

# MARIAPOLI

Notiziario del movimento dei focolari

*The Pope in Mariapolis*

## Transform society together

«On city»  
Networks of light  
to inhabit the  
planet

Asia Portugal  
Lithuania  
The ideal of unity  
celebrates  
important  
milestones

# Light a living cell

If you look around you in some cities you pass through, you are left dismayed and it seems to you that the realization of a Christian society is far off. The world with its vanity seems to dominate...

And you would call the testament of Jesus a utopia if you did not think of him. He saw a world like this too, and at the climax of his life he appeared to be overcome by it, defeated by evil.

He, too, looked at all that crowd which he loved as himself. He, God who had created it; and he would have liked to build the bonds which were going to bring them together as sons of the Father, and unite brother with brother.

He came to bring the family together again: to make all one. Instead despite his words of fire and truth – that burned away the foliage of vanity, uncovering the eternal that is in man – the people, many people, even though they understood, did not want to know and remained with lifeless eyes because their soul was in darkness.

This was because he had created them free. Having come from Heaven to earth, he could have saved them all with just a glance. But he had to leave to them - who were made in the image of God - the joy of freely winning salvation.

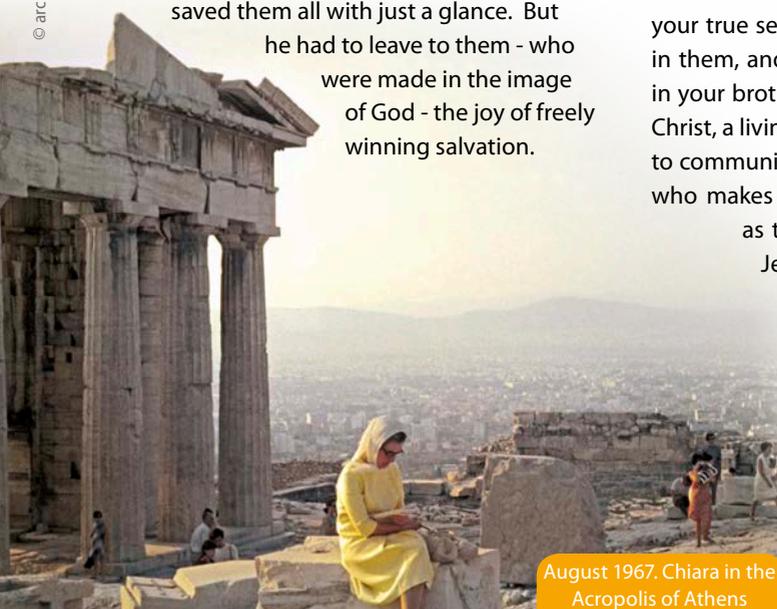
He looked at the world just as we see it, but he never doubted. At night he prayed Heaven above and Heaven within himself: to the Trinity that is the true Being, the real All, while outside the nothingness that passes away moved through the streets.

We too must do as he did and not be parted from the Eternal, from the Uncreated that is the root of the created, and we must believe in the final victory of light over darkness. We must pass through the world and not wish to look at it. We must look at the Heaven that is also within us and attach ourselves to what is real and what has value. We must make ourselves completely one with the Trinity who dwells in our soul enlightening it with eternal light. Then you will notice, with eyes that are no longer lifeless, that you are looking at the world and at things but it is no longer you looking at it: it is Christ who looks, and in you he sees again the blind needing sight, the dumb needing speech, the crippled to be made to walk, people who are blind to the vision of God inside and outside them, people who are immobile and crippled because they are unaware of the divine will, which at the bottom of their hearts spurs them on to the eternal motion that is eternal love.

You see and discover your own light in them: your true self, which is Christ, the true reality of you in them, and having found him, you unite with him in your brother. So you light up a cell in the Body of Christ, a living cell, a hearth of God where there is fire to communicate to others and with it, light. It is God who makes two into one, and who places himself as the third, as the relation between them: Jesus among them.

In this way love circulates and spontaneously carries with it, like an overflowing river, everything else that the two own: both their spiritual and material goods. This is the active and external testimony of a unifying and true love.

But we need to have the courage not to bother too much



August 1967. Chiara in the Acropolis of Athens



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In Rome

# «You transform the desert»

**For the first time, a Pope in a Mariapolis. The surprise visit of Pope Francis to the events of the «Earth Village» that was held in Rome, at Villa Borghese. Emmaus defined it as «A moment of great emotion, a gift of Chiara and for Chiara».**

*«As I was listening to you speak, two images came to mind: the desert and the forest. I thought: these people, all of you, take a desert and transform it into a forest. They go wherever a desert is, where there is no hope, and do things that make this desert become a forest».* This is how Pope Francis began as he spoke spontaneously

during his surprise visit last April 24, to the «Earth Village» that was held together with Earth Day Italy, and in which the Mariapolis of Rome also took part. It was a series of events, in the heart of the city, that was born from the collaboration of the Focolare Movement with groups and Associations so as to highlight the beautiful and the positive that is being done in the capital city.

about other means if we want to revive a little bit of Christianity.

We must let God live in us and let him flow out to the others like a stream of life, reviving the lifeless. And to keep him alive among us by loving one another.

Then everything around us is revolutionized: politics and art, school and work, private life and entertainment. Everything. Jesus is the perfect man who summarizes in himself all men and every truth.

Whoever has found this man has found the solution to every human and divine problem.

*Chiara Lubich*

*Spiritual Writings/2. Yes,yes. No,no. Città Nuova, Rome, 20.06.1978*

Accompanied by Archbishop Angelo Becciu, alternate for the General Affairs of the Vatican Secretary of State, the Pope was welcomed by the Archbishop Rino Fisichella, president of the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of the New Evangelization, together with Maria Voce and Jesús Morán, as the Gen Verde who were present were singing. Onstage Donato Falmi and Antonia Testa, persons responsible for the Focolare in Rome, with Pierluigi Sassi of Earth Day Italy presented the event to him and also some experiences. Teens, youth and adults shared their

commitment against different forms of poverty, actions promoting legality, initiatives against arms trafficking and gambling, activities to promote ethics in sports, projects for the sustainability of the planet.

*«You perform a miracle with your work of changing desert into forest: go forward like this – the Pope said elaborating on his initial metaphor – What is your plan? I don't know.... Let us move closer and see what we can do. This is life! Because life has to be taken as it comes. It is like the goalkeeper in a soccer match: catch the ball from wherever they kick it... it comes from here, from there.... We must not be afraid of life, do not be afraid of conflicts».* And thinking about conflict which in itself carries risks and opportunities he made this observation: *«One who does not risk can never approach reality: to know reality, but also to know it with one's heart, it is necessary to get close. Getting close is a risk, but also an opportunity: for me and for*



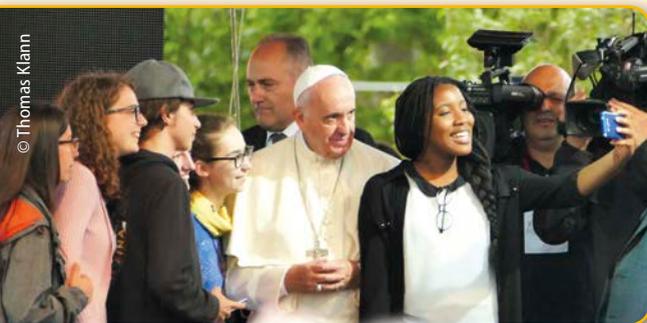
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*a beautiful thing! And forgiveness too, forgiving. Because with forgiveness, rancour, resentment move away. And then always build; do not destroy, build».* *«How is this done? Simply with the awareness that we all have something in common, we are all human. And in this humanity let us come closer in order to work together. 'But I am of this religion, of that one...! It doesn't matter! Everyone, forward in order to work together. Respect each other, respect! And this is how we will see this miracle: the miracle of a desert that becomes forest. Thank you for all that you are doing!».*

To whoever asked her for an «on the spot» comment Emmaus said: *«I lived this day as a gift from Chiara and as a gift to Chiara, because she wanted a "CityFest" and it seems to me that today what emerged was the "celebration of the city" with all its components and with the Pope».* And widening the scope, Emmaus wrote in one of the columns of the *Osservatore Romano* reflecting on this *«first time for a Pope to be in a Mariapolis»:* *«And so in every Mariapolis that is taking place or that will take place in the world — and there are hundreds — they will feel that they are looked at and loved in the same way».*

*Anna Lisa Innocenti*

*the person I move close to. For me and for the community I move close to».* *«Here is a 'home-work assignment' for you – he concluded - one day look at people's faces as you go along the street. They are worried, each one is closed in on himself, a smile is missing, tenderness is missing, in other words, social friendship, this social friendship is missing. [...] Gratuitousness, this is*



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In *mariapolis on line* you will find the complete talk of Pope Francis and the article of Emmaus published in the *Osservatore Romano* on 25.04.2016

## Action for Peace

# Together now more than ever!

**From the commission created at the Center to the United World Project, from the collection of signatures during the events in May for the new generations ...  
An extensive workspace of reflection and actions for peace**



March for peace in Sicily (Italy)

In front of the drama of the refugees and of those who tenaciously choose to remain in their Countries broken by the war, what is and what can the Focolare Movement do about it? This is a heartfelt question that Emmaus asked herself and the whole Movement some months ago. An appeal which expressed the urgency of doing something immediately and concretely for the emergencies, but above all to work for peace, to remove the roots of the causes of too many wars.

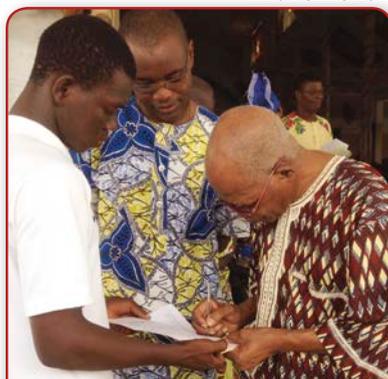
The appeal brought out many ideas, and gave life to actions, encouraged initiatives, gave value to the ongoing activities: from the hospitality given in Greece to Syrian families to the assistance given to the refugees passing through Macedonia, Austria and Hungary; from the work done in the refugee camps in Jordan, Lebanon and other Countries to the commitments in the Central African Republic, torn by a civil war; from the actions in favour

of refugees and asylum-seekers in various European countries, North America and Latin America to the media campaigns spearheaded by the youth, such as that against arms trafficking. People have worked and are working together everywhere, with the support of everyone, whatever their vocation, age, experience, working styles. Often, there is the collaboration with different associations, groups, Movements, national and international organizations.

In the meantime at the international center of the Focolare Movement a commission has been set-up called «Action for Peace» composed of representatives of the sectors of the Movement involved in the renewal of society. It

is working principally with three objectives:

1. to promote actions and projects for peace, geared towards making humanity one family, and this is its primary objective;
2. to support the spread of #Signupforpeace, the signature collection campaign (online and on paper) which is an appeal, promoted by the Youth for a United World. The aim is to bring



Signature campaign #signup4peace# in Benin

the requests contained in the appeal to UN, UNESCO and to the highest national and worldwide institutions and personalities, in order to ask for concrete actions for change in favour of peace. There are five requests: to reduce the use of public funds destined for weapons purchase, to work at eradicating

## A Week for peace

Among the events for peace in 2016 there is also the Week for a United World which took place from May 1 to 10, which gathered the widest range of activities, among which was the Run4Unity, the worldwide marathon for peace promoted by the Teens for Unity, and which has reached its fifth edition this year. Actions that have involved everyone: adults, youth and teens.

The main event of the Week for a United World, at the conclusion of the symbolic itinerary made by the Youth for a United World in the different continents, was held in Ecuador and its main theme was on interculturality.

A few weeks before the event a very strong earthquake hit the Country. But the youth of Ecuador immediately transformed this painful and tragic moment into a new occasion to give hope to the populace and to contribute to fraternity. They immediately took action together with the entire Country, to support the big number of people affected by the earthquake. Nevertheless, on May 7 the event «Half-way around the world– Quito» was held at the Festival for Peace entitled *Solidarity is a pathway for peace*. «Music and dances – the youth wrote – will be a sign that together we will rebuild a better Ecuador».

To contribute to Emergency Ecuador, see Mariapolis online for the details



Houston (Usa). Working at "Stop hunger now"

the roots of inequality so as to fight against poverty, to redefine the models of *governance* today so as to discover a new vision of politics for the common good, to adopt a model of organized legality as opposed to the phenomenon of criminality; to guarantee a level of universal primary education.

3. to accompany the development of a group of experts in the field of international relations, politics and dialogue, also with representatives from various countries in the Middle East. The aim is to study together some themes and to define the paths of action: such as arriving at the root of conflicts, how to be better prepared to eradicate conflict, how to promote a culture of peace.

Many actions then, that are realized on various fronts, but which have just one goal: to contribute towards the realization of «*That all may be one*». For this reason every initiative and activity for peace is part of the «United World Project», the project initiated by the Youth for a United World, but which today belongs to the entire Focolare Movement. The website [www.unitedworldproject.org](http://www.unitedworldproject.org) where one can find all the information is still in evolution: they are working on the creation of a new web platform to gather and upload on the internet all the «fragments of fraternity» that are taking place in the five continents.

Marco Desalvo

March 14, 2016

# Peace is possible

**A great vitality was what characterized March 14, the day in which the Focolare Movement all over the world commemorates the departure to Heaven of its foundress, Chiara Lubich**



In Kinshasa, in Congo, with Abdourahamane Diallo, representative of Unesco.

A multiplication of activities that were realized, some in collaboration with several local communities of the Movement and also with other Movements, together with Christians of various Churches or with communities of other faiths, with the world of culture, with the presence of civil and religious authorities of the place. This was how the celebration of March 14 took place.

