

PRESS RELEASE - January 25<sup>th</sup> 2020

### **Strength in meekness: Mattarella in Trento recalls Chiara Lubich**

**"One can be very strong even though one is meek and open to others' good reasons ", or rather, "only in this way can one be truly strong": this is the teaching of Chiara Lubich in the words of Mattarella, who takes up Maria Voce's invitation to "dialogue to the extreme".**

The Head of State, present at a commemorating event for the centenary of Chiara Lubich's birth at the Mariapolis Centre "Chiara Lubich" in Cadine (TN), recalled with enthusiasm the founder of the Focolare Movement. He was welcomed by Maria Voce, president of the Movement, and by the local authorities and population: more than 400 people were present in the hall, about 500 connected in other rooms in Cadine and in Trento and more than 20 thousand following the live streaming. The artistic dimension, directed by Fernando Muraca, was the background to the narration, retracing the most significant moments of Chiara's life as a woman *in relationship*.

The voices of civil and ecclesial authorities were interwoven through sounds and images. The president of the Provincia Autonoma di Trento, **Maurizio Fugatti**, underlined how Chiara represents, together with people like De Gasperi, "the excellence of this land". Chiara highlighted three characteristics of this Trentino area: willpower, the Cooperative Movement, and being a frontier land. He said "Chiara was able to interpret this belonging which is a distinctive feature of our autonomy, of our specificity". The Archbishop of Trent, Mgr. **Lauro Tisi**, thanking his predecessor Carlo De Ferrari who at the time grasped "the finger of God" in Chiara Lubich's spirituality, recalled how "if today the charism embraces the whole of humanity we owe it to this bishop, who protected it"; and he highlighted the frustration of "Christ abandoned" as that which makes it so relevant today. **Alessandro Andreatta**, mayor of Trento, expressed his joy in remembering "the girl who almost eighty years ago put herself at the service of the poor" and who "continues today to invite us to openness, to welcome, to commitment for others and with others. From the beginning Chiara's experience was not a personal, isolated, solitary experience, but a commitment that can only be understood if seen in the light of the paradigm of relationship.

There followed numerous testimonies, which tell of the tenacity in daily life of people who have been, and are, inspired by Chiara and her charism in their actions: such as **Amy**

**Uelmen**, professor of ethics and law at Georgetown University in Washington, who trains her students to deal with divisive issues while avoiding clashes; entrepreneurs **Lawrence Chong** and **Stanislaw Lencz**, who with their companies contribute to a supportive and sustainable economy; **Arthur Ngoy** and **Florance Mwanabute**, Congolese doctors who dedicate themselves to the care of the weakest and to health care training; and the story of **Yacine**, an Algerian migrant, welcomed as a brother by some young Italians after the difficult journey through the Balkans. There was also the story of the former mayor of Trento, **Alberto Pacher**, who together with teachers and students has welcomed the invitation – through the phone call of a child - from which emerged the projects *Tuttospace* and *Trento a city to educate*.

"The light given to Chiara goes beyond the boundaries of the Focolare Movement and reaches out to encourage and inspire many, women and men of good will in every part of the world, as this anniversary is showing," said Focolare President **Maria Voce**. "Like each one of you, I feel Chiara is alive, present, active, close by every day. She pushes us to go out with courage". And she spurred everyone on: " We must respond with radicality, with the 'extremism of dialogue', nourished by a culture of trust, to this society that seems without roots and without a goal,

The evening concluded with a long and passionate speech by the President of the Republic, who identified in particular fraternity, applied to civil and political action, as the distinctive feature of Chiara Lubich's spirituality – also recalling with fondness Iginio Giordani, whom Mattarella knew, and who was a first-rate interpreter of this spirituality. A fraternity that is "the foundation of civilization and a motor of well-being", because without this "we risk not having the strength to overcome inequalities and heal social fractures". Chiara Lubich, vigorously proposing the culture of giving and dialogue, especially inter-religious dialogue, which "in this historical season is decisive for peace", had intuited "with a spirit of prophecy" what the way to follow was. A teaching that proves how "one can be very strong while being meek and open to others' good reasons. In fact, to be sincere, only in this way can one be truly strong as Chiara Lubich's life shows".

The photos and videos of the event are available at  
[https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1NYHxdxGVgCDi\\_-cl8W-H644m34v0enNn?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1NYHxdxGVgCDi_-cl8W-H644m34v0enNn?usp=sharing).

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