

CH CONFERENCE CALL

Rocca di papa 11th February 2017

“See, make it yours and act”

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1. Opening and greetings

(Applause)

Rafael: Hello everyone and welcome to this global appointment: the conference call.

Mariana: We are very happy to spend this time with all of you. My name is Mariana and I teach yoga.

Rafael: I am Rafael and I work in administration with a non-profit organisation. Mariana is from Argentina.

Mariana: Rafael is Mexican. We have been married for 8 years and have two children who are here: Giosuè (applause) and Luz Maria. We now live here in the Castelli Romani.

Rafael: A special hello to Mexico and the whole continent of America. Hello America! (Applause)

Mariana Los queremos mucho!

As usual you can send your greetings, messages or feedback via WhatsApp to the following number 00 39 3428730175; to the email address collegamentoch@focolare.org or post them on the Facebook page [Facebook.com/CollegamentoCH](https://www.facebook.com/CollegamentoCH).

Rafael: This evening we have with us a group of council workers and the Mayor of our local authority here at Rocca di Papa. Welcome to you all! (Applause)

We also have representatives from a meeting dedicated to the permanent Mariapolises in the Focolare Movement, which are in 25 countries around the world.

Mariapolis means City of Mary. The first Mariapolises began in the mountains near Trent during the 1950s. Chiara was there with her first companions, men and women focolarini, and there were young people, consecrated religious, all kinds of people... There was only one law among everyone, "to live mutual love". This law made everyone equal, workers, children, older people... there was no difference. After a while, the holiday period was over.

As time went by "permanent Mariapolises" were founded, in different ways and times, in various parts of the world. Here we have some people who live in a few of these Mariapolises, for example here is Mauro. He lives in a permanent Mariapolis in Acatzingo, near the city of Puebla in Mexico.

Mauro, que bonito Méjico!

Mauro: De verdad!

Rafael: Welcome, Mauro!

Mauro: Thank you!

Rafael: Can you tell us something about this permanent Mariapolis?

Mauro: Well, Acatzingo is a very small town of 40,000 inhabitants. In the Mariapolis, there are about 40 of us and we have a very good relationship with the people in the area and in many little villages who often come to visit us, to play and do various other things. Then, you know, at the start there were many poor people, so we saw the need to establish a school to help the children of the families we met, and help came from many sources. Today the school has 400 pupils from play school to high school.

We also have a very good rapport with the local authority and with our bishop who comes to visit us at least once a year.

Rafael: Thanks Mauro, that's great.

Mauro: Thank you. (Applause)

Mariana: Now let's go to Asia. Nar, you live in the permanent Mariapolis in the Philippines, at Tagaytay, near Manila. People often come there from all over Asia and people of different religions too. Is that right?

Nar: Yes, you're right, because one of the important features of the Mariapolis is dialogue between people of different religions, so people of different faiths come, for example a group from the Rissho Koseikai from Japan and young Buddhists from Vietnam, Myanmar and Thailand, because they want to have an experience of the dialogue of life. In this way, we can give witness and this is what Chiara wanted.

Mariana: Good, thank you, Nar.

Now, hello Renata, you spent many years in Ottmaring, in Germany, in the permanent Mariapolis close to Augsburg, where we know that people of different Christian traditions live. What is it like?

Renata: Yes, in fact, two Christian communities live in Ottmaring, the Focolare Movement and a Lutheran Fraternity, and this is the main characteristic of this permanent Mariapolis. When the two communities first met, about 50 years ago, it was love at first sight because both of these Movements had "May they all be one" as their Word of Life. So both of them want to contribute to unity among all Christians.

Now it is 500 years since the Reformation and this little town, which was founded with the blessing of both Churches, wants to contribute through its life and the experience of these 50 years. It has been fruitful ground for the meetings of bishops of different churches, and some documents have been drafted in the little town, which then had significant influence in the Christian world.

We really do love one another in this place. It is an experience between groups that are different; a place for dialogue where there is also space for other Movements. *Together for Europe* began there too, which is a network of about 250 Movements and communities, all committed to giving a soul to Europe.