To remember Chiara meant to offer in the different places where the events were held, occasions of encounter, of dialogue, of witness. All steps that are not isolated from each other, of a journey that extends through time and which is always led the Movement that wants to go out towards public life more and more. To remember Chiara meant above all, to realize her message. And this year, it is not by chance that the common thread was peace. In 1996 Chiara was given the UNESCO award for «Education to peace» and many of her thoughts were directed towards the actions of individuals and of peoples in the building of what has been considered by many to be a utopia. In fact, in the face of the repeated signs of death that are coming from many Countries where the wars are never-ending and there is a race to weapons proliferation, peace seems to

have suffered a definite setback; and this is where the timeliness of the theme is evident.

This would explain the great participation recorded in some of the events that took place where peace is an open challenge: 1200 persons in Bujumbura, in Burundi; 1000 in Kinshasa and 1500 in Kikwit, in Congo, just to mention some.

Often, the youth were the protagonists of the manifestations. With their testimonies they gave hope to those who, a bit more advanced in age, had experienced the difficulties and not rarely the failure of their own commitment for a world of peace.

In Fontem, Cameroun, more than 500 persons gathered for an important step in a project for peace that involved numerous schools. On that occasion they awarded the title «ambassador of peace» to those students who, having participated in the competition «Living peace, discovering fraternity», distinguished themselves through their commitment. At the awarding ceremony the secretary of the prefect, the vice prefect, civil and religious authorities, the delegate for education in secondary schools were present. He expressed his



In Roma, Italy, the youth in Parliament

gratitude for the work that the Movement has done and is bringing to the schools, offering an integral education that highlights the essential value of peace. He would like to introduce the «dice of peace» in all the schools in the district.

The Italian youth participating in the school of the Movement of politics for unity together with the Youth for a United World organized in Parliament an event entitled «Universal fraternity on course: disarmament is possible». More than 200 youth, the absolute protagonists of the event, knew how to interact with the parliamentarians present, giving a strong witness to their convictions, starting from their life experiences and their knowledge of the world and of the dynamics that govern it.

In Bucharest, Romania, the involvement of the gen2 and the gen3 was concretized in a concert for peace where the archbishop Ioan Robu, and the auxiliary bishop Cornel Damian were present, together with representatives of various institutions. More than a concert: it was a choral prayer to implore God to grant the gift of peace, many of those present commented.

In Vancouver, Canada, starting from the talk of Chiara at the UNESCO in '96 on the occasion of the conferment of the award, the attention was then directed towards the «United World Project», promoted by the Youth for a United World, with the invitation to sign the appeal #signupforpeace and to commit oneself to the project launched at the Genfest in Budapest «Let's bridge». The participants were invited to rebuild a difficult relationship that they have experienced with a person.

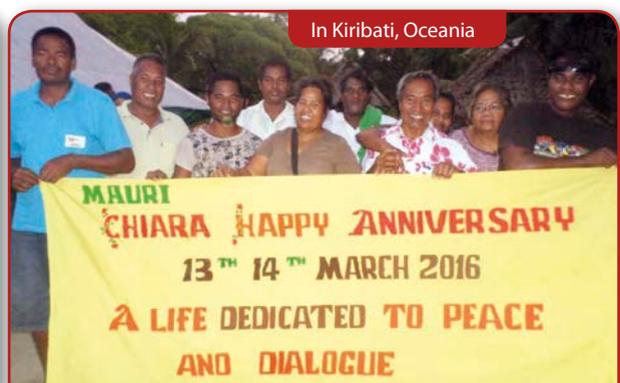
At the Mariapolis Center of Castel Gandolfo around a thousand people gathered together.

Among them were ambassadors and representatives of the diplomatic corps to the Holy See and from 20 Countries to the Italian Government: from Morocco, Libya, Benin, Gabon to Turkey and Taiwan, from Argentina, Venezuela, Cuba, Uruguay and Paraguay to USA and Guatemala, to various European nations, such as Ukraine, Lithuania, Albania, Slovenia, Portugal and Malta. The experiences shared on the theme peace, of dialogue, of the unity among peoples were incisive. As a conclusion to the programme, the concert of the Gen Verde «On the other side», was along the same lines. Emmaus, in her intervention (see [www.focolare.org/notiziariomariapoli](http://www.focolare.org/notiziariomariapoli)), presented the «spirituality of unity» as the «method» proposed by Chiara for peace. She then suggested the «secret of her success», which is the «art of loving» and indicated «a keystone, a good practice according to the language of international relations. The commitment to peace is difficult to realize if one is not ready to lose certainties and comforts, venturing along new and unexplored roads; becoming creative without improvising; listening to the voice of those who demand a future of peace and identifying where the possibilities are so as to realize them».

Finally, there were numerous liturgical celebrations, that have already become a part of the calendar of the communities and often presided by the local Bishops. A priest of the Movement wrote: «Yesterday we celebrated Mass with the Bishop and the whole community to remember Chiara. "You don't talk about Chiara, you live her", this is how we lived this moment».

We could say that this was the spirit that animated every meeting.

*prepared by Aurora Nicosia*





## Retreat of the General Council Believe more in unity

**The General Council at Castel Gandolfo for a week-long retreat, an encounter «of work in unity», the second after the Assembly 2014. Interview of Friederike Koller and Angel Bartol, central delegates**

*!The retreat began on March 14, a meaningful coincidence. At what point is the Movement today eight years after the departure of Chiara for Heaven?*

«We are on a journey, in the dynamics of living for and with Jesus among us who is always transcending us, and who brings us to incarnate what has emerged during the Assembly; with the open-ended challenges brought on by the new set-up all over the world and at the Center, fully aware that we are in a particular moment of our history that requires openness, faith and renewed commitment.

In this meeting of the General Council we wanted above all to listen to Chiara, to her charism that is alive today in her children, to deepen a specific theme and to look ahead according to what the Holy Spirit would suggest to us. March 14 was also a “blessed” day to begin our retreat. Together with the Roman



Mariapolis and the local communities of Rome, with whom we celebrated the Eucharist on that day, we were all united with all the people of Chiara in the world, and this set the tone for us to live this retreat with and for the Movement.

This has helped us even more to have a greater awareness of the immense gift of the charism, with the call to live for unity that is common to all of us of the Movement».

Foto in alto. Il Consiglio Generale in visita a Tivoli

***You deepened the vocations of the Movement, in the common vocation to unity. Why all this attention on this topic?***

«We cannot hide the fact that generally in the various branches the number of vocations to the Movement are decreasing. We must first of all take this situation from the hands of God, and then interrogate ourselves and launch ourselves to do our part better. Certainly – and we clearly we told this to one another – it is God who calls. Our part consists in primarily bearing witness to the beauty of the vocations through our life and to maintain that atmosphere of unity, that presence of Jesus in the midst in all the realities of the Movement, that will favour the understanding and the personal response of the one who is called to our family.

In the last Assembly it was the wish that the persons of the Movement could go out (each one with the mission inherent in one's own vocation), together (with the entire family of the Movement and with all those who live with us for universal brotherhood), suitably prepared (which means aware of our identity and formed so as to be able to explain and share one's own life through facts and words, faithful to the original source, to the aim of the charism and to the Holy Spirit). This does not mean that we look at ourselves, but that we must understand how to live better today these particular vocations that allow us to go towards any person in any social context».

***You spoke of the challenges that we are living. What are some of the principal ones?***

«After a brief analysis on the decrease of religious vocations, above all in the western cultures and in particular in Europe, we worked on the main challenges that the Movement has to face: to overcome the fragmentary nature and to favour the collaboration on all levels, the better incarnate concretely the



Friederike e Angel con Emmaus e Jesús

light of the charism, to deepen inculturation and to take on dialogue as our way of life, to encourage a new sowing of the ideal, to make an in-depth study of our formation courses and to improve the support and guidance of members, to appreciate and grasp even more the potentialities of the local communities and the little towns...

As a premise, Emmaus and Jesús reiterated the value of personal and communitarian witness, in the sense that we have been given a charism which, if we remain faithful to Jesus and be living Word, this is what radiates. And thus, in the same way that we were attracted, those thirsting for unity will come and follow Jesus, through the Movement so as to participate in the building of a united world. Many times, Chiara gave the example of the first Christian communities who lived in a world that was certainly not easier than our world today; and so there should be no fears that stop us, even the most difficult and painful experiences.

Regarding what each one of us can do, Emmaus asked us to believe more in unity and to be more proactive in taking the inspirations that God is giving us. She reminded us that fruits

come from a sincere and profound love for Jesus Forsaken that bring us to build together those spaces of fraternity where Love can give an answer to every challenge».



*We imagine that this has been an occasion to deepen the unity at the heart of the Movement. What has been your experience?*

«When we were preparing our “retreat”, Emmaus specified that we must not consider this week as a spiritual retreat – this is something that each one should do in his or her own branch – but rather, it is a meeting to “work in unity”. A retreat, yes, in the sense that we go to a secluded place with Jesus in the midst, as much as possible away from external influences, so as to work together. On this basis it was first and foremost an experience of unity in the search for how to live the Movement today as we go towards the future.

In the group work and in the dialogue during the plenary sessions, which did not lack in certain moments that required an extra effort from all of us and also a renewed commitment, we tried to welcome and value the contribution of each one in an atmosphere of great openness and sincerity. What emerged was not only a great richness of experiences and reflections, but also concrete paths for the future. The moments of special profoundness were the meditations on the vocation of the Movement as presented in the texts of *Paradise '49* and the visit to Tivoli, the birth city of Foco, where we rediscovered the greatness and timeliness of his design.

Of great importance was the meditation on the last day on the lesson of Chiara with the Abbà School on the 18th of September 2004, wherein she spoke in a stupendous manner of the design of the Movement also in the period after her. Then the conclusions of Emmaus and Jesús followed, based on the results of our work, in full harmony, according to the views of the participants, with the vision that was just expressed by Chiara. These days have given us a great joy and much hope in our hearts and they were a strong confirmation that it is Jesus who is bringing ahead the Movement».

*prepared by the editorial board*

## The Church needs the charism of unity

**The President of the Pontifical Council for the laity wrote to Emmaus Maria Voce and Jesús Morán in answer to one of their letters after their trip to India**

Vatican, 7 april 2016

Kind Doctor,  
Reverend Father Jesús,

I received Your very much welcome letter dated March 8 wherein, together with your Easter greetings, You informed me of Your recent visit to the community of the Focolare Movement in India.

I was happy to know of the many fruits that the Ideal of unity continues to bring in the world, among peoples of different cultures or other religions. The fecundity of a charism does not cease to surprise us and invites us to continually thank God because He enriches His Church with a multiplicity of gifts. And on this occasion, I would also like to express gratitude for the life of Chiara, for her enthusiasm for the things of God, for her «art of loving», of which she herself was an example. I am certain that, in these 8 years since the day of her departure for Heaven, Chiara has continued to be beside each one of you to support you, in the midst of the inevitable difficulties, in the journey of the Work of Mary. Therefore bring ahead with courage the flame of the charism of the Movement, a charism which the Church greatly needs.

I would like to assure you that I will remember all the members of the Movement spread all over the world. I greet You cordially in the Lord.

Stanisław Card. Ryłko  
*President*

## A look at the city

# Oncity networks of light to inhabit the planet

From April 1 to 3 at Castel Gandolfo, an experiment of working «together»

You would need a scooter! Walking through the long corridors and wide venues of the Mariapolis Center in Castel Gandolfo is no joke. Especially during these days, when the requests are so varied, coming from the five Continents and which requires you to go up and down throughout the whole Center just to meet these requests: there are those who ask for a copy of the experience that was just shared, others who would like to share their experience in their city, and also those who have lost some valuables and would like to find it, others who have particular needs regarding accommodation, or someone who didn't understand the announcement. But for everyone there is an answer, or at least we hope there is one!

On the other hand, here it is like living in a city: «Oncity-networks of light to inhabit the planet» became more and more like a temporary miniature metropolis, where you can find everything: from the «city square» (the stage), to the various *locations* of the Mariapolis Center, the «streets» which allowed everyone to walk, to meet and to live these days "to the max" of one's own possibilities. Backstage, like tiny ants who never stop working, were the members and workers of the reality that organized this



international event: New Humanity Movement, Auw, Youth for a United World. We decided to work together, putting aside some perplexities, some habits that are more or less deep-rooted, in order to welcome the challenges that the world is throwing at us in different ways, and to work more in synergy. Certainly, everything seemed easy in the beginning, and instead working with the others was a challenge that called out to us as the project gradually took shape and went ahead.

Together. A beautiful word, especially for us who live of the communion with one another. It could almost be taken for granted. And instead this wasn't so, at least in this phase where we realized that we still had much to learn, after many years of working a bit distinct from each other, we had to recover that dimension of family, of unity, of being and working together, an attitude which then bore fruit in time, also in terms of ideas, of coordination, where everything was truly of everyone, and where the responsibilities were shared, each one taking care of the task of the other and viceversa.

Since the beginning it was clear that before doing anything, it was necessary to look at





each other in the eyes: we were not yet used to sitting around a table and to coordinate our actions, trusting each other. We first looked for this warmth, the good feeling from a hug that someone in your family gives you when you need it, engaging in dialogue with respect and humility, to give God the possibility of giving us a sign, of giving us a new light in this work that we are doing for the Movement.

Concretely this meant that we had to enter into the mind and thoughts of the other, personally but also as realities of the Movement in dialogue with one another, so as to be able to understand the different needs, maybe even taking a step backward so as to allow the other the freedom to express and give himself. It is only with this attitude that the most interesting ideas were born also for the programme and its realization.

