

## Editorial

*Dear Readers,*

As we are closing this issue, the conflict in Ukraine is going on, with all its cruelty. A clash that has increased the number of "hot spots" in the world, where clashes and violence cause loss of life, destruction, refugees forced to move away from their land and culture, growth of poverty in all senses.

Social media, newspapers and television allow us to follow what is happening in real time. In the midst of so much pain, we see those who struggle to defend themselves and to survive, but also those who feel shame for the evil provoked, for the face of God offended in so many others.

In the meantime, solidarity immediately swung into action. States, aid organizations, individuals rush to welcome displaced brothers and sisters who have had to leave their homes, their assets, their history, who have had to decide in a few hours or in a few minutes, if and how to leave, taking with them as little as possible so as not to burden a journey, of which you know the beginning but not the end.

We are also witnessing enormous generosity: those who give their time, those who make available their home or facilities of different kinds for accommodation, those who collect all kinds of basic necessities, clothes and medicines, those who offer sums of money, those who organize and engage in moments of play with the many children who are in shelters or in places of respite for refugees. A constantly evolving situation, about which you will find information and updates on the website [www.focolare.org](http://www.focolare.org).

Even at this moment, we can all continue to contribute to peace by beginning to build it where we are, where we live our daily life, with concrete actions: reconciling conflicting positions, including those who are marginalized or excluded, checking the sources before spreading news or a comment through social media, helping or welcoming those who do not have a roof or what is necessary to survive. This is the best contribution we can make to world peace, together with our prayer of petition and thanksgiving for every step, albeit small, in the resolution of ongoing conflicts.

In this issue you will find many testimonies that can encourage us on the way to a united world. To start with we publish the message of Margaret Karram for the Cantiere Hombre Mundo and we close with a thought of Chiara Lubich on peace, an extract from her speech at UNESCO in 1996.

We hope you enjoy reading this issue,

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NEXT APPOINTMENT:

**28 MAY 2022 AT 20:00 (GMT+1)**

# Becoming world-men and women



The Hombre Mundo Global Workshop was held 25–27 February, and we cover it in this issue. Margaret Karam addressed this message to the thousands of boys and girls who participated in many nations of the world, connected by video call.

Dear Gen 3 and Teens for Unity around the world. I am so happy to be with you for this Hombre Mundo, Global Person Project, which thanks to the internet is truly a global event! I am so happy to have the chance to greet you with all my heart.

The first thing I want to say is THANK YOU! Thank you for your life! I know you have thought of and built up this project together, by meeting one another across different nations and continents. You have been working for months and have sent the Gen3/Teens for Unity Centre a real avalanche of videos, with personal and group experiences, and with your songs, poems and dances.

However, this Project is not just a three-day event. You have built it first of all through the witness of your life.

Hombre-Mundo - Global Person. Do you know where this title comes from? It was suggested by Chiara Lubich directly to you young people. When young people asked Chiara what kind of person she thought was the model for future generations, she answered: this person is a boy or girl who is able to treasure what they receive from other people, even if we are from different cultures, religions and languages, and they in turn know how to share their treasures with others.

The aim you have given yourselves in this Project is to become global men and women. I really like the three important subjects you have chosen to explore in depth.

## Summary

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The first is to showcase the lifestyle of a person who has chosen to live for unity and how to put this ideal into practice even when you are on your own and in all the relationships you build, personally, online, in social networks, everywhere.

The second, to make real progress in protecting the planet, and drastically reduce hunger and poverty until they disappear.

The third, to give a decisive contribution to peace among individuals and peoples.

Many of you know that a year ago we had the General Assembly of the Movement and that, thanks also to the ideas and proposals that you teenagers and many other Gen and young people sent us, we chose to set out together on these paths with even greater determination.

So, don't feel alone. Be sure that the Focolare Movement all over the world is with you and supports you in this commitment, working in many different fields. Indeed, I ask you, please help us to fulfil this commitment!

But, you'll ask, where should we start? We need to have the joy and the courage to leave our comfort zone, where life is easy and peaceful, to take care of others and of creation. "Dare to care" is the slogan launched by the young people, and all of us together have made it our own. It means to look around and get moving to "take care" of those in need. Taking care: using our head, heart and hands.

Many of you know that I was born and grew up in the Holy Land, the land where Jesus lived. When I lived in Jerusalem, I often spent time near the holy Stone Steps where, according to tradition it is said that Jesus prayed to the Father asking for the unity of the whole human race. Jesus said: "Father, that they may all be one, as we are one".

Chiara Lubich often told about the time when she read those very words in the Gospel and realised she had been born to fulfil them. Very often, I too passed by that place and felt strongly in my heart the desire to contribute with the whole of my life to the fulfilment of that prayer. Very often I dreamed of seeing all men and women united

in peace, as one single human family. I truly dreamed of a united world.

I confide in you that I too have often felt, and still do feel powerless, as you do too, in the face of the evil in the world, seeing the wars, the injustice and the destruction of nature.

In those moments I feel helped by looking up towards heaven and speaking with God, trusting in His immense Love. This gives me strength and courage: I know that He is with me, He is with us and He guides history.

Being sure of His Love warms my heart and enables me to love, to forgive, to reach out so as to build unity with all the people I meet every day. I feel this is the only way that I, first of all, can be a little builder of peace.

That new world starts with each one of us. We are the ones who, first of all, must be the change we want to see in the world, as Mahatma Gandhi said.

When I was a Gen, Chiara handed on a flag to us in a symbolic way. The first generation handed it on to the second, then to the third. Today I would like to hand over that same flag to each of you. Do you know what's written on this flag? On one side of the flag is written "That they may all be one" and on the other side is written: Jesus Forsaken. Together with all of you and many others in the world, let's try to be bearers of love and unity everywhere, keeping in our hearts the secret that is Jesus Forsaken. He, who was able to transform even suffering into love, still cries out today in the poor, in those who suffer and in all that is ugly and speaks of division, defeat and suffering. Let's start from there, with courage, to help heal our wounds, the wounds around us and in the world, and hasten the coming of peace and unity.

So my very best wishes to you all! May the love we live, day by day, open our hearts to discover the treasures in every person and every people, and enable us to give our riches to others and so become global men and women.

Ciao!

Margaret Karram



Life at the International Focolare Centre

## New members of the General Council of the Movement

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On Saturday, February 26, Vitória de Fátima Franciscatti was elected councillor of the Centre of the Movement. President Margaret Karram has entrusted her with the aspect of "Testimony and Irradiation" and the region of Africa-Middle East, together with Klaus Brüscke.

The appointment of Fr. Mariano Carrizo as head of the Priests' Movement was also confirmed.