Mariana: Thank you, Renata, thank you. (Applause)

2. Connecting with ourselves and helping others: young people at the Ginetta Mariapolis (Brazil)

Mariana: 40 km from San Paolo, in Brazil, is the permanent Mariapolis called Ginetta. There a group of young people, *Youth for a United World*, spent six months at a "school" of life. We'll hear from them in this report.

Marcos Bomfim – reporter: *We have come to the Mariapolis Ginetta, forty kilometres from San Paolo. It is a centre for training and hospitality for the members of the Focolare Movement. For a year now something new has been happening, the Youth for a United World school. It lasts six months and young people have the chance to plan their future and discover their talents.*

Raphael Strauss, Alemanha: I wanted to do something practical for others or travel the world. I was not yet sure which.

Antonio Neto, Brazil: My biggest challenge was thinking of myself as being less than others, because they had not been through what I had been through. I remember a lesson when everyone spoke about what they could give. Just then, I felt I had nothing to give, only a life full of suffering and pain.

Darlene Bomfim, Life Coach: First of all each of us has to accept our own experience and background, whatever happened. Some come from families that are very organised, others less so. These are young people but some have already been through a great deal and have their problems. The school also includes work experience. At work, they have the opportunity to relate to one another and put what they have learned into practice.

Slide: Projecto Jardim Margarida / Bairro do Carmo / Padaria Espiga Dourada

Bruna de Oliveira, Brazil: One of the young people in the project, knowing my background, asked me to make a video documentary about the Jardim Margarida project.

The difference was that I did not do it for myself, or for them, but the children themselves did it. It was just a question of motivating the children and encouraging them to do it. The interesting thing was to involve them. I had to tell them about my work, involve them in working on the project and doing it all themselves. It was very interesting.

Telegiornale TV Brazilia : Heavy rain and high winds have done much damage in Vargem Grande Paulista about 50 kilometers from San Paolo.

Guilherme Cazzari, Brazil: It was an ordinary day and it was raining. During our lessons we got the news, "Jardim Margarida – the district we were working in – had been flooded". I was shocked. It was as though I understood we had learned just then, and now had to put it into practice.

Darlene Bonfim: – We created some techniques and tools for coaching which help them find themselves and then think about how they want to live their lives, identifying a goal and how they are going to reach it. One of the most interesting things during the final evaluation was that they had been able to see where they were going in future.

Antonio Neto: I had no plans for the future when I came here but now I have some goals ahead of me. Despite my lack of self esteem, now I want to make a life for myself.

Raphael Strauss, Fora de Campo: I am going to do voluntary work in the slums in Florianopolis. I will live there and it will be a strong experience for me. I have not met anyone in Europe who has had such a strong experience and found such a strong reality as I have. Why do I want to do voluntary work? Because I want to give other people what I have learned in the last six months at this school.

Rafael: Muito obrigado amigos! Thank you! (Applause)

3. The Economy of Communion and Pope Francis

Rafael: Money, poverty, the future. These are three subjects that Pope Francis highlighted during his meeting with 1200 business people, and students studying the economy of Communion on 4th February in the Vatican. Let's see the report.

Music

Speaker: A joyful atmosphere characterized Pope Francis' meeting with about 1200 business people, young people and specialists in the economy of communion from 54 different countries. During the 25 years since Chiara Lubich founded the project, businesses of different sizes and business networks have developed which are guided by the spirit of an economy of communion in order to end absolute poverty and social injustice.

Among the first to speak, before the Pope's arrival, was Professor Stefano Zamagni of the University of Bologna. He emphasised the importance of Chiara Lubich's original inspiration. There followed testimonies by those who first established Economy of Communion businesses in Brazil, where it began, but also in Korea, Italy and among poor indigenous populations in Argentina.

Applause

Luigino Bruni: Dear Holy Father, our first words, and mine too, are "thank you".