The second step was to ask ourselves: «Who are we looking at? Who are the recipients of "Oncity"?» Our eyes turned to the geographical and existential peripheries, to the people who are suffering, to those in search of an answer: «Oncity» would like to be this too, a breath of fresh air, an encouragement to not give up and to go ahead.

The third step: to act consequently, and therefore to build a «modular» programme for the 900 participants, made up of four plenary sessions, 64 working groups, four specific seminars specific for a total of 46 interventions

simultaneously translated in 16 languages. We raised the antennas of our city, intercepting the needs of the people, the dramas they are living, but also the great possibilities offered by our times and the conquests in the field of many of our cities in the world; conquests which, if shared, could become a resource for others. To assist in «forming a network» among those who work in the same territory and on the same challenges, seemed like the most useful

thing in order to give concrete and focused answers, and above all to offer a method which can be imitated in the cities. The participants, thus lost their identification with their respective persons or branch who had invited them, and everyone made the experience of having just one identity, that of the Movement as one.



On Sunday, April 3, the network began to take shape in the different territories: the international convention ended but the building of the «network» of cities began. The prospects are broad and the conclusions presented on-stage showed the special fascination with the task ahead of us: the city, in fact, can be seen, in its essence, as the result of an interweaving of relationships among people linked to each other for reasons of work, of being in the same neighborhood, of sharing their free time together. At the same time, adopting a more macro view, extending to the world, the city



can be seen as a point of encounter, a «knot» – using the typical language of the proposed network – among the many threads, or better still, among the many relationships that make up a wider network, the global society, that extends to the whole world.

What is our place in this network? Emmaus and Jesús reminded us of this, when they participated in the final plenary session; a moment that can be summarized as an invitation to make that reciprocal love emerge which is already present in the various ambits of the city: a love that in certain cases links two or more persons, but which must emerge, it must be borne witness to: the challenge then is to recognize this widespread presence of these people of fraternity in the world, encouraging and supporting «*globalization of good*», that is the motor for change and renewal.

The importance of the quality of the bonds, on the macro and micro levels was highlighted; these bonds that we can create by building fraternity everywhere and optimizing the instruments that we have in our hands. First among all is the «United World Project», which having started as a project of the youth is now becoming more and more a project of the Movement,

that is turning out to be a privileged means for the exchange of experiences, projects, working methodologies from all parts of the globe.

Angela, from Uganda, shared with us her impression that expresses quite well the importance of these days: «This is the first time for me to participate in this kind of meeting but I am truly impressed by Chiara's Movement. Look! The whole world is here to bear witness that love and unity generate peace in the world. Certainly it is not easy, *Jesus Forsaken* is part of the life of humanity but here I can see that it



is possible, precisely in looking at this suffering of the world, we can heal it with unity and love. I leave encouraged to go back home and to do my best!».

Reading this and other impressions, one can understand that in the end, it was better not to have had that scooter and instead, walking slowly along the corridors helped us: it did us good to wait without rushing, to wait for a result without wanting it immediately: certainly to walk together means also to risk losing something, and we went slowly for certain aspects; but today, the many positive impressions push us not only to express our gratitude for all that we have experienced, as we treasure the many suggestions we received, we will think about how to improve in the future. Because this is just the beginning of our journey together...

Paolo Balduzzi





## Adherents

# Free and active

**Interview of Gloria Duarte and Tim King, persons responsible for the aspect of «Witness and irradiation»**

The adherents have existed in the Movement ever since its birth, mixed among the 500 persons often cited in the story of the Ideal as those who made up the first community of Trent. A small group destined to become in time, a multitude. The adherents are attracted to the charism of unity, much more than to the structure of the Movement, a patrimony that they received intact from Chiara and that they, in freedom and with the efficiency that is their characteristic, live and transmit this around them. Most of them are lay people, of all ages, nations and social conditions, from – all kinds of professions and states of life. As the Movement developed, there are now also adherents from various Churches, followers of other religions, men and women of non-religious convictions. All share a unique characteristic: their commitment to building a more united world.

*The reality of the adherents is sometimes considered as a «temporary» reality before making a choice to be part of a branch of the Movement. Is this so?*

«Among the adherents there are those who from their very first contact with the Movement have understood that their place in it is precisely with the adherents. Others have realized this after having made, years before, an experience as a gen or in one of the branches of the Movement. Others are here to discover in which branch of the Opera God is waiting for them, or they would like to remain until they have embraced a particular state in life (for ex. matrimony) and then to insert themselves in that branch which is more suited to them.

But one thing is certain: the adherents are an essential part of the Movement. Without them the Movement would not be itself. And they are happy to feel themselves – and they really are – “in” the Movement. Just as the spirituality belongs to them so do the dialogues and its objectives».

*What is their contribution to the life of the Movement in its various expressions and in the local communities?*

«The need of the adherents to feel free from all structures, is not a contradiction to their desire to commit themselves: and so they too become “locomotives”, in bringing ahead the most varied actions which the

Focolare Movement organizes in the different areas, both in the ecclesial and social fields. Their concreteness makes them protagonists in the spread of the publications and periodicals of the Movement, they are active in the inundations, diligent members of the local communities of which sometimes they are the animators. Often they are the generous channels of Providence in supporting the Economy of Communion and our social actions, personally or by raising the awareness of others».

### *How are they formed?*

«They draw nourishment from the meetings or congresses made precisely for them, in the Zones or at the Center, from the meetings of the local communities or also by freely going to the nearest focolare center. The world of the adherents is variegated and with broad horizons, which the Movement can and would like to count on because of their evangelical choice that transforms their life and which radiates to the world around them».

## The 2016 Congresses in Castel Gandolfo

This year too, according to tradition, two Congresses for adherents were held, due to the many requests from all over the world. The first (21 – 23 January) wherein the majority of participants were from Europe, while that of March 3 to 5, had a greater participation from the continents, with more than 30 countries represented.

This year, the programme, similar for both but personalized according to the participants, reflected the prospects of the Movement with the theme on Unity as the central point and the deepening of the topic on Communication as an instrument for «*That all may be one*». They also spoke about «*Together for Europe*» and our dialogues, particularly the ecumenical one. Among the different experiences presented, the one that caused the most impact was about the welcoming of migrants and the social projects of the Movement especially in the Middle East and in Latin America. Life stories of commitment that reinforced in the



participants the awareness that a better world is possible. Many appreciated also the space dedicated to group meetings, where they expressed the joy experienced and the importance of these Congresses at the Center to «recharge the batteries» and to go back to the Zones more sensitive to and more ready to give themselves to the others. The message of Emmaus was important, where she said among other things: «*Remember that I am always with you! We are called to love for unity in every moment of our life so that God among us can enlighten, console, heal, offer concrete and courageous answers to the sufferings of humanity*». As she thanked them for all that they have been doing she added, may «*2016 be rich in fruits of mercy and the true joy that comes from unity*». *a e della gioia vera che scaturisce dall'unità*».

# Our experience in the heart of the Movement

*Up to 2014 you were delegates of the Zone, then, elected by the Assembly, you became central Councilors. How are you living this new page of your life?*

«We found ourselves serving the whole Movement – Tim shared – in what was for us an unexpected way, that of promoting its growth, its going “out”. A task that requires first of all that we live that reciprocal love which, as the Gospel says, gives witness and becomes irradiation. At the thought that before, this aspect was followed by Graziella De Luca and Antonio Petrilli, we can only hope for the grace of Jesus in our midst. For our part we try to put all of ourself and all that we have received in this service. For example, in my case, being British, I can use my native language which is fast becoming the universal instrument of sharing the Ideal; having lived in a Zone which is not numerically big, I can understand the difficulties of the smaller Zones; but most of all I can bear witness to the great value of the persons of various Churches for the Movement.

Gloria continued: «I come from a flourishing Zone, southeast Brazil, with many



© Enrica Aceti

Gloria Duarte e Tim King, responsabili per l'aspetto  
«Testimonianza e irradiazione»

vocations to all the branches of the Movement, even among the youth. I bring within me the enthusiasm of my people and the sprint to make Chiara's dream “to bring the world to God in my arms” a reality as a Movement». «Aside from having the reaponsibility for the adherents and out typical manifestations such as the Day Meetings and the Mariapolises – she continued – we also follow the activities of the Movement “going out”: its big manifestations, the Gen Rosso and the Gen Verde... But our characteristic service as “colors”, is that of providing the support that the Center of the Movement gives to the various branches or agencies that have the direct responsibility for these events».

*Prepared by the editorial board*





## Invest in formation, invest in the future

«On a journey: educate oneself in order to educate others» is the title of the international school held at Castel Gandolfo for the animators, educators and assistants of children and teens

«The function of the assistants is very delicate, he or she must be a person who is able to give his or her life for those entrusted to him or her. We, together must help these younger generations [...] to achieve the design that God has on them, in the measure with which each one of us has put God as the basis of our life». These words, shared some years ago by Marco Tecilla (the first focolarino), express very well some of the characteristics of the formator which emerged during the recent international school which had as its objective that of offering courses of formation to animators, educators and assistants of children and teens in the light of the educational guidelines that arise from the charism of unity. There were more than 400 participants, from 39 Countries of the five continents, coming from the most diverse ages, experiences, formation and belonging to the various branches of the Movement.

Organized by the gen3 centers, the Teens for unity, gen4, secretariats of the Parish and Diocesan Movements in collaboration with Auw, the school showed, since its preparation, that it was an occasion to work in synergy for a better awareness of the formative demands of the various branches and movements of the Focolare and the sharing of the respective educational courses.



The themes of the round-table discussions moderated by experts were enriched by the contributions from the audience: an open microphone was available for a communion of experiences in the field, open-ended questions so that together answers and paths of action could be found.

Friederike Koller and Angel Bartol, central delegates, opened the proceedings, starting from the guidelines that emerged during the Assembly 2014, and underlined what has emerged in this field which is the validity of «investing in the formation of teens and children by supporting educational projects, of irradiation and service prepared with them» in the hope of «increasing the collaboration among all the realities of the new generations on the local, national and international levels». A school therefore to concretize these prospects. And who is our model? «Jesus, the teacher par

excellence, whom we strive to keep alive in us and among us».

«This school is an investment for the future» said Mons. Vincenzo Zani, secretary of the Congregation for Catholic Education, who offered some fundamental coordinates on education starting from the original and specific approach of Chiara Lubich and drawing from the thoughts of Pope Francis.

The contribution of Araceli del Pozo Armentia, focalarina and professor at the Sophia University Institute, made a reference to the school of Jesus the Teacher, analyzing the person-relationship in the thoughts of Chiara Lubich, she outlined a few traits in the profile of an educator who is nourished by the charism of unity.



The themes regarding the learning community and an education towards the difficult were very interesting, as they were presented during the roundtable discussions and entrusted respectively to Teresa Boi, member of the Abbà School in the field of education and to Patrizia (Perla) Bertoncello and Riccardo Bosi, focalarini with a rich patrimony of experiences with teens and children.

The interventions of the Aww brought the attention to the concept of the «Global person», the *identikit* of the man and woman that we would like to be and to form, as defined by Chiara in the famous theme to the gen of July 1972, in which she affirmed the need for «*young people to be formed [...] with a world mentality*».

In the afternoon sessions, time was allotted to deepen certain specific topics regarding children and teens and also workshops with practical experiences where the pedagogic values were explained.

A day was dedicated to separate meetings for the various realities that organized the meeting, allowing for much dialogue, a presentation of ongoing projects and on future ones: such as a triannual programme of formation for gen3, Teens for unity; for the gen4 a formation course for the assistants; for the Parish and Diocesan Movements they focused on the formation to the Ideal of unity of children and teens in the parishes.

This was a school that many hoped would be continued in the Zones: so as to realize some of the guidelines that emerged during the workshops; for the formation of the other animators and assistants, bringing to life concretely on the local level, also the inspirations that were gathered in these days; to continue the synergy at the Center and in the Zones by increasing also the contribution of the youth and of the families.

You can find the materials of the school in:  
<http://incammino2016doc.tumblr.com/>  
password: 2016incammino



# New Families Regenerated by Love

**A meeting for those separated and  
in a new relationship**

A welcome cocktail at the Mariapolis Center of Castel Gandolfo was what greeted the eighty participants coming from Spain, France, Hungary, Italy, Mexico and Costa Rica. The dinner together was then the occasion to get to know each other and to start a dialogue.



In this way an atmosphere of welcome and reciprocal trust was created among all, a precious foundation to develop in the coming days a specific thematic course: from knowing that one is loved to loving the others, in the family and in the various ambits of life, striving to perfect the ability to listen and to dialogue as a couple. The talk of Chiara in Malta in 1999 was very enlightening, wherein she spoke of the Father, and which entered profoundly in the hearts of the all those present, making them rediscover the truth about the unconditional love of God for each of his children. Other points of light: the «art of loving», pearl of the Charim, and the experiences of couples and persons present, shared with great humility and sincerity, telling



of their sufferings and the suspense, but also of the joy of reconciliation with oneself and with the others.

The intervention of Fr. Paolo Gentili, director of the Office of Family Pastoral Work of the Italian Bishops' Conference, was very much appreciated, wherein he transmitted the solicitude and the mercy of Pope Francis for those who have experienced failure in one's own family relationships, showing the way of open acceptance and welcome in the Church (see box). The art works of Michel Pochet, a focolarino painter «spoke» also of mercy, which he himself presented. The prayer vigil, accompanied by the choir of the Roman Mariapolis was also an intense moment, as well as the kissing of the crucifix, the same one that Chiara Lubich had in front of her way back in '43, as she prayed while preparing to consecrate herself to God: a touching experience presented by Doni Fratta, focolarina who had lived for a long time beside her.