We asked them to introduce themselves:

### **Vitória de Fátima Franciscatti:**

I am the fifth of eight children: three male and five female. I grew up in the freedom of the beautiful countryside of the province of São Paulo (Brazil). When I was 12 years old, we moved to the city for our education. Our parents brought us up to work for our living so even when I was very young, I had various jobs, whatever minors were allowed to do.

That's how I faced the adult world. I have often had experiences that tested the moral values I received at home. After my degree in literature, I taught in secondary school. In 1978, I went to a concert given by the Gen Band. I was

strongly attracted by the relationship between them. I threw myself headlong into the life of the Movement. One day at Mass, I heard Jesus' words to the rich young man and felt they were addressed to me. So, I left for the school of formation of the focolarine in Brazil and in 1985 for the little towns of Loppiano (Italy) and Montet (Switzerland) to complete my journey of donation to God in the focolare.

In 1990, I set off for Africa, with great fear, since I was going to a world unknown to me. Palmira Frizzera, one of Chiara Lubich's first companions, then at Montet, worried that I would not be able to live in Africa, proposed a change. This was a very important moment for me as it enabled me to take a step in full freedom and trust in God who knew me, who knows me, and knows what I need. So I left and stayed in Africa for 26 years. There, I always lived in multicultural focolares and experienced that the united world starts right there, in the continuous beginning again in mutual love. I have always felt very free with my African brothers and sisters, even in the most serious situations. For example, during one of the conflicts I experienced there, I was kidnapped by bandits. Even in them I could see Jesus and love really drove out all fear.

I witnessed the birth and development of communities of the Movement in Ivory Coast and Sierra Leone, with many vocations, with numerous sympathizers, adherents, truly a family. Then I spent eight more years in the little town, “Victoria”, near Man (Ivory Coast).

In 2016, for several reasons, I felt I needed a break and so I returned to Brazil. When the time came to go back to Africa, I was asked to change track and go to the little town of the Movement, Mariapolis Ginetta, near São Paulo, Brazil. This was a great surprise. Returning to my culture was not difficult, perhaps because I always felt I was a daughter of this community that generated me. Now there is a new surprise of God for me, with the prospect of going to the International Centre of the Movement in Rome. I feel both gratitude and fear of God, but stronger still is the sense of being a daughter of a Father who knows me and loves me.

### **Fr. Mariano Carrizo**

I'm a diocesan priest. I live in Mendoza (Argentina), near the Andes. I am in a parish which is fifty kilometres long, full of different communities and country churches. Thank God it's very good and I'm happy. I work with a very young assistant priest who was ordained three months ago. We also work a lot in the Diocese together. I am part of the Priests' Pastoral and I am a reference point for my region.

I am also a volunteer priest and part of a nucleus in which we are from different provinces of Argentina (San Juan, Cordoba, Mendoza, Neuquén and Buenos Aires). Three weeks ago we went on holiday with the priest focolarini, volunteers and deacons in Cura Brochero, an important place of popular piety for our country, where the Curé Bochero, one of the first Argentine saints, lived. Today, thinking about this nomination for the Priests' Movement, I am happy to be able to be of service, to say my yes. I entrust myself to your prayers.

Lived Gospel

# Doing everything together



Per evitare i danni di troppa tv ai nostri bambini, I realised that to avoid the harm of too much TV for our children, I had to learn to “waste time” with them. I had to propose other activities rather than force them turn off the TV, even though this required a greater effort. After talking it over with my husband and with the children themselves, we decided to devote each evening to a different activity: writing and painting on Monday; playing games together on Tuesday; watching TV on Wednesday; tidying up the house on Thursday; going for a walk on Friday, etc. Immersing ourselves in the reality of our

children's life, day by day, we discover that there is so much to learn in order to help our children grow. Since we started this exercise, I find that they really look forward to writing or reading a short story, to tidying up their drawers or putting their toys in order, and that they are so happy to do it together. After a few weeks, our eldest son suggested that we should give up our TV evening and do some cooking together instead. So now instead of a film, we have fun preparing dinner together, with our hands coated in flour and grease. Doing things together, even cleaning, becomes an opportunity to have fun!

S.J. - Brazil



## Focolare Movement in the world

# Being and building community

Around the world, wherever there's a group, however small, of people taking the spirituality of unity to heart, you'll find local Focolare communities striving to live in the spirit of the first Christian communities.

French philosopher, Emmanuel Mounier (1905-1950), leading exponent of the movement known as personalism, said, "The primitive experience of the person is the experience of the second person. The 'thou', including the 'we' precedes the 'I', or at least accompanies it". In essence this means: being community.

And because we "are" community, we must "create" and work on building community. The challenge in these our own times, is to strive to go beyond individualism and look around ourselves, to strengthen ties with the people sharing our geographical space, be it in a city, in our local quarter, or our place of work or education.

It's the same challenge that every Focolare group strives to meet in different parts of the world, from large cities to small towns or villages and rural areas around the planet.

I'll never forget how encouraged I felt a while back when I visited a small town in the heart of the Argentine countryside. I'd been invited to visit a center for children with disabilities. While there I soon experienced being in the

presence of a lively community, united by strong ties like a family. You could see it wherever you looked in the township: in the sporting club, the parish, the townhall, the school. You could see it among the adults, the youth, the children, all together. And I've seen the same kind of thing in my contacts with other parts of the world too.

In the province of Namibe in Angola, local Focolare communities unite for different activities, spurred on by the challenges identified during the Movement's General Assembly in 2021, and the call to reach out towards the cry of suffering humanity, in whom we recognize the face of Jesus Forsaken.

Once a month, members of the community work together to prepare a good meal to share among those most in need. They do this in collaboration with the local church, and the action has expanded to include collection and distribution of clothing and household items to people who really need them.

Another group – this time the youth – support a center for over 30 street children aged from 5 to 17 years. Every month they organize a collection of food and household items. Other young people, responding to the Cry of the Planet, collect plastic mineral water bottles (consumed and discarded everywhere in the city streets). They pass them on to local people who, in these difficult economic times, manage to earn something from them. The young



collectors mobilize their families, friends and colleagues to save their own empty bottles and contribute to this project.

The community of Tombwa, in another part of Angola, has chosen to organize a project of clean-up and refuse-collection in the city, protecting and taking care of the trees too.

Moving our attention to the Netherlands, to the southern region of Limburgo, Peter Gerrickens (Volunteer of God) explains, “In late November 2019 we visited a nearby city where we knew they offered regular meals to the most needy residents, because we wanted to start the same kind of activity in our own parish”.

Unfortunately, just as they were about to launch this action, the Covid pandemic hit, so they were not allowed to set up a dining hall as planned. Instead, they began distributing packed meals. Focolare member Maria Juhasz is one of the team. She reflects, “It’s not just about giving out



food, we want to give something more. This is much more than a charitable activity”.

