tried her best to read and meditate on all things regarding the charism and the life of the Opera, she was always up to date! It was edifying to study with her and to take the Marian University exams with her. In her parish, she encouraged many and listened to them with love.

She left us last May 4, she was 73 years old. The sisters who were living near her house and who had lived with her the last period of her life, had a Thanksgiving Mass celebrated for her to thank God for the gift of her life, and the same was done by the focolarinas of Curitiba together with all the community.

Riscelta Lyra

José (Pepe) Alonso

For the 'Economy of Communion

«Seek first the kingdom of God and his justice, and all these things and more will be given to you» (Mt 6,33).

This is the Word of Life that most expresses the life of José (Pepe), volunteer of Sevilla (Spain). Born in a numerous and deeply religious family, he met Ana in 1985 and together they attend the Genfest at the Paleur of Rome; marked by the Ideal, they committed themselves immediately to living it. They got married and had

two children: Nacho and Javier. When Chiara launched the Economy of Communion in 1991, Pepe was attracted to the project, and overcame the distrust that influenced the economic politics of the multinational company where he worked, which was so far away from these principles. He participated with enthusiasm in the various congresses so as to get to know more about the EoC.

In 2002 he lost his job and with others of the Movement they proposed to do something in this sector. For two years they studied together projects that then led to the birth of the Day-Care Center for the elderly called «The Mine». Pepe put his talents to use in striving to remain faithful to legality, honesty with their suppliers, trustworthiness with their competitors, creativity, professionalism and the ability to reach out to everyone; with courage he willingly opened up a discussion on his previous working experience. Last October he received the first diagnosis of a brain tumor. «From the beginning, I was able to recognize Jesus Forsaken... accepting him – he wrote to Emmaus -. After many years of living the Ideal, I discovered its secret. I am living only the present moment».

When they would ask him: «How are you?», he would answer: «Marvelous!» Supported by his family and by his nucleus on the 20th of May, the 10^o anniversary of the founding of the Day-Care center, the Eternal father wanted Pepe to celebrate this event in Paradise.

Emmaus wrote to Ana and their sons: «I will always remember my visit to “The Mine”, this project for which Pepe gave much of his life... Together let us thank God for his life, consistent and joyful, always turned towards Him. I am with you, with the staff of the Day-Care Center and with all those whom they have accompanied with so much love up to the end».

Toni Torres

Loiva Soares De Souza *«I thank God everyday»*

Loiva, volunteer of Pelotas (south Brazil), one of the first from the zone, reached the goal on the 2nd of December, at 86 years old. She met the Opera in 1973 and since then she has given her life with great generosity. Among the volunteers, she was responsible for a nucleus for many years, and she very attentively took care of a group of adherents. She was the one who organized the buses in her city for all those going to attend the various meetings of the Opera; she was very concrete in loving, her house was always open for meetings and she accommodated the volunteers who came from other cities.

For many years she worked in the sector of Pastoral Health Care of her parish, visiting the sick in the hospitals and seeing to all their needs.

She wrote: «Everyday I thank God for the gift of being so close to the Opera, to be Opera together with everyone. Like an athlete I am training in every moment in “knowing how to lose”... in this way I can work with more love and faithfulness for the Kingdom of God». Her Word of Life was «How precious is your love, oh God» [Psalm 36 (35),8]. During the last period of her life, her health became more fragile, nevertheless she tried her best to receive the Eucharist and in spite of her illness, she was always peaceful. The day before her «departure», two volunteers went to visit her and, even if it seemed that Loiva could not hear them, they prayed and sang a song that she liked very much; from the expression on her face it seemed as if she was happy. She reached the House of the Father, leaving in each one the certainty that Mary had welcomed her with great love.

Riscelta Lyra

Our relatives

The following have passed on to the Next Life: Mario, brother of Graziella De Luca; the mother of José Pereira, *focolarino in Brasilia*; Juresse, brother of Bertin Kufunda and Anna, sister of Valerio (Lode) Cipri, *focolarini of Loppiano*; Romain, father of Edwige (Fiamma) Rasoahanitriaina, and Claudette Uwarepublika, sister of Aline Uwimana, *focolarinas in Bujumbura*; Mario, father of Gioacchino Turco, *focolarino in the Heavenly Mariapolis*; Pina, mother of Myriam Giron Affanni, *married focolarina in Buenos Aires*; Anton, father of Maria Magdalena (Marwie) Wiech, *focolarina in Graz*; Mpamano Cyprien Mukobe Giheta, father of Salome Mvuyishanga, *focolarina in Antsirabe (Madagascar)*.

septembre 2013

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SPIRITUALITY

- 2 *Spiritual Thought of Chiara. Where peace begins*
- 2 *New publications. Reciprocal Love*
- 3 *Audience with Pope Francis. Go ahead with joy*

THE PEOPLE OF CHIARA

- 4 *Trip to Jordan. Dialogue primary option To contribute towards a new Middle East*
- 9 *An encounter with Pope Benedict XVI*
- 10 *Echoes of the Collegamento CH*

events

- 11 *«Learning Fraternity». Education online*
- 13 *Novelty. Big for «smart» kids. Teens for all teenagers*

AT THE CENTER

- 14 *Religious men. At Roverè and in Sassello*
- 15 *Consecrated women. In Loppiano: a variety in communion*
- 16 *Priestly world. The Zone responsables for priest focolarino in Loppiano. Meeting for priests and genS*
- 17 *Diocesan Movement. Make a mark in the Church and in society*

IN DIALOGUE

- 18 *Ecumenism. In Solingen a study weekend for evangelicals*
- 19 *Sportmeet. «Mundialito» and «Sport4peace» in Rumania*
- 20 *Dialogue with persons of non-religious convictions. In Sarajevo to heal the wounds. At Ariccia with «friendsi» and collaborators*
- 22 *Social school at the Mariapolis Lia*

IN ACTION

- 23 *At the Mariapolis Piero. Encounter at the «existential peripheries»*
- 24 *Forum of the Teens for Unity in Northeast of Brazil*
- 24 *Experience of a gen2 from New Zealand*

TESTIMONIES

- 26 *Luciano Beltramo. Mabel Vera. Wadad Farah Azar. Brigitte Bolkart. Carlo Bresci. Anilda Stanzachi Fernandes. José (Pepe) Alonso. Loiva Soares De Souza. Our relatives*

This issue was concluded in the printing press on 27 september.

Issue number 7-8/2013 was delivered to the post office on 17 september 2013. Cover The visit to the «Promised Land» at Mount Nebo.

Ai sensi del D. lgs. N. 196/2003 per la tutela dei dati personali, comunichiamo che gli indirizzi dei nominativi a cui viene inviato Mariapolis fanno parte dell'archivio del Notiziario Mariapolis, gestito da PAFOM, esclusivamente per la finalità dell'invio di tale periodico. I dati possono essere comunicati a terzi incaricati per la spedizione.

Editorial Board Via Frascati, 336 00040 Rocca di Papa [Roma] tel/fax 06 94798 311 e-mail n.mariapolis@focolare.org *Mariapolis n. 9/2013 | Monthly | Newsletter for internal use of the Focolare Movement | Director in charge Caterina Ruggiu | Graphics Maria Clara Oliveira | Direz. Via di Frascati, 306 00040 Rocca di Papa [Roma] | Autorizzazione of the Tribunal of Rome n. 5/84 dated 10 January 1984 | PAFOM | Printing Press Tipografia Città Nuova Via Pieve Torina, 55, 00156 [Roma] tel/fax 06 6530467*