The Sunday Mass, prepared with great care together with some of the participants, was celebrated by Fr. Natale Monza, priest focolarino



## From the apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia* of Pope Francis

“... the baptized who are divorced and civilly remarried need to be more fully integrated into Christian community. [...] The logic of integration is the key to their pastoral care, a care which would allow them not only to realize that they belong to the Church as the body of Christ, but also to know that they can have a joyful and fruitful experience in it. They are baptized; they are brothers and sisters; the Holy Spirit pours into their hearts gifts and talents for the good of all. Their participation can be expressed in different ecclesial services [...] the various forms of exclusion currently practised in the liturgical, pastoral, educational and institutional framework [...] able to live and grow in the Church and experience her as a mother who welcomes them always, who takes care of them with affection and encourages them along the path of life and the Gospel. (AL 8,299)

who was present for the entire programme. At the moment of Holy Communion he invited all those who could not receive the Eucharist to unite themselves more closely to Jesus Forsaken and to come just the same to the altar to receive a blessing. A couple said: «We have only two words in our heart that we have experienced during these days: Love, when we received the words of the liturgy translated into

our language so that we could follow it better; Unity, while we were lining up with the others coming back from the blessing, we cried, but then we realized that the others who were able to receive the Eucharist were also crying with us».

The final impressions and greeting, with the commitment to keep alive the relationships of fraternity built, bore witness to the changes that had taken place: «This is the third time I come here – one of the participants said. At my first meeting I was full of anger but then I became a bit more peaceful; on my second meeting I understood that I had to say my “yes” and obey... In this meeting I felt that my suffering was transformed into a greater capacity to love». Another said: «I was touched to hear that from the “last” we could and must become the “first” together with all the others and this is what I want to continue to cultivate within me: to not allow myself to auto-marginalize, but to open myself up to God more and more, in a daily journey of deepening the Word and of striving to live it together with others».

Those who accompanied them coming from the Zones stayed a day longer at the Mariapolis Center to deepen, with the help of some experts, themes and methodologies to support these couples who are in new relationships. In the rich dialogue that followed, many questions emerged that led to the clarification of doubts and difficulties, above all to the sharing of positive experiences. The common note was the passion for this special face of Jesus Forsaken in the drive to continue in this service of the Movement for a reality that today is among those in greatest need of help.

*prepared by the New Families  
international secretariat*



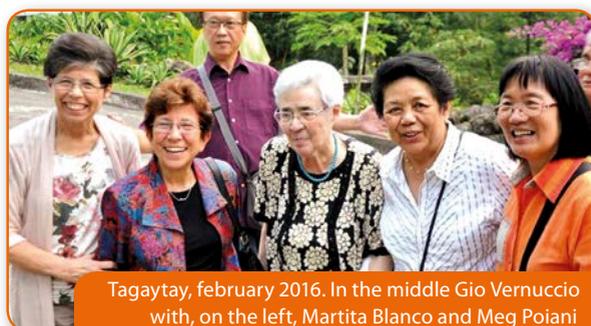


## Asia, a great resource

**This year the fiftieth anniversary of the arrival of the Ideal of unity in Asia and Oceania was commemorated. The testimonies of Giò Vernuccio and Silvio Daneo, among the first focolarini who arrived in those continents**

In February of 1966 three focolarine and two focolarini landed for the first time in Manila (Philippines). From there, in just a short time, the Ideal of unity began to spread, reaching almost the entire Asian continent, Oceania and the Pacific islands. There were many events to commemorate that day. Emmaus Maria Voce and Jesús Morán sent a message of greeting. Emmaus recalled, among other things, what Chiara said in 1982: *«One of the joys that I have experienced during this rather quick trip to the Asian zones, is that of seeing how seriously they immediately put into practice what has been said»*. Jesús talking of Asia and its characteristics affirmed: *«Your openness to dialogue is a precious experience to bring ahead with determination and faith. In this sense we consider the Movement in Asia as a great resource for the Church and for society, and clearly also for us»*.

In two of the events held last February, one in the Mariapolis Peace of Tagaytay and one in Manila, the following also participated: Giò Vernuccio, Silvio Daneo, Martita Blanco, Giacomo Pellizzari, Fr. Victor Agius and Meg Poiani who were in Asia during those first



Tagaytay, February 2016. In the middle Giò Vernuccio with, on the left, Martita Blanco and Meg Poiani

years. Also present were Antonella Liguori and Roberto Catalano, councilors at the Center for the Big Zone of Asia, together with more than a thousand people coming from all over the Philippines, Japan, Korea, China, Thailand, Myanmar, Vietnam, Laos, Indonesia and Australia.

***Giò, you have just returned from Asia where you participated in the celebrations for the fiftieth. What is your impression?***

So much unity among everyone! Not that this is something new, but that it has remained like this also today, in the midst of many changes in the situation. I saw a great enthusiasm in meeting one another, after so many years, with Silvio Daneo, with me and with all those who were present. My impression is that of a great joy for the gift of God that was the Ideal of unity in that continent. I saw people who are happy.



And this said everything. Looking at the various realities of the little town of Tagaytay, I can say that everything has gone ahead along the line that Chiara had given us, ahead in the way she would have wanted. Precisely during those days while I was there, like a miracle, we could see the beginnings of the realization of the church for the little town that Chiara had entrusted to me as the first thing to do!

***You were in Asia for 43 years. When did the imaginative love of God surprised you the most?***

I was never surprised. I remember that I was just a year in Asia when, in the spring of '67, I had the possibility of meeting Chiara in Switzerland and I gave her a long, spontaneous update of all that had happened. «*Look Giò – she said at the end – there is no other zone like this one that has given me the impression that it was Mary who did everything*». Mary! Who else if not Her? Just think of the vastness of Asia, of the complexiaiteis of its culture, the languages... there were just five of us who left fifty years ago: Guido Mirti (Cengia), one of the first focolarinos of Rome, Silvio Daneo, a young focolarino from Turin with whom I had shared the experience in the USA and where we also learned how to speak English, Ednara Tabosa (Doni) and Magdalena Brandao (Grazie) both not even twenty years old, who had just finished a year at the nascent school of formation



Silvio Daneo, on the left with Carlo Gentile

of Grottaferrata (Rome). In our heart was the desire for «*That all may be one*» and the certainty that Jesus among us would have conquered the continent. Yes, it was Mary who did everything. I was always very much convinced of this. She and no one else. And today, finding myself once again in Asia in the midst of peoples coming from two continents, I could see this reality, I could touch it in the hearts of all those present: everything was the fruit of Her love and the faithfulness of many in all these years.

***Silvio, returning to Asia fifty years after that first trip that brought you there, what touched you the most?***

During the Event in Tagaytay, with more than 1200 persons, I went back in time. It was the same month, fifty years ago, that I arrived in Asia. Back then I was still a young man of twenty four. Even if we started in the Philippines, God brought us, from the very beginning, to many other countries. I remember that already during the trip from Rome to Manila, we had stop-overs in Pakistan, in Burma (Myanmar), in Thailand. Everywhere they told us: «*When will you open the focolare center?*». And we didn't even reach Manila yet! Today, seeing the delegations from all these nations, it means that, now, there is the Work of Mary developed there. Chiara also was very much present among everyone and everywhere, even if many have never seen her personally. I asked myself: «*But who could have*

*done something like this?*». Not even for an instance can we think that it was us, it is obviously the work of God. And so, what is it that we did then? A comparison came to my mind. If one were to go and see the Mona Lisa of Leonardo or the Pietà of



Chiara Lubich (at the center)  
with Fr. Pasquale Foresi,  
Igino Giordani and Ginetta Calliari  
in Fatima in 1955



# Portugal

## A land loved by Mary

**The Focolare Movement in Portugal  
is 50 years old. The memories of the  
first witnesses and the vitality of the  
Movement today**

Michelangelo no one would ask what scalpel the artist used or whatever happened to the brush used to make the final touches. You look at the masterpiece, you are enchanted, you give glory to God and, thinking of the author of everything, we say: «What a marvelous work of art!». And so, in front of all the people of the Movement in Asia, all I can say is: «What is the masterpiece? It is you!». I thank God for having had the privilege of being that brush without which the work of art could not have been realized. For me, as for many others, I had an extraordinary adventure which allowed me to be able to tell God: «Thank you for having used me as a humble instrument, maybe a little hesitant, not so docile, but the masterpiece was made by You».

***The story of these fifty years  
has recently been gathered in a book  
written in English and which will be  
shortly published also in Italian.***

Yes, the title is *My life across the oceans*, in Italian it will be *Una vita tra quattro mari*, because it recalls the phrase of Confucius: «Four seas, one family». It is the story of Giò and mine in the USA and then in Asia together with Cengia. The book is made up of many experiences that show God's creativity and his inventions! And from those pages one can understand very well how we were truly just His instruments.

*Lisa Innocenti*

21 February 1966: under a torrential rain, Conceição Lins and Gehilda Cavalcanti, Brazilian focolarine, with the freshness of their 24 years, arrived by train in Lisbon to open the focolare. Eletta Fornaro, Italian focolarina who arrived from Spain, was there to welcome them. A small rented room, a few people and a question: «Are you ready for everything? Here there is only Jesus Forsaken!». Chiara wanted to have a focolare there out of love for the Madonna of Fatima who «has a lot to do with us». It will be «*the focolare of Mary*», she said. It was planned to open the focolare in Madrid but unexpectedly Chiara changed it to Lisbon, the point of arrival and departure of the Brazilian focolarini, in Europe.

And it is because of the love of Chiara for the Madonna of Fatima that we are happy to know that the story of the Ideal in Portugal had its origins in '55 when Chiara with Fr. Foresi and Foco came to visit Fatima.

Conceição and Gehilda looked for a house and for jobs. A month later, in a small apartment

Portuguese and Spanish Gen at the Gen Congress  
of June 1968 in Rocca di Papa



without any furniture, they shared: «One day some young girls came. One of them exclaimed: "How marvelous! This house is so different from the others. There is something here. One can breathe, there is so much peace!"».

A breath which spread rapidly: from the north of Portugal up to its islands. Life that spoke of an encounter with God, of a choice: «... people discovered Christianity: an interior call to a profound conversion».

With enthusiasm they prepared to participate in the Mariapolis of Ávila, in Spain. But then Portugal found itself in the midst of a full-blown

the focolare and today are spread in all the five continents; men and women Volunteers who from the very beginning lauded themselves at the service of God to transform the world; entire families, priests, religious men and women...

Abundant life, concretized with the birth of the Little town Arco-Íris and the development of the communities all over Portugal. A reality that pushes us to celebrate, to be grateful and to look ahead.

In October 2015, with the applause of 800 persons reunited for the updating, the logo for 50<sup>o</sup> anniversary was presented and the cel-



colonial war and the 40 young people who were supposed to participate were prohibited by the police to leave the country. When Chiara knew about it she proposed to have a Mariapolis in Portugal, even just for the sake of these 40 young people. So in October of '66, the first Mariapolis was held in Fatima, with around 100 people, among whom was a young girl from the Azores. In '67 the men's focolare was opened in Lisbon.

The first gen are born, a sign of the vitality of the youth who adhere to a committed life for «*That all may be one*».

In '68, at the Mariapolis Center of Rocca di Papa a Portuguese religious, Sr. Cecilia Siqueira, arrived with a group of students from her college. There Chiara gave a Word of life for Portugal: «Have faith, I have won the world» (*Jn, 16, 33*), adding: «*My Immaculate Heart will triumph in the end*».

Those were the beginnings of a story that is interwoven with personal stories: youth who chose to live for a united world, among whom around 100 of them leave everything to enter

celebratory events were started. In what way can we celebrate? Different ideas take shape and are realized here and there: parties, meetings, moments of prayer. Gathering the life that has been sown in this «land of Blessed Mary» many of those who had met the Ideal start to return. *Cidade Nova* represents the story of one of the realities of the Movement. There is a stamp of celebration in every meeting!

The life of the youth in these fifty years, shared through songs and choreographies performed by those who were part of the gen bands throughout the years, brought an explosion of wonder and amazement during the last evening of the gen congress 2016. The joy of the gen2 today is a stimulus for the «antique gen», and provokes a desire to have once again that sprint of the early times, while the «new ones», because of the depth of the past history, already feel that they are reinforced in their present responsibilities.

There was also a celebration on February 21, where those who first fell in love with the great Ideal of Chiara that she gave to many hearts,

were its witnesses; the celebration on March 13 spoke of «Chiara Lubich – dialogue and peace», and where two journalists and the President of the Commission on Justice and Peace highlighted her life that is continuing to be realized today.

Dialogue with culture, in the conferences in Lisbon entitled «*Pensar Portugal Atual*» (Thinking of Portugal Today), first with Professor Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa, then elected President of the Republic. Four conferences were held and another four are still being planned for October, also with the participation of the Patriarch of Lisbon, Card. Manuel José Macário do Nascimento Clemente. The commemorations of the 50° will conclude in November in Fatima, with the whole Movement, the Church and different civil and religious personalities. It will be done with Mary, who in the Movement has made us one body capable of generating light in a rainbow of life. In faithfulness to the Charism we want to be, just as Chiara has said once, «*a tangible sign of the predilection of Mary for the Portuguese people*».

Teresa Guedes, Paulo Melo

## Lithuania Prudence, wisdom and courage

**Twenty five years ago the opening of the first focolare in Vilnius: an occasion to recall the story of the arrival of the Ideal of unity in the Balkan Republic**

A triple celebration took place on March 13 in the priests' seminary of Vilnius that welcomed around 180 members and friends of the Movement reunited for the anniversary of Chiara Lubich's departure for Heaven, for the 25 years since the opening of the first focolare in Lithuania and to greet Nico Tros, a Dutch focolarino, who after twenty years was leaving Lithuania to go to the ecumenical town of Ottmaring in Germany.