Over the year, the number of meals they provide increased to 400 per day, far too many for the original group to manage on their own. But when they looked around, they soon found reinforcements! Members of the Salvation Army and the Community of Sant’Egidio brought their valuable practical expertise to contribute to the successful continuation of the project.

The support of providence is never lacking, in various forms. Some local businesses contribute their excess products. One shop, in particular, delivers large quantities of fruit and vegetables every week.

Peter and Maria continue, “One evening every fortnight we hold a prayer meeting together. Everyone is welcome: our friends who receive the meals, the kitchen volunteers, the delivery teams, everyone. Among us are Christians from





all different churches, people of other religions and some without any particular religious faith”.

Once a week they also serve coffee in the public square alongside the parish church and the parish priest is always available for anyone who wants to talk with him.

“We know everyone carries many worries and sufferings which can’t be resolved with a meal,” admits Peter. “Our friends are grateful for the food they receive but equally for our prayers when we can remember a friend who has passed away or a newly-born grandchild. It’s important to give food, but it’s equally important to build true friendships and to recognize Jesus in the other person. This is our starting point, creating contact, entering in dialogue, person to person, and to discover each one’s need. Some people come along just for a chat. For example, one man after eating the meal thanked us for having listened to him because he felt no-one in his family listened any more.”

Currently around 2,000 people receive food every week. But the community is not stopping here. A new project is underway, sponsored by the town of Heerlen, to set up a professional skills centre for youth from disadvantaged backgrounds who will receive catering training while assisting in the preparation of these meals. “The Word of Life sustains us in all our challenges,” conclude the project team. “We hope we are truly giving food to Jesus: ‘When I was hungry you gave me to eat’...”.

We could continue to travel the world and find local Focolare communities forming wherever two or three have taken the spirituality of unity to heart. Drawing inspiration from the first Christian communities, they strive to be a living testimony of mutual love. “By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” (John 13,35). Together they contribute to the transformation of their own environment, with a particular focus on the most disadvantaged.

Carlos Mana

### School

To reflect on the potential of the local community in expressing preferential love for those who are suffering the most, and to witness to the Gospel alive in different expressions of the Church and in the world today, the local leaders (or local “pivots”) of Focolare communities around the world are holding a School from 7th to 10th April 2022. Participants will link in for two hours each day from hundreds of points around the world, sharing in a “glocal” experience: being deeply rooted in their own local situation while at the same time being part of an extended global family.



Lived Gospel

# A new family

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My husband and I got to know from a friend of ours, who is a nun, that a young girl who was eight months pregnant was homeless and that she had to spend her nights in a public toilet. We were so upset to hear about this, and we informed the social worker, although we were ready to welcome this girl into our home after we spoke about it to our children. However, as the social worker took some time to see to this situation, one day we decided to go and look for this girl. Helped by a local family, we found her in a video game arcade, where she usually spent the day. She had a very sad story: she was the daughter of a prostitute and she lived in an

institution until the age of fourteen. When she went back to her mother, she immediately ran away from home as she did not want to do the same job. She could not believe her ears when we told her that she could come to stay with us. Thanks to the daily password, many of our friends did their best to provide all she needed for herself and for her unborn child. Now, that a beautiful baby girl has been born, very discreetly we try to help her take care of this baby. She considers us as her family.

L.A.G. – Italia

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When we got married, love made us fly and we hardly listened to the advice of relatives and friends. My husband has an elderly, widowed aunt who took care of her nephews and nieces as if they were her own children. When we asked her to come and live with us, she was very happy. Her presence has always generated warmth. One day, she sensed that something was wrong between us as a couple and she decided to talk to me quite openly about it. She went straight to the heart of the matter and said: “Passion ends, but love remains”. And with

Lived Gospel

# The elderly

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the delicacy of someone who was suffering, she added: “You are in a position to generate a new love: that is what your husband needs. All I can do is support you with my prayers”. When I asked her if we could pray together, she was very happy. The serenity I found after we prayed together immediately had its effect on both my husband and my children, who were already in their teens. My aunt’s presence in our life helps me understand why Pope Francis insists so much on the value of the elderly. She is the most precious asset in our family.

Sz.K. – Slovacchia

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Focolare Movement in the world

## Peru: The many faces of Jesus

For years Silvano Roggero, Ofelia Torres and many people in Peru have been involved in welcoming many Venezuelans who have been forced to leave their homeland in search of a safe place which could become their "home".

If we think that in 2015 there were just 3,768 Venezuelans residing in Peru and only 6 years later there are over 1,200,000, we immediately realize the tragedy of a country that, every day, is becoming more and more depopulated. Currently there are 6 million "refugees" from Venezuela, more than there are from Syria, and the tragic social situation of Peru, which in any case must be given credit for having been generously open to this totally unexpected migratory flow, should not be underestimated.

In December 2017, Ofelia Torres (kindergarten teacher), Armando Molina and Anita, an interconfessional family (he is Evangelical-Pentecostal and she is Catholic), already involved in the Focolare Movement in Venezuela, arrived in Peru. This was the beginning of a new adventure of welcoming and accompaniment of migrants. It is absolutely new and very exciting. It has been going on now for 4 years and has engaged us more and more, also, thanks to fraternal collaboration with members of various Churches and different religions, involving us in the ecumenical and interreligious field.

It is an action that, unfortunately, continues to require our contribution. The volume is less than in previous years in which, for example, there were up to 5,000 crossings a day on the border from Ecuador to Peru. Sometimes Peru is only a transit country from which many continue towards Chile, Argentina and Bolivia. However, we are not talking about migration, but about people fleeing. And when you run away from a place the only thing you do is collect the few things you have at hand. People arrive here with only a few clothes (more summer than winter), a little food and the money for the trip (overland by bus but often also on foot!) during which, very often, they have had to pay bribes in order to get to their destination.

I remember we how we helped one of the first Venezuelan families who arrived here in Peru. We found them a little place to stay that belonged to a couple of the Focolare community, who made it available for a month and we gave them some euros for their immediate needs.

In this spontaneous way, with Ofelia Torres, we started what has basically become our main commitment in these four years: to welcome, accompany, be close to, help in the most urgent needs (food, medicine, clothing, documents, transport ...), including financial aid resulting from the communion of goods of



some Focolare communities and/or donations from friends, relatives, etc. Talking about their choice to leave Venezuela, Ofelia Torres said, "... I wasn't thinking of coming here but when I received a message from Silvano Roggero saying, 'Come to Peru', I intuited a "call". So with my husband, Armando, we embarked on the journey towards a new adventure. Today, after 4 years, I realize that all of this was really God's plan!"

Throughout the year, relatives and friends tell us about people who are arriving in Peru from Venezuela or are already here. What they ask of us is above all to welcome them and allow them to feel the warmth of the family.