Speaker: Luigino Bruni, a focolarino and an economist, welcomed the Pope, thanking him on behalf of everyone for focusing so often on economics and economic matters in his encyclicals and in other ways. Luigino explained how those gathered in Paul VI Hall see communion as a way of life that is both personal and related to their business in response to a calling to combat poverty and injustice. Then Florencia, Cornelius, Teresa and Maria Helena spoke about what is happening in their own countries and their gratitude to the Pope on behalf of the poor. His audience warmly received his words, both sombre and powerful. The Pope immediately emphasised the important connection between the two words: economy and communion.

Pope Francis: These are two words that people today keep very separate and often consider as opposed to each other. ... Through your life, you show that economy and communion become better when they are alongside one another. Economics becomes better, of course, but so does communion, because a spiritual communion of hearts is even fuller when it becomes communion of goods, skills and profits.

Applause

Speaker: The Pope emphasised the importance of profit sharing to avoid money becoming an idol; and the need to build an economic system that does not limit itself to care for the victims of injustice but creates a society in which there are no people who are marginalised or cast aside. He ended looking to the future, inviting everyone present not to worry about the number of people involved but rather of being salt and leaven in an economy of communion.

Pope Francis: Saying "no" to an economy that kills becomes a "yes" to an economy that gives life, because it shares, it includes the poor and uses profits to create communion. ... I hope you will continue to be seeds, salt and light for a different economy: the economy of the Kingdom, where the rich know how to share their wealth and the poor, the poor... are called blessed. Thank you. (Applause)

Rafael: The Pope said that “No” to an economics that kills should become a “yes” to economics that gives life”, words that were widely reported by the media. Let’s hear a few reactions from the business people who were there.

Armando Tortelli - Holding Protelli - Curitiba, Brazil (in Brazilian) It was marvellous when the Pope said that we must not only share money and what we earn, but also give of ourselves, for others. This is the best gift! I think we have made good progress up to now.

Ernesto Figueredo – Gestar – Camaguey, Cuba (in Spanish) The Economy of communion is a good opportunity, we really need this in Cuba where there is a debate going on between the socialist state economics and capitalist economics. I think this can give a boost, not only to the economy, but to enabling people go forward in Cuba.

Teresa Ganzon, Bangko Kabayan - Batangas, Filippine (in English) The times are not easy for someone in our business for example. We’re in banking, the modern times make it very difficult to keep to this being an expression of communion in the financing world. To me it meant a lot to share it with the Pope and to somehow feel that he has this in his heart as well.

Steve William Azeumo - responsable AECAC - Yaoundé Camerun (in French): He really showed the difference between philanthropy, in the way capitalism goes about it, and communion. He said that we are salt and yeast and we must keep going on and on with courage, humility and joy.

Bettina Gonzales - Boomerang Viajes - Buenos Aires, Argentina (in Spanish): We can get confused and think that the system is being imposed on us, instead we are the ones who create it. We have an important responsibility, to change the system. We are committed to the poor, to keep on including them in our businesses and carry on working hard to eradicate poverty and above all create jobs, which is the greatest challenge.

Corneille Kibimbwa – Director of a Hospital – Kinshasa, DR Congo (in French): Africa is united in its suffering, I must say, and we want to work to reduce suffering, to eliminate suffering through the economy of communion.

Mabel Ortiz – Cafe shop – Tegucigalpa, Honduras (in Spanish):

We must talk about and hand on this reality, the economy of communion. My business has been doing this for a few years but we want to teach all business people in Honduras that this is the only way to eliminate poverty in third world countries.

Mario Maia Matos – responsible for the EoC – International Incubating Network – Lisbon, Portugal (in Portuguese): It was like a prophecy, more than anything else. I understood that Pope Francis sees the economy of communion as a prophecy for today, which makes us believe it is possible to create a better society, in which money and the poor “put together” can truly be the future.

John and Julie Mundell –Mundell & Associates - Indianapolis, USA (in inglese)

John: I think it is going to be a great boost for us and also for us entrepreneurs ... It gives us that extra push specially in the day to day work we do where we sometimes, it is difficult, typical work is chaotic , but remembering the words of the Pope today is going to be something we'll keep as a treasure.

Julie: Yes, He reminded us that the work is about money but the work is about love.