It was a day of family together with the Cardinal of Vilnius, A. J. Backis, Bishop E. Bartulis, the rector of the seminary Hans-Friedrich Fischer, the friends of Communion and Liberation and the community of Faith and Light. You could feel the joy of being one family who grew up together and who continues to grow everyday. Today in Vilnius there are two women's focolares and one men's focolare, which are entrusted with Lithuania, Lettonia and Estonia.

We began with a solemn and well-participated Mass and concluded with fireworks on a cake. There were also moments of meditation and sharing of experiences, of smiles and emotions. We recalled some of the important steps in the spread of the ideal of unity in Lithuania. We remembered for example, the historic meeting in 1967 in the then Czechoslovakia between a Lithuanian orthodontist, Aldona Lapiskiė, and Pavol Ferko who would later become a married focolarino. Pavol, often seeing Aldona in church, shared with her the story of the Ideal of unity that he had recently encountered, meeting her in a

One of the first Mariapolises in the forest of Lithuania





park for security reasons. After that first meeting, many others followed. Aldona was very much impressed because she saw the possibility of living the Gospel even in a Country like Lithuania where there was a totally anti-religious regime. She and her husband later became the point of reference for the persons of the nascent Movement in this land.

Another apostle of the Ideal of unity in Lithuania was Sr. Birute Gucaite of the congregation of Jesus Eucharist. In the '80s Hans-Friedrich Fischer of the Oratory of Leipzig, a priest who is now the rector of the seminary of Vilnius, requested to invite Andrea Pasioka, focolarina from the former East Germany, to Vilnius. Through her, Sr. Birute came to know the Movement and immediately the following year she made a trip to the focolare in East Germany. She got to know Fr. Jonas Lauriunas ver well, a Jesuit and the parish priest of a Lithuanina village situated in the forest. He was considered as a spiritual authority in Lithuania and, in order to limit his activities, the secret police forced him to live outside the city. A man of the church who was very open and courageous, he willingly

welcomed the proposal to receive the Word of life every month from Berlin (Germany), which was then translated into Lithuanian, typewritten into many copies, thanks to the use of carbon paper, and then sent to all those who wanted to live it. This is how a small group was formed, wherein every occasion was good in order to meet with one another, to share and to live the newly encountered Ideal together. They needed prudence, wisdom and courage, which was never lacking, especially in Sr. Birute.

And it was precisely her family which welcomed the first focolare in Vilnius in February '91, made up of two German focolarine: Christina



Warmbier and Ute Ihl. In Vilnius there was also since '88, Giuseppe (Clari) Santanchè, an Italian focolarino who worked as a doctor and taught a new method of anesthesiology at the university hospital. And from '91 another phase of the Movement in Lithuania started. The Country was taking its first steps in freedom after almost fifty years of Soviet rule, where religious practice was prohibited and the Catholic Church was forced to live and work in silence. An interesting story that was welcomed in a hall where, seated beside one another were those who, twenty five years ago were living the Ideal of unity even before the arrival of the focolare and... those who twenty five years ago were not even born yet!

*Vilma Banyte*



## Towards Munich 2016

# The gift of Europe to the world today

The appointment for «Together for Europe» is fast approaching and it will be held in Munich of Baviera on June 30 to July 2. A rich journey full of prospects for the future of the «old continent»

Last November, Movements and Communities of «Together for Europe» (TfE) were already working on the preparations for «Munich 2016» at the Little town of Marienkroon, in Holland when the attacks in Paris took place. This fact pushed them to publicly declare the will to intensify their commitment to the values of Europe and of peace; a commitment that has become more urgent due to the subsequent terrorist attacks in Brussels and the drama of the refugees that is happening at the gates of the Continent.

Whoever has encountered «Together for Europe» knows very well that this is not just an event, but a journey which began in 1999, and is going ahead and spreading, involving an ever greater number of Movements and Communities from different Churches and Christian communities. There are more than 300 of them in the various countries to adhere to the 2016 edition that will be held in Munich of Baviera, Germany, at the end of June. The borders of «Together for Europe», clearly don't coincide with those of the European Union, but with that of the European continent, from the Atlantic to the Urals.

There are those who speak of a «spirit of togetherness», almost like a way of conceiving relationships that are at the basis and which characterize all those who are making this experience. An experience that goes beyond the European continent and produces significant fruits also in Countries beyond the ocean.

Walking along the road towards «Munich 2016» the countries of Eastern Europe are convincingly involved. This is a sign that working together also brings together the gifts that the various charisms can offer to meet the growing needs and the contradictions that the Continent finds itself in and has to face.

*«We are asking all the Christians of Eastern and Western Europe to unite so as to bear witness to Christ and to the Gospel, so that Europe can preserve its soul formed by two thousand years of Christian tradition»<sup>1</sup>,*

<sup>1</sup> Cuba, 12 febbraio 2016. Dichiarazione comune di Papa Francesco e del Patriarca Kirill di Mosca e di tutta la Russia, n. 16



Rome, April 6-7, 2016. The Steering Committee of «Together for Europe» met in the headquarters of the St. Egidio Community

Pope Francis said to Patriarch Kirill when they met in Cuba last February.

What should we focus our attention on? Emmaus, after participating in the Steering Committee meeting of «Together for Europe» last April 6-7 said among other things: *«It seems that what is important is to let all the positive things emerge. Even the Pope said that within the cities there are these "hidden cities": those of evil, that contribute to polluting the air, and also those of good that contribute to making the air breathable, emitting peace and love.*

*What came out very strongly was the importance of dialogue on all levels: this is the right attitude in order to be together to do something "for", something for humanity that surrounds us. Without limiting ourselves only to Europe because, Emmaus continued «We must never stop, we are called to "That all may be one", therefore whatever continent is too small for "That all may be one".*

*We tried to understand better: what Europe has to give to the world and this is precisely the experience of these past two thousand years of Christianity, which has made ideas, culture, life, actions mature for the world of today... and which unfortunately, have not become more evident up to today. In this moment in Europe, what is being highlighted are the difficulties, the dramas, the walls, intolerance and instead, all the good things that there are, are not evident».*

## Produce fruits together

On April 21 in Geneva, in view of the event of Munich, a roundtable was organized by the Ecumenical Council of Churches (ECC) and the Focolare Movement entitled: «Europe, what identity, what values».

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Pasquale Ferrara, diplomat and university professor, affirmed that today in Europe, rather than referring to its own Christian roots, it must produce «Christian fruits» together. As part of the solution, the «Golden Rule», which invites us to do to others what we would like done to us» was presented. This rule – Ferrara continued – «is not just an ethical value, but is assumes a political dimension, inasmuch as it invites us to rethink the nature and character of the political community». For his part, the secretary general of the ECC, Dr. Olav Fykse Tveit, who will also speak at the event in Munich, highlighted the involvement of his institution in that «pilgrimage of justice and of peace», that is pushing the Churches to go to the roots of one's own faith, and to open itself up and to hope. The event in June is, among other things, a step forward in the journey towards 2017, the five hundredth anniversary of Luther's Reform, in the hopes of being a prophetic sign of a reconciled and united Europe.

During those days, Pope Francis and Patriarch Bartholomew confirmed that both of them will be sending a video-message for the occasion. So the journey continues.

prepared by Gianna Sibelli

## In dialogue

# Along the road to universal brotherhood

At the Center of the Movement the freinds of non-religious convictions met for a day of dialogue and comparison

«We must create a common "mixed" language, which means to translate the values of one into the language of the other. To put together that which unites and to harmonize that which divides through the analysis of the roots of one's own cultural identity and way of thinking, in a serene and open comparison». This observation of Moreno Orazi (Italy), which is like a synthesis and a programme, describes very well the rich, lively and profound day of reflection that took place at the Center of the Movement, with the participation of around eighty people, some with no religious convictions, coming from Spain, Bosnia, Italy, Uruguay, Argentina and Hong Kong.

«We covered a lot of ground together and certainly not without difficulties – observed Luciana Scalacci (Italy) recalling the origins of this dialogue and her personal relationship with Chiara. The first thing to overcome was definitely scepticism: on the side of the



Piero Taiti and Luciana Scalacci

non believers, the worry that this was a cunning tactic of proselytism; on the side of the believers, the thought that the non-believers would try to question their beliefs and certainties». «The only one who never had any doubts of this kind – she added – was Chiara Lubich who understood that the long road to "universal brotherhood" cannot be travelled unless we pass through the paths of a respectful dialogue with everyone».

«To start a relationship with others – Luciana concluded – it is necessary first of all the know oneself (which is not easy) and to offer the others one's own truth with love and without personal interest, ready to consider the truth of the other to be as important as one's own. The two truths that meet will create a third truth that is even more true».

«Chiara – Piero Taiti observed, who has been in this





Jordi Illa



With Arnaldo Diana pioneer of this dialogue



Jesús Morán

dialogue since 1983 – presented herself to us in her dignified role as a worker in the vineyard of the Lord (in the same way that Pope Benedict presented himself) and refusing to proselytize us, she shared with us her dream: universal brotherhood to which she asked for our contribution; her aspiration for unity of the entire human family based on a radical interpretation of the Word; her great faith in reciprocal love. She confirmed us in our identity giving us and asking us respect for her and our positions».

### In the nitty-gritty of the problems and the possible solutions

Then, the various linguistic groups entered into nitty-gritty of the problems and their possible solutions. In the numerous Italian group, the two Zone delegates of Rome were also present. Among the more rich experiences was the one from Uruguay where with a group of persons of different ages they would share various topics and activities every week. The contribution of Spain was also noteworthy with groups spread all over their territory.

«For me dialogue is first of all an instrument – Jordi Illa of Barcelona said. If I want what is good for the person beside me, if I search for the common good and the betterment of human coexistence, I consider dialogue to be indispensable. At the basis of interpersonal and broader communitarian conflicts lies the lack of dialogue. Chiara is a model. She showed us the way towards unity.

All of us can live this spirituality, of course with different reasons, but all with an identical result».

«When I met Jordi, a non-believer with whom I fell in love – M. Àngels Capellas of Barcelona shared - I experienced that with him I felt free to express myself and what I believed in as a Christian member of the Movement. His way of looking at things was not an obstacle for me to live my personal commitment; on the contrary, it helped me to keep my feet on the ground. His being consistent in life, his honesty helped me to discover that together we could take steps that before I thought were only for Christians».

Finally, the much awaited encounter, Jesús Morán shared his reflections on what it means to dialogue: in the various religious traditions, from a lay point of view, and also in the typical way of the Focolare, according to the style that the «genius of Chiara» has taught us. All those present requested for a deeper understanding of that which links us, first of all among religions, cultures and diverse ideas; then what is this link among us that makes the encounter among persons of different conviction possible and which finds optimum fertile ground in the culture of unity. «Jesús encouraged us to go ahead together in this direction, in spite of the difficulties that we meet» and «he put us on a "springboard" so that we open ourselves up and go ahead always more».

*Vida Rus, Andrew Camilleri*

# From dialogue to communion

At Castel Gandolfo three days of meeting with those involved in dialogue within the Catholic Church

A moment that was very much-awaited, a gathering of novelty and of growth for the seventy participants – with representatives from some of the centers – to the school of the First Dialogue which was held in Castel Gandolfo from April 1 to 7. It has been four years since the last school, and there are many new faces that are interspersed with those who are known. Also new are Margaret Karam and Marc St-Hilaire, in-charge of this dialogue at the Center. It is almost like a gamble in the new set-up of the Movement that is still taking shape, causing, in a certain sense, the trepidation of the unknown and the unexpected, but over which the joy of meeting for a dialogue and sharing in a wider communion prevails.

This School was a gamble, whose aim was to meet with all those involved in bringing ahead the dialogue within the Catholic Church, both at the level of involvement in ecclesial bodies, and also in the journey of communion with other charismatic reali-

ties. A dialogue that Chiara called the *First dialogue*, recalling the history of the Movement which, at its birth, had the Catholic Church as its first partner. The few preparatory contacts revealed then, in the number of participants, an unexpected and surprising richness, an eloquent sign of how the «bud» of Pentecost '98 is decisively on its way to becoming a mature fruit of ecclesiality and humanity. The presence, above all European: Italy, France, Hungary, Czech Republic – some linked up through *skype* – was compensated by eleven Brazilians, who pushed us, as Pope Francis said, «to the alla end of the world!» The diverse geographical participation was important to be able to experience, to share and to develop the programme of those three days. Protagonists par excellence was the Dialogue in all its manifestations, which allowed for moments of communion and exchange with the Centers of Ecumenical and Interreligious Dialogue as well as with the dialogue with persons of non-religious con-





From left to right: Fr. Edie Bethlem from the Shalom Catholic Community; Danusa Rego Community of Caçao Nova; Carine from the Emmanuel Community; Fr. Giacomo Pavanello of New Horizons.

victions. The supporting experiences were interesting and varied coming from a Diocesan Consulting Body – that of Gaeta (CDAL) – and from four Movements: Community of Emmanuele, New Horizons Community, Shalom Catholic Community and the Caçao Nova Community. A moment in which the affirmation: «We are together not to do activities, but to bear witness to the Gospel» reveals the value of communion among charisms.

There were many points of reflection and meditation that gave value to the meeting: from a presentation of the birth of charisms within the Catholic Church that generated new charismatic realities, to the experience of a priest in an ecclesial environment; from the passages on dialogue *Paradise '49*, to the meditation on Mercy. And finally, a «pearl»: Igino Giordani (Foco) and the First dialogue, a true prophecy in unsuspecting times! Here is a sample: «... In these times we have worked in a rather scattered way. Every religious order had its own little garden, every community its environment, every writer made his own campaign, each one worked on his own. Today we cannot do this anymore. Therefore to take up the objective of unity once again is the essential function of the Church, if it wants to be the teacher of the people, if it wants to be redemption in action for humanity today ...». This is what Foco said to the priests in February 1965.