We came into contact with more than 500 Venezuelans concentrated mainly in three cities: Lima, Arequipa and Trujillo. We set up a WhatsApp group where we communicate news, especially about documents required to regularize the legal situation of the stay of these people or news of job offers, need for medicine, accommodation or other.

Among the many Venezuelans we met, we came across two women, a psychologist and a doctor, who made themselves available. With them we were able to start offering professional help too. There were workshops, for children, conferences on the theme of depression, distance and communication with family members, nostalgia, overcoming the cold, etc.

If we had to summarize in a few words what we are trying to do, I would use the 4 verbs that are also widely used by Pope Francis when he speaks of migrants: welcome, protect, promote, integrate.

From the beginning we understood that it was and is important to listen deeply to each one, recognizing, in every face, that of Jesus. This was something I had learned as a young man, also being open to a new culture (I arrived in Peru just two years before Ofelia Torres) very different to ours, in order to guide and accompany numerous families, including Peruvian ones.

Ofelia said, "I remember something which marked me deeply: once, in the middle of the night, a person called me and told me that she had recently arrived in Lima and that she was very cold, shivering. I listened for a long time, there were 11 people in the same room, 4 children and 7 adults. We agreed to contact each other the next day. We were delighted to be able to get them blankets, clothing and food". And she continued with another experience: "Once a girl called me, as if to say goodbye. She felt that her life no longer made sense. I listened





to her and realized what was about to happen. Not being able to help her in any other way (she abruptly cut off the call and turned off her cell phone), I called some friends of the Focolare here and in other countries and asked them to pray for this person. The next day I received a text message: "I don't know what happened! I took a bottle of pills and there was no way, they didn't go down my throat, I threw the bottle away and started to cry". We stayed in touch with her for the last two years and thanks to the help of professionals (a psychologist, a doctor, a psychiatrist) we managed to get her out of her darkness. And the real surprise is that love comes and goes. Now it is she who, for some weeks now, has dedicated herself to helping a lonely elderly woman and from the little she gets from street sales, she also helps us by offering a breakfast to some Venezuelan children. She was close to a man severely affected by Covid-19 because no one wanted to approach him, until he died in her arms. She

herself was surprised and recently confided to me how much she values life now. We could really tell many moving stories, like the time when a father, married with two children, came to visit us to give us 15 euros. Months before, he had fallen off a scaffold and fractured his arm. When we met him, it had been 2-3 weeks and, having no money, he hadn't done anything for his arm. It was urgent to intervene before the fracture became complicated, so we were able to have him hospitalized and operated on. Despite his own need, months later he returned to give us that sum: 'So you can help other Venezuelans!'

There are three examples, but there are many people who contact us every day in full pandemic. We realize that it was the Father who wanted us here in this new homeland! "

Silvano Roggero  
*(with the collaboration of Ofelia Torres), Lima, Perú*



Focolare Movement in the world

## Planetary Hombre Mundo Workshop

From 25 to 27 February 2022 a worldwide project thought up and run by young people, aimed at universal fraternity. More than 3,000 teenagers involved in local and global actions to foster greater understanding between different cultures and religions, promote active citizenship and make the young people's commitment to the greatest challenges facing the planet a reality, from the environment to the elimination of hunger and poverty.

Every three years the Gen 3 – the teenagers in the Focolare Movement – organise an international workshop to learn about the culture of fraternity on a global scale. The young people get to know, love and respect others' homelands as their own. They experience how every culture is a gift for the world and they try to build the experience together by means of concrete activities of solidarity. **Their aim is to become active citizens of the world.**

This is the International **Hombre Mundo** Workshop.

The first such event took place in Argentina in 2014; in 2017 it was held in Eastern Europe (Croatia, Serbia, Poland). Then others were held locally and involved thousands of young people. The programme is put together by the young people themselves, from choosing themes to choosing experiences, from the texts to the songs.

This year was the first time it was held at a global level from 25 to 27 February. Over 3,000 young people from more than 600 locations around the world participated in concrete actions and were connected via online videoconference to bear witness to a united world. They were also able to share videos and photos of their experiences via the teens4unity social networks.

In the words of **Chiara Lubich**, founder of the Focolare Movement, who spoke at the 1997 International Gen3 Super Congress “Consequently, a model for future generations would have to be a person of unity. We have often called such a person a “global person,” someone who treasures in their heart all the gifts of people from other continents and also can share their own treasures with everyone else. A model for future generations is a person of unity, a global person.”

The aim of the three days in February was to become more world-men and -women, people with hearts that are open to the whole of humanity with its riches and challenges to be faced and overcome. Each day a different theme was explored.

### Stage I - Our Way of Life

Our way of life is **the art of loving**: how have we lived it, and can we live it during a **pandemic**? How do we carry on loving in the virtual world



of **social media**? These were the themes on 25 February. The art of loving proposed by Chiara Lubich was at the centre of their reflections and experiences shared. “We’ve understood”, said Samira from **Congo**, “that we need to accept one another despite our differences, which are of enormous richness. It is a way to promote values and at the same time banish anti-values”. Élise from **France** echoed her: “We were very struck during one of our meetings by certain statistics concerning infant mortality around the world. Besides hunger and disease, we discovered that a huge percentage of children die of diarrhoea due to lack of clean drinking water. So we contacted an NGO in Cambodia and organised a concert to raise funds for a bore well which would provide enough clean water for a dozen families for life”. Dong and Sunho from **Korea** added: “Last year we wanted to do something for the homeless people in our area. We thought of making sweets for Christmas. We put our savings into a piggy bank and managed to put together 819 packs of sweets which were delivered on Christmas Day to 40 children and 750 homeless people”.

## Stage II – A Tree for the World: Responsibility

“Our commitment to integral ecology and achieving our goal of **Zero Hunger**”.

On 26 February, the young people explored their commitment to integral ecology and achieving the Zero Hunger Goal, the second of the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals to be achieved by 2030. Why is the role of young people so important for saving the environment?

With the help of experts like **Richard Tantoco**, **current President and Chief Operating Officer of the Philippine Energy Development Corporation**, the world's largest geothermal company - they tried to learn more about global warming. “What you do in your lives in the next 10 to 15 years will determine the fate of the planet,” said Tantoco. “We don’t yet have enough innovations to deal with climate change. So, young people are extremely important, and I hope you will focus on careers and studies that help you understand what is happening and make you think about how we can resolve some of the problems.”

One of the experiences shared was from the Gen3 of **Austria** for a reforestation project. “The money invested in the tree project was raised during the Fair Play tournament in Vienna,” they said. “The theme was 'Fair Play against Climate Change'. About 120 players and 100 helpers took part that day. With the money raised, we were able to buy about 1500 trees”.