Rafael: Anouk Grevin, is French and she is an economist. You were there at that important meeting with the Pope in the Vatican. Anouk, how would you explain the Economy of Communion in a few words? What does someone in business need to know to understand this subject better?

Anouk Grevin: I think the Pope himself gave the best definition of all and we are grateful for this. The Economy of Communion, more than being about business practice, is about a vision for economics, a vision that puts the poor at the heart of the matter, and also giving, freely giving, and reciprocity, not profit and money. A businessperson who wants to get involved in the Economy of Communion can find many ways of putting it into practice. Each can find their own way. Perhaps the most symbolic and the original way is the one Chiara gave us from the start: the sharing of profits. This not only means helping those who are in need but it also means that profit is not the purpose of the business, the purpose is to serve everyone and especially those who are most in need.

Rafael: One last question. What are the priorities for the Economy of Communion now?

Anouk: I could mention two. The first is young people, above all to support young people who want to start a business in the Economy of Communion, so that there can be more of them. Young people or at least new entrepreneurs. We want to help young people because they can help us to find very creative ways of making this culture of giving widely known, which is not something only for business people but for everyone. I have just come back from Africa where I saw that young people in the universities in Cameroon have set up clubs for the Economy of Communion to make it better known.

The second priority is to give a more correct vision of poverty. The Economy of Communion is not philanthropy, helping people in need. The fact is that we all have infinite riches to discover. We are all poor too and we don't want to reduce people simply to their economic vulnerability. Everyone has something to give and the EoC truly wants to give everyone this opportunity, not only to receive what they lack but also to be able to give the treasures they have that others are missing.

Rafael: Fantastic, thank you Anouk! We will follow these developments with all of you.. (Applause)

4. Eunice, a criminologist who works for justice (Kenya) In English

Mariana: So, we'll turn over a new page now and go to Nairobi in Kenya. We are going to hear a testimony from Eunice, a criminologist whose daily life is committed to bringing back justice to her city.

Music

Eunice Wanta Ikapel: Criminal Investigation Unit, Nairobi: My studies? I have two degrees: the first degree I did, is sociology, (...) I work with the Criminal Investigation department – (...) I took the second degree of criminology because I felt that to deal with the criminals I have to understand more about crime and the criminals themselves.

Everyday there are different challenges, deep challenges that need more strength, more wisdom (...) and much knowledge. One man came in to my office and he was reporting that his friend had conned him 1.3 million shillings (...) So for me I recorded this statement and I went with him to arrest the other man.

Music

(...) Many of the officers who were around me they were supporting that we take this man to jail because of the money that he has taken (...) I talked to the two of them. (...) I told the complainant, because the accused was willing to give back the money, the whole amount, to just take the money and forgive him, instead to taking him to serve in the prison. And he has young children, he has a family. So at the end of the day they all agreed to what I was requesting them and we sorted out the matter. He was paid his money and he forgiven this other man and the both went happy home.

Music

Where I found my strength? It's from the community, most of the weekend I go to the Focolare where I share my experiences, I get the ideas, also. And above all every morning I ask wisdom from God and because God knows the work that I am doing I need his presence (...) My hope for Nairobi city and for the whole of Kenya is that people will live in a city where there is no crime, in a city where there is hope (...). A city where everyone will be happy and everyone will appreciate the work that we are doing

Music

Mariana: Thanks Eunice, we heard that you had a baby recently, a little girl. Congratulations! (Applause)

5. Creative art... and social transformation (Costa Rica)

Rafael: Let's continue our journey around the world and go to Costa Rica. There are a great many refugees on the borders with Nicaragua, Honduras, Haiti and Venezuela. Tina and Sandro have gone there with their friends, to set up a fraternity project through art. We can get to know them through a report they sent us.

Tina Murg – Austria – Designer and Art Teacher: Hi, I'm Tina Murg.

Sandro Rojas Badilla – Costa Rica – Graphics Communicator: I'm Sandro Rojas Badilla, from Costa Rica.