The Council of the lay associations of Gaeta

A surprise came with the brief greeting of Emmaus Voce and Jesús Morán. Emmaus, having come from the meeting of the Steering Committee of «Together for Europe», underlined the importance of their commitment in view of «*That all may be one*» (see pages 28-29), which is just as valid for the First dialogue. Jesús evidenced the important contribution that can be derived from uniting the Catholic forces for the spiritual reform of the Church, therefore he invited them to go ahead with courage.

What has this meeting been then? This is how one of the participants answered; the members of the CDAL of Gaeta said: «May the Lord always grant you this formidable gift of welcome, this ability to enter into the heart of the others, and to beat with the same sentiments and emotions. May your journey be always light and salt for the world». Some

of those present: «We must relearn how to be dialogue above all after Chiara: in the Movement, with the Church and with everyone»; «I am very grateful to have been able to follow through *skype*. This School will be a great help»; «Thanks to everyone! We experienced a piece of Paradise»; «In just a few days we were immersed in a great treasure and we found ourselves changed from within»; «It was a very strong moment of God»; and still more: «A gift! To live as brothers in one family where the center and the periphery cannot be distinguished from each other».

In this planetary family we look towards and live for, with a renewed passion, the common goal: «That all may be one».

Lina Ciampi

## Welwyn Garden City

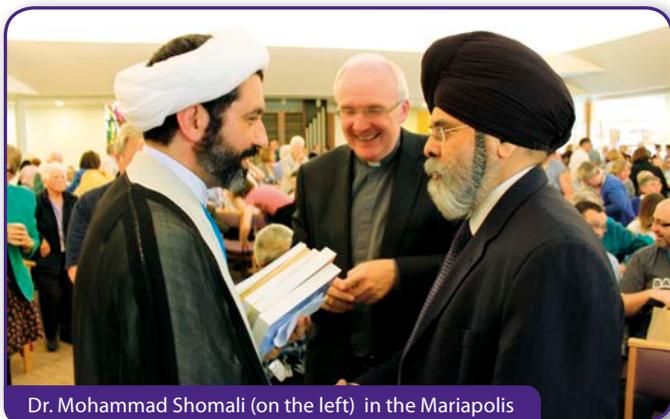
# Dialogue as a way of life

Fourteen representatives of various Churches together for the ecumenical day of the «Church Leaders»

The theme of dialogue read at the center of the annual ecumenical day of the «Church Leaders», an appointment that has grown through the years, involving an increasing number of Bishops of various Churches. This year at the Mariapolis Center «Centre for Unity» of Welwyn Garden City there were fourteen of them, among whom twelve were Bishops: five from the Church of England, one from the Lutheran Church from the North of England, one from the Church of Ireland coming from Belfast and five from the Catholic Church of which two were Archbishops. Also present were two Ministers of the Reformed Church in England (URC) of which one is the Secretary General of the ecumenical organization «Churches Together in England» and also a Volunteer.

The day began with three *leaders* of three different denominations who shared their personal reflection on the theme of dialogue. Archbishop Longley of Birmingham underlined the importance of this in the ecumenical ambit and of not only being side by side but also «face to face» among the heads of the various Churches. An affirmation that seemed to express the experience that we were living.

Pat Whitney, focolarina, presented the theme on dialogue in the light of the spirituality of unity starting from the presence of God-Communion in the first community of the Focolare in Trent. Then Dr. Mohammad Shomali, a Muslim, presently the director



Dr. Mohammad Shomali (on the left) in the Mariapolis

of the Islamic Center of England, who know the spirituality of the Movement, highlighted the impact of the charism of unity in inter-religious relationships. Two highly appreciated interventions. Archbishop Longley suggested to the Episcopal Conference of the European Union (COMECE), the name of Dr. Shomali as reporter for their conference on a European level.

Michael Beasley, the new local Anglican Bishop who came for the first time was very enthusiastic. He would like to know more about this reality of dialogue and to share it also with his councilor from Interreligious Dialogue.

The day was characterized also by a sincere and open communion: an exchange of experiences and impressions which was very respectful, after each intervention, a «journey» made together towards a greater understanding of the Truth. What emerged was how «dialogue as a way of life» is really the right thing in the different cultural contexts that everyone is living in.

Noreen Lockhart, Frank Johnson

# The other face of the Middle East

Actions of peace and of welcome shared by two Lebanese gen.  
School for families in Beirut inspite of the borders

## From the personal sharing of two Lebanese gen

«The Middle East is living through the bloodiest pages in the history of humanity». This is how Lara, a Lebanese gen, began in describing her land at the convention «OnCity» held recently in Castel Gandolfo. A land which inspite of the horrors, offers the world an extraordinary example of persons who, condemned to death, refuse to renounce their religion and pray for their persecutors. This is what happened to the 21 Coptic Christians killed in Lebanon last February. «An event – she commented – that profoundly calls out to us, whether we are Christians or Muslims and which calls us to love and forgiveness».

In the whole Middle East we are impressed by the testimonies of the people of Chiara, who never stop raising funds and collect all kinds of basic necessities, who bear witness that unity is possible and that political barriers can never kill the aspiration to live in peace. Concerts for peace, Christmas celebrations, evenings of prayer, saw the creation of a mosaic of persons of different religions, cultures, and levels of society, who together learned how to trans-



Mariapolis 2016 in Lebanon

form the sentiments of fear, of hatred and of vengeance into forgiveness, hope and peace.

Luminous examples are seen also in the drama of the six and a half million refugees that the war in Syria has provoked in the Country and of the three million who found refuge in the nearby Countries. «In Jordan – Lara continued – we don't hesitate to welcome into our homes even with the limited resources we have, the Iraqi refugee families, who we discover as our

brothers and sisters. We share with them hunger, shame, humiliation, the loss of loved ones. Together we strongly believe that violence will not have the last word. And even if it is capable of destroying the city and killing people, it can never put an end to the forces of love that live within us».

George, also a gen from Lebanon, shared about the tragedy of two Syrian families: «One of them lost two children three and nine years old. Taking advantage of a so-



## A School for families in Beirut

We were welcomed by a very beautiful Lebanon, which after the sufferings of the past has today the added challenge of the very high percentage of refugees (almost 1.5 million of the entire 4 million population). In the school for families, there were 125 participants, including couples from Syria and one from Egypt. The programme, carried out by several couples from there, was centered on different topics of the family enriched by experiences, moments of dialogue in the hall, private talks between the individual couples, moments of joy. The sharing of the Syrian families were quite moving, as they faced the daily struggle of the risks in a Country at war and the absolute precariousness of their future. Their leaving the Country to come to Beirut for the school was also not without its problems.

We were a bit afraid to speak of our life which is rather different from those who had to escape from their homes bringing only their car and two pieces of luggage to start life again somewhere else or those families who today are still living the drama of war. But from them we perceived that they needed to listen to experiences of a "normal life" and that the light of the Charism that allows them and us to continue to live and to love there where we are was much stronger than any circumstance. For us too they were intense days, with the joy of getting to know the treasures and the challenges of this region of the world and in experiencing that we are brothers and sisters now more than ever.

Leaving this blessed land, we felt in our hearts, just as in the early times when the Movement was born, the certainty that God is Love. And that Love conquers all.

*Francesco and Adriana Scariolo  
responsible at the center for the New Families*



called "cease fire", they were finally outside in the open air playing in their balcony when a missile struck them.

The husband of another family, who were expecting a child, volunteered himself to be part of the security team of their neighborhood. The armed groups kidnapped him and his brother, returning them dead after two months. In front of such suffering, it seems that any comfort given is in vain. But the love with which the community continues to be beside them, in sharing their great sufferings, slowly heals the wounds and their existence slowly finds meaning once again.

«One of our friends – George continued – was stopped at the border and brought to prison. In prayers and in his faith in God, he found the strength to go beyond his suffering to offer a smile to his cellmates, to listen to them, to give advice, and to share the meager food supply that he had with him. Surprised by his attitude, the other prisoners also began to have the same disposition of love and reciprocal help. After a few days– something truly exceptional in the situation that we are in – the authorities recognized that he was imprisoned by mistake and they released him».



## Rita Azarian

*The words of a pioneer of the Movement: «Heaven is waiting for me»*

A Milanese focolarina of the early '50s, Rita left us on March 5 after havinf sown the Ideal for 57 years – a pioneer of the Movement – in Africa and Asia. She was 86 years old. Strong and meek at the same time, a woman of few but always substantial words; frank, demanding of herself and open to the others, she left behind her a permanent mark of love and of hope.

An Armenian father and an Italian mother, since her youth the vocation to give herself to God matured in Rita. She studied to become a nurse, but inspite of attending daily Mass, she herself said that concretely, «I didn't put together the call to follow Jesus with the conversion that was necessary».



roads that became impassable, no telephone nor postal service: completely cut-off from the world. Coming from a well-off family, Rita found herself living in a mud hut, without electricity nor water; to wash clothes they had to walk several kilometers to the river. One day, one of

the chiefs (tribal head) with some of his wives came to visit the focolare, bringing bananas and some chickens. «Since you arrived here – he solemnly said – the few Christians have become betetr and we (animists) are starting to open our eyes».

In '69 she was transferred to Seoul (Korea), also here it was to open the focolare with other two focolarine. She remained there for seven years, in an environment that was culturally very diferent from her own, and bore witness to the light of Chiara accompanying the birth of the Movement there. Chiara came to visit the Zone and, seeing its fruits, she suggested that she also should take acre of Japan. And so, together with a Korean focolarina, Rita arrived in Tokyo in October '76, to open the focolare. Without knowing the language yet, they organize the first mariapolis in that Country.

«I shared with Rita – Dionisio Cossar affirmed – thirty years of my life in Korea and Japan from 1970 to 2000. The characteristic of Rita is that of adhering totally to the spirituality and at the same time having her feet planted solidly on the ground, aware of the circumstances around. God placed in our hands the blossoming of very active and apostolic communities in Korea, and solid and faithful



Rita with Guido Mirti in Korea

After her studies, she is no longer as convinced to enter the convent, as she had previously thought. A religious priest suggested that she get to know the focolare. In the life of the focolarine and in all that she participated in, Rita began to see the answer of Jesus. Thus began the adventure of unity for her that changed her life and which in the same year 1953, made her decide to enter the focolare.

After having lived in some focolare centers in Italy, she went to France and then to Belgium, and then returned to France up to '64, the year when she left for Njinikom (a villagge in the high plains of west Cameroun) together with other two focolarine, with prospsects of going to Fontem later. During those times, to live in that area was absurd: due to the rainy season that lasted for six months every year, the

In Fontem, untiring translator beside Chiara





In Japan with rev. Etai Yamada

ones in Japan. The presence of the community in Japan, in very close communion with the Center of the Movement then, also helped in developing the interreligious dialogue with Biddhists of various denominations».

In 2003, because of her long experience at the service of the Movement in the Asian continent, Chiara entrusted to her the co-responsibility for the Zone of Hong Kong with Manfred Kogler who remembers her in this way: «She was very competent with regards to the Movement. She never hid her very precise points of view and at the same time she had an extraordinary humility, ready to lose everything to make her own the point of view of the others». «The way in which Rita entered into our culture – Vania, Chinese focolarina said – was extraordinary. She did not learn our language, but her life spoke to us».

In 2010 Rita is in Rocca di Papa. Having

passed on the role of witness to many of the younger generations, she still found a way to be useful: doing translations, helping in the care of focolarinas who are sick or elderly, giving English lessons... Towards the end of January she had to be hospitalized, where she gave witness to a total adhesion to the will of God without complaining in spite of the situation she was undergoing. The evening before she died, greeting a focolarina who visited her, with a weak voice she said: «Heaven is waiting for me». The next day, she peacefully took flight.

*From the profile read at her funeral  
(<http://www.focolare.org/notiziariomariapoli/it/rita-azarian-il-cielo-mi-aspetta-2/>)*

With the community of Hong Kong



## Jacqueline Caillaud

### *The importance of living the Pact*



Focolarina of Orléans (France), a nurse, after being in the focolare in Grenoble and for some years at the Mariapolis Center of Rocca di Papa, in '79 she was sent to Burundi where the focolare was opened. Hers was a discrete, silent, intelligent and active presence. Aside from working in the Nunciature and in building the Movement – many vocations were born in the surrounding Countries – she dedicated herself to the meticulous translations for the books on inculturation.

In '92 Jacqueline moves to Kenya and participates in the birth and development of the Mariapolis Piero. Returning to France in 2013, she realized that

she was starting to lose her memory, but remaining always in love she said: «This is my Jesus Forsaken». As her health declined due to her illness which gradually took away almost everything, even – for a period of time – her ability to speak, the more she offered this. Her first commitment was to make and to live the Pact especially for those who were «without God». All those who knew her bear witness to the

fact that she was always «with a smile on her face and in charity».

The doctors were optimistic with her treatment, but without anyone expecting it, on April 10, after having given a smile to the nurse, Jacqueline fell asleep to wake up in Heaven at 76 years old.

*From the telegram of Emmaus  
(see complete text in  
[www.focolare.org/notiziariomariapoli/testimoni](http://www.focolare.org/notiziariomariapoli/testimoni))*

# Marcio Peixoto

*A living rock  
of the Movement in Brazil*

University professor of sociology and politics, he met the Ideal in 1972 and immediately puts his cultural expertise at the service of the Movement. Among his many contributions, the more prominent ones are his lessons at the Social Schools and in the Civita Schools of political formation for the young people in the Mariapolis Ginetta. His words are rich in wisdom that come from his union with God and from the presence of Jesus in the midst. A volunteer of God, he gets involved in the zone secretariat of New Families offering his collaboration to the Center of Natural Family Planning.