But how are Zero Hunger and Ecology related or linked? **Yob Doronilla**, an **Australian botanist and scientist**, responded: “I’m going to tell you about a wonderful experience. The people of Fiji were so happy to know that the Youth for Unity are committed to ensuring that no one in the world goes hungry. The Fijian representatives at the United Nations were very supportive of the Zero Hunger project and voted in favour of recognising that agriculture, ecology and climate change are linked. Zero Hunger is linked to ecology because if you grow your crops in a sustainable way, without



been given shelter in the church. Even though I was tired, I believed that God was with me, looking at me and giving me the strength to keep going and help others. So I started to hang on, trying to be patient with everyone but then came a turning point for me: being patient. Now I can say that it was a wonderful, beautiful time for me. It's an experience I'll never forget.

Malala is from **Pakistan**. "When I was 15, I was shot in the head by a group of Taliban when I had to leave school in October 2012. That's when I started a blog, 'Diary of a Pakistani Student', to share something about my daily life, the difficulties I was going through and my great love for my studies. In 2014, when I was 17, I became the youngest person to receive the Nobel Peace Prize for all the efforts on the blog to ensure women had access to education." Last September, the Malala Fund launched the Gulmakai network, a \$3 million initiative helping girls and women around the world to have access to education.

In **Lebanon**, Maria Sfeir, Ambassador of Peace from the Middle East, and Fouad Sfeir told how they "incorporated the culture of peace in educating our children and bringing them up with positive values of love and giving to build a better society, in an environment of non-violence and justice".

One of the many talks was given by Gen Rosso direct from the island of Lampedusa in Italy, famous for welcoming migrants, responding to the cry of humanity in this moment and reaching out to the excluded, the forgotten and the poorest. The day ended with a prayer for peace, the Time Out, where the 3,000 young people connected live asked for peace in every country affected by war or persecution. But it doesn't end here because Hombre Mundo continues to build a united world day by day, starting where we are, with each little action, in each moment, taking each opportunity.

For more information, visit [teen4unity.org](https://teen4unity.org)

Lorenzo Russo

wasting too much fertiliser and water then the world would be able to feed 20% more people, people who currently suffer from hunger. So the two things are closely linked."

"I remember how grateful the person at the UN who negotiates on climate change for the Fiji Islands was when I told her that you guys had taken this action to heart. She said, 'I didn't know the Youth for Unity had done this'. (...) You, the Youth for Unity are doing something really important for the whole world!"

### Stage III - May They All Be ONE

"The beauty of encountering different peoples and their common commitment to build a world of **peace and unity**".

27 February was the day for peace. It all started with the "Hands, Head and Heart" course. The young people reaffirmed their desire to do concrete actions using their hands, their heads to reflect and create ideas for action, and their hearts for strength to carry out all these positive actions.

The experiences shared exuded peace and unity despite the many difficulties. Like that of a girl in **Myanmar** which is going through a really difficult political situation with many families having to leave their homes and take refuge in reception centres. She really wanted to be able to do something for them. "So I made myself available to help the refugees who had



Focolare Movement in the world

## #DARETOCARE: United World Week 2022

The "dare to care" theme will once again be the focus of this year's United World Week on May 1–7, 2022. It's an opportunity not to be missed throughout the regions.

It's time! We are two months away from the United World Week 2022, which this year will see thousands of people of all ages, races and creeds involved all over the world.

When thinking about this event, typically what comes to mind immediately are young people, large gatherings or events. Yet United World Week is much, much more, because it is not just about young people.

Throughout the year there is a wealth of life, with all the different generations of the Focolare Movement and others who work together for universal brotherhood.

Almost 27 years ago, the Youth for a United World proposed to dedicate one week a year to engage public opinion more actively in the journey towards a united world.

I remember the comments, in those days of May in 1995 during the Genfest, trying to figure out what that idea was, what we could do in the year that followed. The answer came in the following weeks and, as always, it came from life itself.

The invitation was, and still is, quite specific. The 25 years of history, from the first United World Week in 1996 to the most recent one in 2021, have confirmed this.

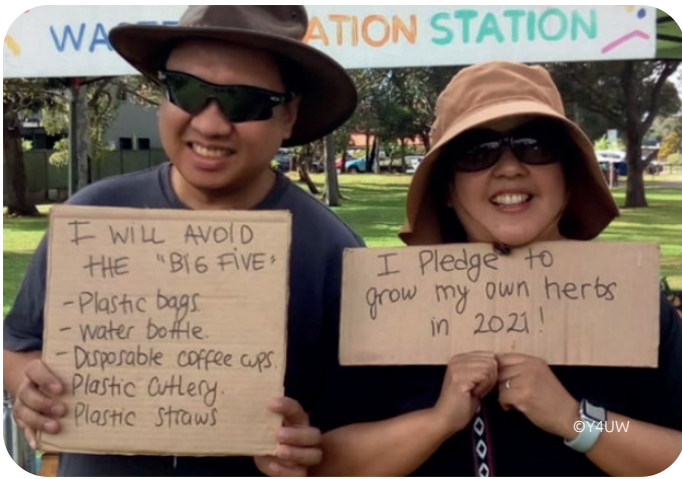
The first thing to do is to deepen and keep up all the activities that the Focolare communities carry out with courage, and in some cases even silently, to support the journey towards unity in the most diverse contexts. This includes in neighbourhoods, schools, workplaces – situations of fragility and neglect.

The campaign targets cities, institutions and the media to promote unity and peace at every level, together with all people who are inspired by the same principles and objectives.

It is not just young people, but together with those who are older, with the involvement of families, professionals, committed adults, politicians... united by the values of universal brotherhood. Together, by being inclusive, with wide-ranging actions that change and improve the social fabric, we can have a greater impact on world opinion.







David Sassoli (1956–2022), the recently deceased former president of the European Parliament, had this to say to Youth for a United World at last year's United World Week:

“I believe that this is a work of civil education that in some way should concern us. It concerns us politicians and institutions, but also of course all the important world of European association. I believe that you in particular are in a privileged position, because you have already defined not only that it is important to take care of others, but also to take care in order to improve the living conditions of others.” This is the care that the world needs. Even in this very special year, on every continent, it has not gone lacking.

“Caring for others is an act of courage,” says Jomery Nery, a young Brazilian tax lawyer who is also the director of operations for Anpecom (the Portuguese national association of the Economy of Communion). From Anpecom comes an initiative called Supera (a program for overcoming economic vulnerability). Jomery describes it this way:

“Throughout the year we receive messages, emails and other communications from people who need help to eat, to build a house because they live in

cardboard housing, for rent, to study or to start a business. Supera is a campaign to collect money, which is then used to help people in need.”

It's a “cure” directed towards fragile situations. In Belfast, too, the capital of Northern Ireland, they have taken this on seriously. For close to four years the city has been hosting an initiative that you could say was both ecological and social, which also takes place in the same way in other parts of the world.

