

**The General Assembly of the Focolare Movement is about to start.  
An audience with Pope Francis is expected.**

The General Assembly of the Focolare Movement will take place between the 1st and the 28th of September. It follows the one held in 2008 that took place soon after the death of the founder Chiara Lubich.

The Mariapoli Centre at Castelgandolfo, Rome, is expected to host 494 delegates that represent the international centre and the various geographical regions of the Movement in the world. These are lay and consecrated persons, adults and youth, men and women, an expression of the diversity that characterizes the Movement. Another 49 participants have been invited to give their share towards the work of the Assembly; 15 of these are members of the Movement who come from other Christian Churches, non-Christian religions and non-religious cultures.

Focolare Communities all over the world have participated very extensively in the preparation for this event, and this resulted in thousands of reflections and proposals for an Assembly called to give its views on key topics for the life of the whole Movement. The introductory part of the Movement's General Statute states that "the norm of norms, the premise to every other rule" is mutual love, as this is the base for the action of Holy Spirit; and it is this the "logic" that guided all consultations made in preparing for this Assembly.

This preparatory work has brought to the surface questions, challenges and demands that show the vitality of the life of the Focolare people. Matters that have emerged in a very particular way are loyalty towards the Movement's charismatic identity, attention to young people, to the elderly and to families, and the need to look beyond the Movement and move towards the pains of humanity, offering privileged care to those gripped by the most diverse needs.

Therefore, here is a call for further action, together with an adequate and updated spiritual formation, in line with the spirituality of communion typical of the charism of the Focolare Movement, so that Jesus himself, present among those united in His name, (cf. *Mt* 18, 20), may walk in the streets to meet the men and women of today.

Contributions from the preparatory work have been summarized into twelve major themes. During the Assembly these will be discussed by the 32 groups of participants and in plenary sessions so as to direct the Movement in the coming years.

After a few days of spiritual retreat and some work, the Assembly will elect the President, the Co-President and the general councillors for the next six years.

The participants will be received by Pope Francis on Friday, September 26, at noon, at the Vatican.

The General Assembly is the main governing body of the Focolare Movement and ordinarily meets every six years.

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