For three years (1984-87) he was the delegate of the men Volunteers of the region of San Paolo and eventually involved himself in the secretariat of New Humanities where he followed the world of politics. With his noble and generous character he was an uniting builder of unity: with his wife Maria Eugenia, with his children Valentina, Eduardo and Luciano, in his nucleo, in



public service where he worked with integrity, respect for the other and profound professional dedication.

15 years ago they discovered his illness, and he underwent successive operations and therapy with their ever shortening intervals, up to his death on March 11 at the age of 71. «I have

to admit – he wrote – that the possibility of a long life for me is decreasing, but what is stronger is the awareness of the many graces that I have received. Because of this I would like to continue my readiness and availability as always, overcoming the temptation to think that I have nothing more to contribute. I continue to be active in my nucleo, in the parish as an extraordinary minister of the Eucharist, I continue with the translations for the magazine *Unity and Charisms* and of the texts for the Volunteers. While I increase my trust in God, I pray that he will give me enough time to practice and improve in living the “art of loving”, so that I can conclude my Holy Journey with dignity and as a true child of Chiara».

*Antonio Carlos da Silva*

# Iris Liceaga Rodriguez

*«In giving everything one  
is helped  
to grow»*

Iris was one of the first women Volunteers of God from Puerto Rico. In the summer of 1980, she went to accompany her fourteen year old son and so participated in the Mariapolis of New York. She returned enthusiastic and very much decided to love for unity, an adventure that is joined by her husband José Antonio, who would also later become a Volunteer of God.

A refined woman, cultured and sensible, with a sense of humour, she knew how to make the others from all social classes comfortable.



She lived all the aspects of love, distinguishing herself above all in the culture of giving, such as the time when a woman Volunteer had to undergo a long convalescence and Iris not only brought her food and medicine everyday but also went to retrieve her letters from the Post Office and to pay her utility bills. Her home was always open to welcome others. When Hurricane George (1998) struck the island, together with her husband she generously assisted even

for long periods of time, people whom she had never met before. In spite of all she did, she never neglected to love her children and grandchildren, following them attentively as they grew up.

She worked in the editorial board of the Parish Bulletin with wisdom and love, she was part of the liturgical group, and was also an extraordinary minister of the Eucharist. Iris learned how to share also her spiritual treasures and experienced

that «in giving everything one is helped to grow». She participated in the local community meetings where she shared her experiences on living the Gospel, which showed her commitment in not letting any occasion, even the smallest one, pass in vain without doing an act of love for the neighbour and to cultivate her union with God. In 2013, she discovered an illness which she lived in unity with Jesus Forsaken, offering everything for the Movement and her family. While she still could, she remained faithful to attending daily Mass and her great love for Mary gave her strength up to the end of her Holy Journey which concluded on January 19, at the age of 84.

*Mirella Soto*

## Giovanni (Gianni) Casella

*Among the first men Volunteers of God from Portugal*

A native of the province of Piacenza (Italy), Giovanni studied at the Polytechnic of Milan and immediately found a job in an elevator company, a job that in the early '60s brought him and his family to Portugal where he became known as the «father of elevators».

His wife marcherita met the Movement in Lisbon, and both of them become Volunteers of



God, among the first to build and support the Movement in Portugal. Everything they do includes also their children, among whom is Nico who later became a focolarino (who held various positions of responsibility in the Movement), and Michela, who would later become a Volunteer.

Hospitality is a normal occurrence in the Casella household. For months they welcomed a family of Italians who had fled from Mozambique during the colonial war, and remained with them until they could find a suitable arrangement.

Gianna worked for numerous works of mercy, such as hospital visitation in St. Anne's, where

he took care of the tetraplegic young African men. He helped them to eat, he kept them company and sent money to Africa to help their families. Up to then end Gianna led a simple life, keeping only what was necessary and his superfluos was shared to the communion of goods of the Movement and to support the Church, where he also served as an extraordinary minister of the Eucharist.

On February, at the age of 91, Gianni left serenely, surrounded by his children, grandchildren, great grandchildren, and we are grateful to God for such a great example of life.

*Paulo Melo*

## Gina Sodano

*Parish and Economy of Communion, her two great loves*



After graduating in Economics, Gina, originally from Pomigliano d'Arco (Naples, Italy), specialized as a dottore commercialista. Ahe had a decisive and sunny character and at 27 years old she met the spirituality of unity and committed herself to living it especially in the parish, the ideal place where she gave herself: in the relationships with the others, in how she welcomed the least, in the formation of adolescents, support for the priests in building the community. At the same time, she immersed herself in the field of work, taking on several responsibilities, among which she was employed at the Chamber of Commerce in her city. In 2012, she was requested by the Lionello Industrial Park of Loppiano to offer her expertise as administrative consultant for the Economy of Communion. Gina readily accepted and in her three year's stay in the Citadel she placed all of her expertise at the service of this innovative project that Chiara Lubish had greatly at heart. Her passion for «work done well, because it must be done well» conquered many.

In January 2015 an illness which seemed to have been cured resurfaced. She decided to return to Naples to undergo treatment near her family, but the treatment did not produce the desired effect. Nourished daily by the Eucharist and supported by the love of the Movement, Gina peacefully prepared herself for the encounter with Jesus. From the hospital she wrote: «These days have truly been a real exercise in loving that has helped me to push away the thought about what awaits me in the future. Before I had just one fixed certain thought in my mind that I would never get well. Now what is foremost is the commitment to live the present moment. It is an exercise also to welcome all those who come to visit me and see me in this pitiful state. I reciprocate by offering all that God gives my soul enriching it with his love». On January 1<sup>o</sup>, The feast of Mary Mother of God, He called her to himself at 48 years old.

*Miruna Machackova*

## Mihály Posa

*«I experience the Holy Spirit present in my life»*

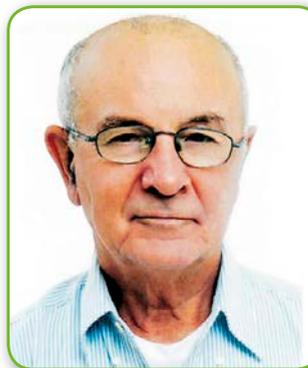
Born in a little city of Serbia near the border of Hungary, asied from working as an engineer, in the last thirty years of his life he also was a catechist in the parish of one of his brothers who is a priest. Thanks to this brother, a priest focolarino, he was able to meet the Movement. Among the first members in that place, Mihály became a Volunteer of God and committed himself as a responsible in-charge of a nucleo and as an animator of the Parish Movement. Untiring and always at the service of others, he was also the delegate of the men Volunteers of the zonetta for several years, sharing the Ideal to many people whom he followed personally. His great sensitivity also brought him to work for the marginalized and the sick.

Three years ago he was struck by a serious illness. Fully aware and with great dignity, he had to give up many activities. And so began his joyous preparation – as he himself said – fro his encounter with Jesus. Recently he wrote to his companions in the nucleo: «I constantly experience the presence of the Holy Spirit in my life who encourages me to

embrace Him as the God of suffering who visits us in the powerlessness of a hopeless illness. I am with you and I would like to assure you of my unity!».

On January 31 his heart stopped beating as he slept peacefully at the age of 70. At his funeral, which took place in a festive atmosphere, several hundred members of the Work of Mary gathered around him, in gratitude for his life spent for unity.

*Robert Zajc*



## Iole Giampietro

*«Blessed is the Lord who has made for me a marvel of graces» [Psalms 31 (30),22]*

On December 30, 2015 Iole reached the Heavenly Mariapolis at the age of 94. A nurse at a dental clinic, in 1948 when she was 26 years old, she participated in the Mariapolis of Fiera di Primiero. Immediately after she wrote: «I fell in love with this Ideal and in the evening, after work, we would meet in the waiting room with the doctor and some people who were entrusted to me». Iole thus discovered the beauty of bringing God to humanity and she corresponded without any hesitation, embracing – and becoming one of the first in Abruzzo (Italy) – the vocation of a Volunteer of God.

Untiring in spreading the *Word of life*, in the family, at work, in the parish and also through the local radio, she distributed around 120 copies every month throughout the years, often accompanied by a personal note.



In order to live the spirit of poverty, Iole keeps for herself only what is necessary, participating in the communion of goods and sharing the rest with her neighbours whom the love of God puts beside her. Up to the end Iole's life was marked moment by moment by the will of God, supported by the Eucharist, assisted by prayer and nourished by the Word.

*Marilena Angiolossi D'Alfonso*

## Armando Gino Corsi

*«Without the life of the nucleo one cannot go ahead»*



From Carrara (Italy), on December 21, at ninety years old, Gino reached the house of the Father. Married to Rosella, he began to participate in the Movement thanks to his son who was aged 3. After some time he felt the call to follow God in the branch of the men Volunteers, bringing his simplicity, concreteness and acute sensitivity into his nucleo. A great worker, he distinguished himself in the preparation of Day meetings and Mariapolises, collaborating through his beautiful and generous industriousness.

He became a widower and took up the responsibility of caring for his aunt who was disabled, and when she died he welcomed her son and his family into his home, becoming a full-time grandfather to the three grandchildren who were still small.

His advancing age refined his relationship with God, characterized by intense prayer and life in the nucleo, «without which – he said – you cannot go ahead». Gino remained active up to the end, helping an unemployed grandson to learn a trade. He left a splendid witness of unity, of faithfulness to the Ideal and an example of readiness to do the will of God.

*Fabio Tommasii*

## Maria Otília Leiria Gomes Moura

*«If we live, we live for the Lord» (Rom 14,8)*



Married, mother of four children, teacher at the high school and university, Maria Otília was one of the first women Volunteers of the Azores Islands (Portugal).

When she met the Ideal at 36 years old, her strong character gradually became more docile;

## Sr. Maria Lydia Santner

*«Whoever loves is generated by God and knows God» (1 Jn 4,7)*



Last year, during the meeting in Castel Gandolfo wherein she participated as a gift for her fiftieth anniversary as a religious, Sr. Maria Lydia felt that she didn't have much time to prepare before her encounter with Jesus. And it was exactly so. On Christmas Eve, at the age of 75, she returned to the house of the Father.

Some of her thoughts bear witness to the profoundness of this franciscan sister from Hallein (Austria), who in '86 stayed for seven months in the school for religious consecrated women in Villa Achillia, at the international center of the Movement. In April 2014: «I try to live the present moment better and I pray to Jesus to help me in my responsibilities in the parish. He never abandons me and for this I am very grateful to Him. The Ideal is very precious to me and has enriched my life». In March 2015: «Everyday when I receive the Eucharist I ask Jesus to bring me totally "inside" the Trinitarian love. This has always been my request ever since I entered the congregation». In fact, her complete name is: Maria Lydia of the Trinitarian love. A love which she had brought and sown with courage everywhere she went.

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her generosity was transformed into communion. There is no focolare in the Azore Islands and so Maria Otilia offered her house to welcome the persons and the activities of the Movement there.

With a joyful and communicative personality, she strived to transmit to her students the great values she believed in.

When she learned of her illness she wrote: «Tomorrow, I go peacefully into the operating room. I would like to thank you for the prayers wherein, we asked together that it will be Jesus in the doctor to perform the operation. I believe in the love of God and this gives me much strength».

Often during the final three month of her life, Maria Otilia experienced much pain and her renewed «yes» to Jesus crucified and forsaken gave her the strength and also to those around her, grateful for the gift of her life and for her faithfulness. She flew to Heaven on December 18 at the age of 84.

*Lurde Presa*

## Emma Aterini Barucci

*A simple woman with a taste for the things of God*



«As soon as there was a meeting – Emma, Volunteer of God of the zonetta of Florence (Italy) shared – I would run, because I loved listening to Chiara, to hear how she spoke of God». Born in the province of Siena way back in 1914, she experienced the harsh realities of life and poor health lived in the countryside. When she married Giocondo, they moved to Florence.

Silent, orderly, a simple woman with the taste for the things of God, she knew how to express her experiences of the Gospel lived in a few words and with the strength of her faith, she was always grateful to Chiara and to the Movement for the spiritual gifts that she received. Her husband was not always happy of her participation in the activities of the Movement, but Emma slowly gained his trust and in the final years he too wanted to attend the Mariapolis.

From what she earned by sewing, she set aside a part which she faithfully placed in common for the Movement, happy to be able to do so. Around ten years ago, she became a widow and went to live in a home for the elderly. While she still could, even with great difficulty, she would wake up early every morning to go to Mass in their chapel. Nad when someone from the Movement came to visit her she would joyfully tell the sisters: «These are my friends form the Work of Mary!». On the evening of December 14, at the age of 101, Emma went to sleep peacefully to awaken in Heaven.

*Gabriella Petrini Vannucci*

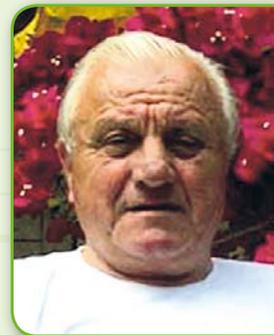
## Virgilio Raffaelli

*A love which as its roots in Jesus*

A Volunteer of Rimini (Italy), up to the mid-'70s Virgilio called himself just a Sunday Catholic. «They invited me to a meeting inthe home of a family – he shared – and thinking that I would be spending an afternoon among friends, I brought a bottle of wine. When I returned home I confided to my wife Rosanna that I had met a group of crazy people who spoke of the Gospel». Up to that moment, his job – managing the family hotel – was his first priority.