It's called the Repair Café, that is, a bar for repairs, where volunteers are available to fix broken objects that people bring. As they do, they spend a nice morning together. The Repair Café is a real experience, both for the volunteers who fix things and for the people who decide to invest their time and bring an object to be fixed rather than throwing it away.

Their motivations behind this are the most diverse, from concern about climate change, to the wish to see a fond object work once more. And with that excuse, relationships and ties are woven, and the strength to face daily challenges is found.

In Lecce, Italy, a community made up of families, young people, professionals, artists, together with





associations and the parish, works to redevelop a neighbourhood that has become marginalised, difficult and colourless from many points of view.

“The first idea was to make the wall of the oratory more joyful and colourful,” says Don Gerardo. “That’s where the idea of the first mural came from, and people truly appreciated it.”

Slowly, thanks to word of mouth, and to the young writers present in the area, artists from many parts of the world arrived to beautify the buildings of the Stadio district. With them came photographers, tourists and local administrators who were drawn by the true works of art that these murals represent. Everything is the result of a fraternity that has been created between the artists and the inhabitants of the neighbourhood. It has triggered a virtuous

change that everyone feels part of – a true project to help those most in need, which has included activities for economic, environmental and social redevelopment.

It is stories like these that give a soul to United World Week. These communities of active people who put themselves on the line will find a showcase from May 1–7, 2022 in many events around the world, both virtual and in person, that will do nothing more than collect and show the life that exists in the various regions.

The title once again be #Dare to Care – the same “care” that can still make people repeat what Chiara Lubich said about United World Week in 2002: “It is always something a bit special. It is one of the initiatives that is most in keeping with the charism.”

Paolo Balduzzi

## Contributions to the Mariapolis newsletter:

*Dear Readers, this printable Pdf newsletter contains the most important articles published in the “Mariapolis” section of the Focolare Movement’s international website ([www.focolare.org/mariapoli](http://www.focolare.org/mariapoli)).*

*You can download it from the site or receive it by email by activating the link.*

*It is a free service from the Communications Office.*

*We are always grateful to those who wish to continue to support our work financially and in that way contribute to the spreading of the charism of unity.*

*It is possible to send a contribution by bank transfer to the current account in the name of:*

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The present Mariapolis Newsletter in PDF format is a selection of news items published on the Focolare Movement’s website - P.A.F.O.M. [www.focolare.org/en/mariapoli/](http://www.focolare.org/en/mariapoli/)  
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Mariapoli Celeste

# Palmira Frizzera: “The ideal of my life”

One of Chiara Lubich's companions in the very first Focolare in Trento, Palmira Frizzera died on 5 January this year, leaving behind a striking example of “creative faithfulness” and trust in the new generations.

It's May 1947. Spring is in magnificent bloom throughout the Italian city of Trento. Palmira Frizzera, 19 years of age, born in Terlago a few kilometers outside the city, is attending a youth meeting. She's there at the invitation of a friend she'd got to know the year before in November and through whom she'd discovered a new inner freedom and joy for life. Palmira recalled these events years later to a group of young people. *“About a hundred people were in the hall. And that's where I met Chiara Lubich for the first time. I was deeply moved by her, by how she spoke about God, about love, about love of neighbour”.* Among the youth, there were six or seven who stood out from the crowd: the ‘focolarine’. As Palmira explained, *“At the end of the meeting, I noticed these girls, instead of going to their own homes, walked together towards a little house at number 2 Piazza Cappuccini. This was the first focolare house in Trento, but I didn't know it at the time”.* Palmira asked to come along with them.



When she stepped inside she felt she was entering “a king's palace”, even though there was practically no furniture. *“How come you're living here and you never told me?!”* she exclaimed. *“Actually, I burst into tears I felt so overwhelmed. I sat down on one of the little beds and declared ‘I'm never leaving this place!’.”*

Hearing this, Chiara asked her, *“Is God the ideal of your life? And have you understood that to love Him we have to do His Will?”.* The young Palmira answered yes. *“So now, it's best you go home. And if it's His Will you'll come back here, but later”.* With that, Palmira leapt to her feet, said her goodbyes and left. *“On my way home,”* she recalled, *“I heard an inner voice so strongly that I can still hear it to this day: ‘God is the Ideal of your life!’.”*

A few months later Chiara asked her if she still intended to enter the focolare as a focolarina. She did not have to ask twice and so Palmira's adventure in focolare began. These were the “early times” of the Focolare Movement, years of Gospel life in action with so many stories witnessing to the power of the Word of God and all His promises. Palmira lived in focolares in various different cities in Italy. She helped launch *‘Incontri Romani’*, a tourist centre created to promote access to the Christian history of Rome, welcoming visitors from eastern Europe in particular. In 1981 Palmira was transferred to Montet in Switzerland, for the nascent Focolare Center which would take the name of ‘Foco’.

With this move, Palmira felt God was asking everything from her. *“... I found myself alone in*



*Everything was important, big or small, and there was no disharmony between them.*

*I'm reliving the same experience now. I must engage with simplicity in small and big things, with death and life, with what God asks of me moment by moment. I must live as a Focolarina, not with words but with my actions.*

*I've understood I must stop thinking about living or dying. I must convert myself to live only the present moment in the Will of God. (...) God doesn't want us on our own, but together. We're a body.*

*Preparing myself for Paradise, I've understood that it counts for nothing being from the early times, or the second or third times. Because in front of God the soul is always young, it's immortal. In God, the soul has no age. So we've all got to recognize that in ourselves. We're all equal. In God, there's no long-service or privileges. We're all on the same level together!"*

Palmira left us on 5 January 2022, at the age of 94. One particular phrase from Mark's Gospel (16:15) accompanied her throughout her life: *'Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation,'* her Word of Life.

Margaret Karram, President of the Focolare Movement, wrote *"...just as she always sustained us by living her design fully, we're sure she'll continue to sustain us beside Chiara and all our friends up there ..."*

Noreen Lockhart



*an apartment in Estavayer (the nearest town to Montet). I felt absolutely desperate, sobbing and crying. I realised I couldn't stay like this. Driven by my desperation, I knelt down on the carpet and recited the Our Father. When I got to the words 'thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven', I proclaimed them out loud. With that, I experienced an inner peace, which I've never lost". She remained at Montet for nearly thirty years, playing a unique role in the formation of generations of Focolarine women and Focolarini men, and enriching all inhabitants and visitors with her great wisdom.*

She was passionate about the Gen, the youth of the Focolare Movement. Before coming to the Centre at Montet *"I didn't have much experience of being with young people,"* she reflected. *"But I gained that experience here. So I realised 'Here, we're all at the school of the same Master. (...) I'm one of your school mates. It's not that I'm someone from the early times of the Movement, one of your formators. No! That would rob Jesus in the midst of His place. I am one of your school mates. We're all at the school of Jesus in our midst'."*

Another of Palmira's gifts was her extraordinary ability to communicate, combined with a similar extraordinary ability to listen. This was reflected in the sincerity and frankness of her communion with others, and the openness with which she always shared what she was living through. This is how she related an experience towards the end of her life: *"To take on a responsibility, to hold a significant conversation ... and to wash the dishes, all with the same solemnity, with the same freedom, with the same importance. That's what we learnt from Chiara in Piazza Cappuccini, in the first Focolare in Trento.*

Mariapoli Celeste

# Mgr Aldo Giordano: witness to the resurrection



He encountered the spirituality of unity shortly before being ordained a priest, and understanding Jesus forsaken gave new meaning to his ministry. Highly-cultured, he served the European Church and was Apostolic Nuncio in Venezuela.