Tina: I'm Austrian and we have been married for two years. We live here in San José, the capital of Costa Rica,

Sandro: Both of us work in the field of art, design and communication.

Tina: One of the goals of our marriage was not only to have a family, but that our marriage pact should be meaningful beyond ourselves. We wanted to dedicate part of our lives to something we believe in and this something is fraternity.

Sandro: Yes, in fact we grew up living for the culture of unity; and we are deeply grateful to Chiara Lubich for this, because she inspired this project which we now call the F CR Project.

Music

We work for fraternity in an interdisciplinary manner, using art as a tool for social transformation. We started this project with a special focus on migrants who come and who are stranded on the northern border of Costa Rica. We don't just bring basic necessities, but our art too: games, dance, music, and everything that can fill the soul. We don't only go to the border for the migrants, but also to other parts of the country with the intention of making the local population more aware of this situation.

Music

Mariana Chaves – Costa Rica – Human Rights Lawyer: Most people who come to Costa Rica as refugees, have come from the north, from Salvador, Honduras, Venezuela and Colombia, and other countries. There are also a few from Haiti and some African nations, who have chosen this option for international protection.

Speaker: It was a new situation for the country, and the government was not able to deal with it. Nevertheless, the government has put up some tents to give temporary shelter. After a short time the F CR Project began.

Nayle Yrigoyen – Venezuela – Professional Dancer: I started doing this because I too was a migrant and a refugee, so I approached their situation in a personal way. The project has inspired me because of its artistic point of view that uses universal language, that can transform society. It was like an open road, bringing about change. music

Speaker: From the time the F Project began in October 2016, monthly visits were made bringing help and art.

Viviana Lopez – Costa Rica – Social worker: It was a way of getting to know very nice people, to learn about their experiences and these changed me. I saw that art, as a universal language, is one of the best means of communicating among people.

Tina Murg – Austria – Designer and Art teacher: After 4 months, the most beautiful thing was to see the joy on the faces of the people we have visited and of the volunteers who worked with us.

Esteban Hernandez – Costa Rica - Comunicador: We thought we were the ones helping, instead each time we got on the bus to come back, we realized we were the ones who had been helped.

Carlos Acosta – Costa Rica - Sociologist: It was an opportunity to do something concrete, for real people in really difficult situations. They were not just words and good wishes. What I learned most is that we make progress by doing something, and not in other ways.

Speaker: Networking is the key, cooperation with other entities and associations in the artistic and social field. It made the project possible and has allowed it to grow as a community Project. With the solidarity of so many people and companies, F CR Project was able to bring more than a thousand wooden pallets to the refugee camp, because after Hurricane Otto, there was a great need of beds for the migrants.

Sandro: We also started a campaign through the media and social networks, which helped raise awareness of the situation.

Adrian Hernandez – Costa Rica – Student and Sociologist: And it is an experience that everyone should have, that can be repeated and practiced, it's really good!

Veronica Gomez – Costa Rica – Studying History: Thanks to the F CR Project I found the true value of fraternity.

Rodrigo Umana – Costa Rica Student: This kind of activity, Fraternity, helps people who are in need. Cool!

Tina: We don't want to be dominated by the law of collective fear that is widespread in the world.

Sandro: One way or another, we are all descended from immigrants for generations already. Fraternity should become something normal for us who are all living on the same planet.

Mariana: Thanks to Tina and Sandro and thank you to all our friends in Costa Rica!

6. Mohamed's family: love and courage (Italy)

Mariana: We are going to hear more now about migrants. We'll tell the story of an Italian family and Mohamed, a young man who came to Italy on a boat from Africa.

"There are things you cannot see with your eyes, but you can feel them and live them with love and courage. Because love conquers everything". This is what Mohamed taught us.

Franco Di Biase: Anyone want fruit? Would you like some water? Look.

Franco Di Biase : I met Mohamed on Christmas day in 2015, one of those guys who had been rescued from a boat from Africa. I met him at the hospital, he had an aggressive lymphoma and was completely alone. When he was released from hospital our family thought of welcoming him to our home and into our family so that we could face this difficult situation together.