In the following meetings, which he did not refuse to attend out of love for Rosanna, he was struck by that phrase of the Gospel: «Seek first the Kingdom of heaven and its justice and the rest will be given to you besides» (Mt 6,33) and tried to put it into practice. A true revolution took place within him which made him discover the love of God as Father. He reviewed all his family relationships, starting with the one with Rosanna. His condictual attitude gave way to a limpid and attractive love between them as a couple, so much so that they became the point of reference for other couples.

The Gospel lived highlighted the real personality of Virgilio, a simple mand with a pure heart, who knew how to welcome everyone and



to radiate around him serenity and joy; he was always able to dissolve even the most embarrassing situations. He had a heart for the poor and every month he would give something for them. He was involved in the parish and was always ready to listen to everyone. Those who met him experienced that his was a love rooted in Jesus. As his illness grew worse, he continued to say his «yes» and those who visited him were edified by his profoundness and total adhesion to the will of God. On December 14, at the age of 73, he left this world to enter into the bosom of the Father.

*Antonio Guid*



## Lucia Morasso Barisone

*«Say "yes" to God immediately and with joy»*

Born and raised in Liguria (Italy), she was formed in the Catholic Action where she distinguished herself by her generosity and being always at the service of others. Married and mother of three children, her parents also lived with them and she cared for them with great love.

A widow at 60 years old, she met the Ideal after some time and soon became a Volunteer of God. Lucia created around her many relationships of sincere friendship, especially with a lady belonging to the evangelical Church whose son was a Pastor. She understood the great importance of dialogue and often also participated in the Divine Liturgy of the Orthodox Church.

She was entrusted with the Indigo «Widow and studies» in her nucleus. «To live this aspect – she wrote – it is indispensable to have the presence of Jesus among us through reciprocal love. In this way, what we think, our reasoning, our understanding and our decision, will be a fruit of Wisdom».

She left this earth at 84 years old on the 8th of December, 2015, the Marian feast which she loved dearly. Her sixteen year old granddaughter

shared during the funeral: «Thanks to grandma I understood what it means to die everyday for the other, to start again to love, to love the other in everything. Now I am preparing to also be a thread in His cloth».

*Angela Roncallo*

## Giuseppina Giolitto Barberis

*A woman of faith and dedication*

Born in Piedmont (Italy) in 1926, Pina lost her father while she was still very young. Being the eldest of five children, she worked hard to help her mother and when she became a teacher, she taught adult education, in order to contribute to the finances of the family. Because of this, she remained with the family until all of her brothers and sisters could stand on their own. Then she met Silvio, a widower with a small son, they married and Nicola was born.

Moving to Liguria, in the '80s, Pina met the Movement and became a Volunteer of God. Generous and always at the service of others, she never held back in loving. For months she would do the grocery shopping for a Volunteer who was confined to her home due to an accident. In her nucleus she knew how to listen very well and her love for the UPM studies was also a push for the others. Prayer and the Eucharist were her joys.

When she became a widow, her ability to communicate gradually diminished, to the point of needing someone to be with her constantly. With the support of the women Volunteers who assured her of a constant presence of Jesus in the midst, Pina carried her cross with faithfulness, docile to the will of God. A woman of faith and dedication, an exemplary daughter, sister, teacher, wife, mother and grandmother, she died of December 4, 2015 at the age of 90.

*Angela Roncallo*





## Sr. Marta María Timossi

*Her lamp  
was lit*

Religious of the Daughters of MaryHelp of Christian, at a young age she attended the Salesian Institute of La Plata (Buenos Aires, Argentina), being formed as a catechist and then eventually as a teacher of philosophy and education. For a year she also studied at the Teresianum of Roma where, through her brother, also a Salesian, she met the Ideal. From that moment on Sr. Marta acquired a new enthusiasm that never left her. She gave herself without measure: she was the treasurer, vicar, pastoral administrator of the animating school of the Oratory and, in the last five years, she was the Directress General of the Collage of Mary Help of Christians. She was responsible for various educational communities in the province of Buenos Aires and in the extreme south of Argentina. She sowed the ideal generously wherever she went.

In 2007 as advised by her physician, she had to give up all her responsibilities. She wrote: «Four months away from the Mother House, resting in O'Higgins, the Argentinian Little Town of the Focolare, has allowed me to understand deeply, vitally, that the only thing of importance is love. To do or not to do is not important. May He, my only Spouse, be by my side now more than ever».

In her final years, she became part of the Zone Council of the Movement, representing the women religious, where she always gave her fresh, mature and joyous contribution. On November 25, at 73 years old, she left unexpectedly for Heaven due to a heart attack: «Sr. Marta – her religious sister said – was ready. She went to meet her Spouse with her lamp lit. But those of us who lived or worked with her, were not ready for this loss. But we have faith that her death, like that of the grain of wheat, will bring a blossoming of life throughout our religious families».

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## Mons. Georg Müller

*At the service of migrants*



Mons. Georg received his formation in the Community of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and Mary of Arnstein, in Lahnstein on the Rhine (Germany) and was ordained a priest by Mons. Klaus Hemmerle, from whom he met the Ideal and was conquered by it.

He was transferred to Norway, and after just three years was nominated Vicar General in Trondheim and in 1988 he was installed as Apostolic Administrator. From that year onwards he participated assiduously in the annual meetings of the Bishops Friends of the Movement. In 1997 he was consecrated as a Bishop.

The influx of migrants and refugees in Norway caused a notable increase in the number of Catholics in his diocese and Mons. Georg dedicated himself to them with great care. In 2012, following an unproven accusation, he accepted the request to resign as Bishop and to live in a community of Priests of Arnstein, in Münster, always maintaining his contact with the Bishops and religious of the Movement. Believing in the resurrection and with great patience, he endured the sufferings caused by a serious illness, grateful to all those who expressed their closeness and solidarity to him. He reached the House of the Father on October 25, 2015 at the age of 74. There was much emotion during his funeral, with the presence of seven Bishops, ten priests and fifteen religious men.

*From the German edition of Mariapoli,  
translated from German to Italian by Helmut Sievers*

## Marisa Castradori Frezzi

*«For I resolved to know nothing while I  
was with you except Jesus Christ and him  
crucified.» (1Cor 2.2)*

Married, mother of two children, elementary school teacher, Marisa met the Ideal in 1976 and we were immediately struck by her readiness, her



profound listening, and her openness towards all and for all. For many years she was responsible for a nucleus and then became the delegate for New Humanity of the Marches (Italy), working in a special way for the field of education and

politics. In her city– Chiaravalle in the province of Ancona – Italy – she started the Consultancy for the associations of volunteer service, of which she was the president up to her final days.

Last October 30, 2015, at 85 years old, she left for Heaven. The testimonies shared during the

funeral of this strong woman who was full of energy and who lived for her people are important and meaningful: «A Christian, focalarina – her parish priest said - Marisa leaves us with an example of humility, joy, perseverance, tenacity in her commitment, unity and communion as the basis of every relationship. She taught us how to break down the walls that divide and to build bridges that unite». A city assessor said: «Marisa always insisted on one word: together. Even in the most difficult situations, where there was great divergence she was always able to push the various associations towards finding a solution. Together».

*Elisabetta Balloni*

## Fr. Ernst Langer

*A life lived in the radicality of the Gospel*

Priest focalarino of Germany, Fr. Ernst left for the heavenly Mariapolis on August 21, 2015 at the age of 89. This is what he said in 1968 when he met the Ideal: «I found such a light, that it seemed to me that I had completely lost the 18 years of my priesthood; I am only now beginning to live as a true priest». An Ideal that he would never leave and which he gave generously wherever he lived. In his parish at Herten-Süd all the vocations to the Movement were born,.

In his 25 years as a parish priest he was able to visit all the members of his parish at least three times, returning even to visit those who had slammed the door in his face. He was always ready for anyone who was in need of a real father. Fr. Ernst was a man of few words, but of a warm and concrete love. Just to give you two examples: he welcomed into his home in the parish another priest focalarino who was not well and a man Volunteer who had cancer.

Fr. Gerhard Sievers, the priest who succeeded him as parish priest of Herten-Süd, testified: «Fr. Ernst lived the spirituality of Chiara without ifs or buts. He never missed a meeting of priests except



for serious reasons. I was very impressed by his humility and his generosity and faithfulness with which he lived the communion of goods. He was a real pioneer of this new form of poverty». The Word that Chiara gave him as light for his life was: «I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I call you friends because I have told you all that I have heard from my Father» (Jn 15,15).

*Fr. Wilfried Hagemann*

## Cécile Ehrler

*She radiated a contagious joy*

A Volunteer of God from Switzerland she reached the heavenly Mariapolis last July 21, 2015. Married and mother of five children, hers was not an easy marriage. At a meeting for those separated at the international center of the Movement she shared: «After 15 years of marriage, my husband left me for another woman. In Jesus Forsaken I found the strength to say my “yes” to God and I began to pray for his new partner. On the occasion of the funeral of my eldest daughter I went serenely to greet her, I



# Janina (Nina) Witek

*The Ideale was her precious «pearl»*

Nina was the first responsible of the women Volunteers of God in Poland. She was already a professional in her career – as an architect at the Institute of di zootecnics of Krakow, with a doctorate in the field of agrarian construction – when she met the Ideal, which she called her precious «pearl», and immediately placed all of herself at the service of the Movement: time, talents, home, food supplies (which were difficult to come by during those times) and even the telephone, which in the '60s was very, very rarely available. She was always ready with her bedsheets in a bag to go and spend the night with her friends so as to leave her apartment free for the guests of the focolare. Her house was used for meetings of the women Volunteers, wherein often, during the time of the «iron curtain», the women Volunteers of East Germany would also participate.

In her final years of life, Nina experienced many physical limitations which she endures with patience and remaining always in love towards the others. In spite of the fact that she could no longer participate in the meetings, her heart was entirely for the Movement, for which she was offering everything. «Her eyes were always full of God» was what



those who came to visit her said. In one of her last letters she wrote: «...I thank God for everything, especially for the charism of Chiara. I want to live the will of God everyday, so that my journey to Him will be the fulfillment of his last Will for me». We remember her as the first anniversary of her departure, which took place on May 5, 2015 at 88 years old, approaches.

*Malgorzata Bober*

embraced her and I told her that I forgave her, experiencing a great peace within me».

For many years Cécile was responsible for a nucleo and committed to the Parish Movement. From 1991, when the Little Town for the Zone of Switzerland was started, Cécile moved close by to be of service in its construction. A woman of great heart and open to everyone, with a surprising generosity, she knew how to put herself at the complete service of others without thinking of herself and with a simplicity that radiated joy all around her.

At 84 years old she was caught by a sudden illness and for a month her health swung from hope of recovery to danger of dying. The women Volunteers live everything together with her and were by her side when, after having received the anointing of the sick, Cécile peacefully returned to the House of the Father.

*Claudia Fricker*

## Our relatives

The following passed on to the Next Life:

**Antonia**, sister of **Margarida Nobre**, **Francesca**, mother of **Anna Maria (Marodi) La Vecchia** and **Santo**, father of **Celestina (Celeste) Bergamini**, focolarine at the Roman MAriapolis; **Luigi**, father of **Ilona Mészáros**, focolarina in Cairo; **Maria Rosario**, mother of **Manuel Carrasco**, focolarino in Loppiano; **Jose Borrego Agüera**, father of **M<sup>a</sup> José Borrego**, focolarina in the Cittadella Castello Esteriore (Spain); **Bruno**, father of **Anna (Anna Luce) Ramogida**, focolarina in Ancona (Italy) and of **Giuseppe**, Volunteer of Lazio Nord; **Elisa**, mother of **Annalisa Vezzano**, married focolarina in Padua (Italy); the brother of **Anne Plantard**, focolarina in Madagascar; **Isidro Antonio**, father of **Alejandro Gamez**, focolarino in Loppiano; **Gino**, father of **Anna Lisa Gasparini**, focolarina in the Cittadella Faro, of **Maria Angela**, Volunteer in Treviso and of **di Rosetta**, Volunteer in Udine; **Thomas**, brother of **Philomena Sheridan**, focolarina at the Mariapoli Luminosa (USA); **Fr. Luis Lei**, brother of **Cecilia Xavier**, focolarina in Lisbon (Portugal); **Margarita**, mother of **Elizabeth (Marivi) Mendoza**, focolarina in Bogotà (Colombia); the mother of **Luz Nancy Barreto**, married focolarina in Bogotà; **Josè**, father of **Juana Torres**, focolarina in Myanmar; **Santina**, sister of **Enzo Cardaci**, married focolarino sposato in Lazio Nord.

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Questo numero è stato chiuso in tipografia il 30 aprile 2016. Il numero 03/2016 è stato consegnato alle poste il 18 marzo. In copertina: Roma, 24 aprile 2016. Papa Francesco in Mariapolis. © Foto di Lorenzo Russo

**Redazione** Via Frascati, 306 00040 Rocca di Papa [Roma] **tel/fax** 06 947989 **e-mail** n.mariapoli@focolare.org  
 Mariapoli n.04-05/2016 [Mensile] | Notiziario ad uso interno del Movimento dei Focolari | *Direttore responsabile* Caterina Ruggiu |  
 Grafica M. Clara Oliveira Oita | *Direz.* Via Frascati, 306 00040 Rocca di Papa [Roma] | Autorizzazione del Tribunale di Roma n. 5784  
 del 10 gennaio 1984 | PAFOM | *Stampa* Tipografia Arti Grafiche La Moderna Via Enrico Fermi, 13/17 00012 Guidonia [Roma]

**Mariapoli Online** [www.focolare.org/notiziariomariapoli](http://www.focolare.org/notiziariomariapoli)

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