In the introduction to his book entitled 'Another Europe is possible! Christian ideals and perspectives for the old continent' (San Paolo Edizioni, 2013), Mgr Aldo Giordano presents himself as follows: 'I was born (on 20 August 1954) in a small country village in Cuneo (San Benigno) in northern Italy. (...) I was ordained a priest on 28 July 1979. (...) A companion with the same name as me, Aldo, had been ordained a priest at the end of June. On the Sunday before my ordination he had celebrated a Mass in the evening as a gift for me and another companion about to be ordained since we were in danger of missing Sunday Mass because of a mix-up. As he was saying goodbye, he told us he would be going to the mountains the following day with two young people. That was to be his last mass because the following day he fell into a precipice and died, after just one month as a priest.'

We celebrated his funeral on Thursday and on the Saturday of that same week I was ordained a priest. During those days, it was perhaps the first time I asked myself about faith in a serious way. I asked myself about the existence of God, about Providence, about Paradise, and said to myself if I wasn't convinced about the answers to these questions I could, and perhaps should give up the idea of becoming a priest. I had the grace of hearing a voice within confirming that God does exist and that He is love, that the Resurrection is true, that Paradise exists, and that being a priest meant above all being a witness to this great and good news. So I became a priest."

He completed his studies in Philosophy and Theology in the autumn of 1978 then decided to specialise in Philosophy at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome. However, at the beginning of August, before moving to the Italian capital, he took part in the Mariapolis in Bergamo and was fascinated by the charism of unity. He took advantage of the few days he had available to spend time at the "gens centre" in Grottaferrata (Rome) for young seminarians who live the spirituality of the Focolare Movement. Thanks to profound conversations with some of the members of the "gens centre" that he continued to visit during his first year of studies, he understood in a new way that Jesus' death on the cross was not the end but a passage, and that His cry of abandonment, first desperate, then immediately confident, was not a question of meaning, but rather an answer to non-meaning: God is Love, even in pain.

Aldo's natural predisposition to friendship, after meeting the charism of unity, became enriched by a new dimension: fraternity in Christ.

From 1982 to 1996 he was professor of philosophy at the Interdiocesan Theological School and the Higher School of Religious Sciences in Fossano (Cuneo). He taught for several years at the seminary's classical high school, whilst also running courses in ethics at the school of theology for lay people. He also worked as vice-parish priest in the parish of S. Pio X in Cuneo and followed the pastoral work of the diocese in the areas of politics, economics, medicine and culture.

Because of his organisational and teaching skills and his sensitivity to Europe and ecumenism, he was chosen in 1995 as Secretary-General of the Council of European Bishops' Conferences (CCEE) and moved to the secretariat's headquarters in St.

Gallen (Switzerland). He carried out this task in the service of communion and collaboration with the European bishops for 13 years, deepening in particular the ecumenical dimension of his ministry. His years of intense and fruitful work in Switzerland also attracted the attention of the Secretariat of State, and in June 2008 the Holy Father Benedict XVI appointed him Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the Council of Europe in Strasbourg (France). Here he was able to deepen and broaden his knowledge of the European reality.

In October 2013 he was appointed Titular Archbishop of Tamada and Apostolic Nuncio in Venezuela, where he remained for just over seven and a half years. Despite having no classical training in diplomacy, he understood diplomacy in its most authentic and lofty sense as bridge-building.

On 8 May 2021, the Pope appointed him Apostolic Nuncio to the European Union. The Covid pandemic also became an opportunity for Aldo to reflect on the meaning of life. On 20 April 2020, he wrote: "The pandemic is highlighting the fact that life is a risk and is fragile (...) it will leave its mark on the question of faith. Those

who entrust their lives to scientific reasoning, technology, trading, money, power, pleasure... find themselves in a new situation, that of experiencing how unreliable these spaces for salvation are. (...), the suffering in these times is creating the question about God himself, His Love and Providence. Where is God at the very moment these sorrows occur? Faced with this situation, it seems to me that we need to find ways to witness to and re-propose faith in the crucified and risen Christ as a matter of urgency, a God to whom we can entrust our life to save it from falling into meaninglessness and nothingness".

Mgr Aldo Giordano died on 2 December 2021 having battled with that same virus for two months. Saying goodbye to his friends before reluctantly yet serenely entering intensive care, he wrote: "The time has probably come for me too to return to the house of the Father. From heaven I will accompany you in every way (...). I embrace you strongly. I love you" and 10 minutes later: "The doctors are telling me I need to accept intubation and general anaesthesia. I am trying to accept it as God's will'. He never awoke from the anaesthetic except to find the Risen One waiting for him on the other side.

Mons. Giorgio Lingua

—

Mariapoli Celeste

# Darci Rodrigues:

## A truly faithful life



Darci Rodrigues was someone who knew how to live her life for the cause of unity, in her characteristically "marian" style.

From the moment Brazilian Focolarina Darci Rodrigues left us on 10 February 2022, and again in the hours after her funeral, social media was humming with expressions of appreciation and gratitude for her life. She was well known throughout Brazil and beyond due to the many roles of responsibility she had undertaken in the Focolare Movement, which allowed her to forge relationships with a staggering number of people around the world.

*"A life as full and challenging as hers never stopped her from being refreshingly 'normal', as many have commented, combined with a great spiritual depth. And she was so greatly loved by everyone because of this",* reflected Saad Zogheib Sobrinho, Focolarino also from Brazil, summing up the reactions of many who lived and interacted with her over the years.

The young Darci first met the charisma of Chiara Lubich in 1963 at a Mariapolis gathering over a

few days in the city of Garanhuns, in the state of Pernambuco. *"It was such a strong experience"* Darci herself said when relating her first contact with Focolare. *"I was fascinated! Especially by how I saw the Gospel being lived"*. At that time she was a student at the University of Recife," surrounded by Marxist ideas and strong criticisms of the Church" as she recalled. The contrast with this new encounter with God was overwhelming. She embraced the charisma of unity and decided to consecrate her life to God in the Focolare as a Focolarina.