Graziella Di Biase : We felt that he was truly like a son of ours, a son we had chosen. We took care of him completely, his material needs, for food and clothing. When he was better, he even went to school. Above all Mohamed was a boy who had a great faith. He was a Muslim so we wanted to ensure that his

faith did not weaken but could support for him in his illness. We took him to the Mosque and he had a place at home where he could pray; and he did so faithfully.

Luca Di Biase : At first it was difficult because I had less space. One day my mum saw that I had changed and she came to me in tears saying she did not want to lose one of her children for another person. From that time on I felt that what I was living was a gift, a beautiful experience. The relationship between Mohamed and I changed completely and we became really close.

Federica Di Biase: It was difficult for me to relate to Mohamed because in their culture the relationship with girls is different. I tried to do my best and he really gave me the hundredfold; he taught me true values in life.

Francesco Di Biase: The doctors were amazed and let me go to be with him even at night, because when I was there all his blood levels stabilised, which was remarkable.

Luca Di Biase : Ciao Francesco, we'll be in touch.

Piano music

Federica Di Biase : Luca! Can you go into this room?

Luca Di Biase : See what Francesco has done!

Franco Di Biase: Mohamed was losing the sight in one eye, but he was not upset about it. In the last post he wrote on Facebook he said: "There are things you cannot see with your eyes, but you can feel them and live them with love and courage, because love wins out over everything."

Graziella Di Biase : Recently we managed to find Mohamed's mother and it was a very special moment with her. One of the lovely things she said to us was " Now you are his real family, I gave him his natural life but you gave him true life".

Song sung by Federica e Graziella

*puoi prendere per la coda una cometa
e girando per l'universo te ne vai
puoi raggiungere forse adesso la tua meta
quel mondo diverso che non trovavi mai
solo che non doveva andar così,
solo che tutti ora siamo un po' più soli qui
è per te*

*Can you catch a comet by its tail
and tour around the universe
can you reach your goal today
the different world you could not find before
only it should not have been like that
only that now we feel lonely here
we miss you*

Slides: 1. Mohamed's funeral in the church 2.His funeral in the Mosque

Mariana: What can we say? A huge thank you to the Di Biase family.

7. Uncle Rolf: seeking the good of others (Germany); (8'46")

Rafael: Suffering is part of life. It can destroy you, but it can also be a springboard to new ways forward you never thought of before. Here is Rolf's story, who became "Uncle Rolf" to many new friends.

Music

Slide: Suderburg - Germany

Rolf Infanger: *My wife, Maria, and I lived here together. It was a very simple life, dedicated mostly to others. After a few years she had a miscarriage; we then thought of adopting a child but I was already over the age limit. They then asked us if we would like to foster children instead.*

That is what we did. Over a six-year period, more than 38 children came to stay with us; some came for four months, or five, some even for 11 months.

Music

Rolf: *That morning when I left the house, she was still well. I got up, she was still in bed and I asked, "Did you sleep alright?" She said, "Yes, but I feel cold". I covered her with my blanket, which was still warm, and she said, "You know I love you very much, don't you?" I said, "Of course I do".*

So we kissed and I went out. When I came back after work in the afternoon she was slumped down on her knees in the kitchen and I said, "Maria, what are you doing?" and she did not answer me. She had had a pulmonary embolism, and when help came, it was too late to save her.

Music

Rolf: *The days after that were terrible because I felt as though the foundations under me had disappeared. I could not understand how a person aged 45 should die, so young, in the fullness of life. I went into a deep crisis, also a crisis of faith. I did not want to accept this cross, but then I asked myself "What did Jesus do after that?" On the cross, he too cried out "Why?" "Why have you forsaken me?" He could not understand what was happening but he still entrusted himself to the Father "Into your hands I commit my spirit". So I said, "If you truly exist, give me a hand, show me what I must do in future". At that point, I did not feel there was any future – "Guide me".*

Now, looking back I can say that is what happened.