Once decided, she left her fiancé, her family and studies behind to attend the formation school for Focolarini in Italy from 1964 to 1966. She then returned to Brazil and dedicated herself to working for the aims of the Focolare.

After a time in Belo Horizonte, she was transferred to the region of Vargem Grande Paulista, near São Paulo to support the beginnings of Mariapolis Araceli (now known as Mariapolis Ginetta), one of the three main Focolare centres in Brazil. She later moved to the city of São Paulo from where, for 20 years, she guided the development of the Focolare Movement in the south-east and centre-west states of the country.

In 2002 she was elected as Counsellor for the Focolare Movement in Brazil. In the Movement's next Assembly which took place in 2008 after the death of founder Chiara Lubich, Darci was re-elected as a Counsellor, this time nominated by the newly-elected Focolare President, Maria Voce, as 'Central Delegate' with a leading role in the governance of the Movement at an international level.



"At times I had to tackle difficult issues. But in those moments, I always found peace and a special assistance of the Holy Spirit", she recalled. "Often I may have had my own idea ready, but then I could recognize that Jesus – through another person – wanted something different, perhaps the exact opposite of what I was thinking! What was important was to trust in the presence of Jesus among us, and not only rely on my own common sense", she explained.

In May 2012 she was diagnosed with serious lung disease. She described receiving the news: "The test results were conclusive. The doctor told me I was going to need a lot of courage to combat it and persevere. But deep inside, I held the strong conviction that nothing happens by chance and that God has a plan of love for each one of us".

To the amazement of her doctors, Darci responded unexpectedly well to the treatment. Her close

colleague Gloria Campagnaro remembers that period very clearly. "Life went on as usual, in the sense that she retained her calm demeanour whatever she was doing: therapy, daily walks prescribed by her doctor, as well as her work for the Movement albeit for a reduced number of hours. Her life continued to be fruitful and to build unity".

In May 2020 her illness returned and she was admitted to hospital on several occasions. In these last steps of her life, Darci was surrounded by the love and prayers of the whole Focolare community. She recorded a video message just before Christmas in which she declared her conviction which had guided her whole life: "Jesus is in our midst".

Federal Government spokesperson, Luiza Erundina, responded to the news of Darci's death with the declaration: "She leaves an exemplary lesson on how to live fully the ideal of unity and fraternity which humanity needs so badly". What stands out from the countless expressions of gratitude to God for the life of Darci Rodrigues is a universal recognition of the serenity and joyous welcome she extended to every person she met throughout her life, wherever she was. In essence, as someone described it, hers was a 'Marian' presence.

Luís Henrique Marques  
Editor of Cidade Nova magazine







## Members of the Movement who have concluded their earthly life:

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1 December 2021 **Maddalena Cariolato**  
*focolarina from Italy*

3 January 2022 **Luis Roberto Abella**  
*focolarino from Uruguay*

5 January 2022 **Dominique Maure**  
*married focolarina from France*

5 January 2022 **Antonio (Tonino) Bagnoli**  
*volunteer from Italy*

5 January 2022 **Margrit Gspan-Keller**  
*volunteer from Switzerland*

5 January 2022 **Zelide Cecchetti**  
*member of the New Families Movement from Italy*

9 January 2022 **Laís Antunes Plech**  
*gen 3 from Brazil*

10 January 2022 **Chukri Mehmari**  
*volunteer from Brazil*

13 January 2022 **Adele Santanché**  
*focolarina from Italy*

15 January 2022 **Pubblio Dal Soglio**  
*married focolarino from Italy*

19 January 2022 **Michel Vandeleene**  
*focolarino from Belgium*

19 January 2022 **Maria Rosa Ghislandi**  
*volunteer from Italy*

19 January 2022 **Martin Klingbacher (Podi)**  
*focolarino from the USA*

21 January 2022 **Roberto Moreira**  
*volunteer from Argentina*

22 January 2022 **Dante Concari**  
*priest focolarino from Italy*

23 January 2022 **Paolo Abati**  
*focolarino from Italy*

27 January 2022 **Cosimo Migliaccio**  
*focolarino from Italy*

27 January 2022 **Piero Taiti**  
*one of the first members in Italy of the dialogue with people of non religious beliefs*

31 January 2022 **Joachim Jermis**  
*married focolarino from Germany*

6 February 2022 **Maurice Khoury**  
*priest focolarino from Egypt*

8 February 2022 **Sebastiano Vizzini**  
*priest focolarino from Italy*

9 February 2022 **John Welch**  
*married focolarino from the USA*

10 February 2022 **Darci Rodrigues**  
*focolarina from Brazil*

20 February 2022 **Ricardo Spinetta**  
*volunteer from Argentina*

24 February 2022 **Jacquot Rakotobe**  
*focolarino from Madagascar*

24 February 2022 **Teresa Piras Garau**  
*married focolarina from Italy*

28 February 2022 **Carlos Alberto Quiroz Palacios**  
*volunteer from Ecuador*



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Santi insieme

## Chiara Lubich: One single people

From the Speech at the Reception of the UNESCO Prize for Peace Education, Paris, 17 December 1996.

How indeed could we think of peace and unity in the world without the vision of all humanity as one family? And how can we see it as such without the presence of a Father for all?

This spirituality therefore calls us to open our hearts to God who is our Father, who certainly does not abandon his children to their fate, but who wants to accompany, protect and help them. For he knows human beings in their intimate depths, looks after each person in particular, even counting the hairs on their head.

He does not lay burdens on their shoulders that are too heavy to bear, rather he is the first to carry them. He does not leave people alone to fend for themselves as they seek to renew society, but he is concerned and involved.

Believing in his love, believing that we are loved personally and immensely, is vital to this new spirituality.

To believe.

And, from among the countless possibilities of our life, to choose him as our Ideal. This means to put ourselves, intelligently, in the position that everyone

eventually faces in the future, when we reach the destiny to which we have been called: Eternity.

Clearly, however, it is not enough to believe in God's love, it is not enough to have made this great choice of him as our Ideal. The presence and care of the Father of all calls each one to be his child, to love the Father in return, and to fulfil, day after day, that particular plan of love which the Father has in mind for each one, that is, by doing his will.

And we know that the first will of a father is that his children treat one another as brothers and sisters, that they care for one another

Being committed to living and to bringing peace is not to be taken lightly!

One must have courage, one must know how to suffer.

But certainly, if more people would accept suffering out of love, the suffering required by love, it would become the most powerful instrument for giving humanity its highest dignity: that of feeling that we are not so much a togetherness of peoples, one beside the other, often in conflict with one another, but that we are one single people.

Chiara Lubich

*Chiara Lubich, Discorsi in ambito civile ed ecclesiale, by Vera Araújo, Città Nuova, Roma 2020, pag. 39-43.*