Music

Rolf

After Maria's funeral, a friend of mine suggested I travel with him to Myanmar. I did not even know what Myanmar was. He was going there to help the Focolare Movement, which was beginning there at the time. I thought it over and concluded, "Perhaps it is the best thing I can do, so I don't just think about myself and my problems". After three months, we set off.

Music

Rolf *I was struck by the people, they are very simple and big-hearted. The meeting with Father Carolus changed my life. When I asked what he did, he said he was parish priest in a little village of 3,800 people but that he had a home for children who came from villages further away and went to school in his village. There were 120 children there. I asked, "What does it cost to look after these 120 children for a day?" He started adding up, for food, clothing medicines, the school fees, for diesel to run the generator, and said "25 euros". I said "25 euros for 120 children? It cannot be right. You must have gone wrong somewhere". "No, no, that is what it costs." So this changed my way of seeing finances and how to use my money.*

Music

Rolf when I was back home I told all my friends, neighbours and family about it and one after another, they began giving me money. One said, "Here is money for a week", another said, "Here is enough for two days", another for a month. So I thought I would collect it and sent it off to Father Carolus. Then my best friend, who was a lawyer, said, "Rolf, if you are collecting money you need to set up an association". That is what we did. Through the help we give, we are trying to enable people to take on responsibility, to help them become independent, so that they can help themselves and other people around them.

After Maria died, I felt that the God had taken my life in hand and was guiding me, leading me. I used not to notice things. She was the one who taught me to look around and notice more.

So I kept on going with her way of seeing things. That is why I feel that she travels with me on the journeys, because I know that I have a guardian angel ... someone who is looking after me, who... yes.

Song

Slide For a number of years the Maria Schlegel association has been working in the poorest regions of Myanmar in the field of nutrition and micro-credit projects. This year 600 people have been helped, mostly women and children.

Mariana: Thank you, Rolf, for letting us share in your life and for giving us this broader view of things, to see those around us that helps us make other people's sufferings our own and do something to help them.

Your story helped us choose the reflection by Chiara Lubich that we will see now.

8. Chiara's thought

Mariana: Chiara answers a question read to her by Eli Folonari, on the 7th of May 1995. Let's watch it now.

Eli: *As I get to know the Movement, it seems to me that unity is achieved by giving oneself to others. It's hard to set myself aside in order to make room for the person in front of me, but giving oneself is the greatest joy one can experience.*

I often hear you speak about the suffering of Jesus forsaken. I asked myself: Is it the same thing I experience when I set myself aside in order to receive the other, or is it different? And if it is something different, can I live it too even though I don't have a religious faith?

Chiara: *You see, Leonardo, you compel me to use the language of our Movement - even though I'll do my best, I know not everybody likes it - because you are already speaking about Jesus forsaken, an aspect of our spirituality.*

You say that you try to live him by making yourself empty, so to speak, being empty in order to receive the other person. It's the technique of unity. We need to do this to be one with others, to understand and then to respond to one another. That's right.

It is not the only way that we show our love for Jesus forsaken. We love Jesus crucified and forsaken also because St. Paul said very clearly: "I know only Christ, and Christ crucified." It is the essence of the Christian faith.

We show our love for Jesus forsaken in other circumstances too, for example, when we see brothers or sisters who seem like Him. Jesus felt forsaken, so anyone who is abandoned; when we see people who are marginalized; when we see orphans... Jesus felt orphaned because He no longer felt the presence of His Father. Jesus felt separated from His Father and so all those we see suffering because of any kind of

separation: between members of the same family, between cultures, nations, or ethnicities, we bring our love because there, we see an aspect of Jesus forsaken.

We find Him in our brothers and sisters.

We find Him in our personal sufferings, because sometimes we too feel betrayed, or disappointed, we feel persecuted, unloved. These are all aspects of what he suffered here on earth. He came from heaven and suffered these things on earth.

We try to embrace these sufferings too and so that suffering does not hold us back, we say to Jesus, to whom we have given our lives: "Look, You are living within me now somehow. I'm happy because I've given myself to you." We try to give this suffering to Him and then set out to love others, to do what we call "the will of God," our duties. And generally speaking, these sufferings disappear. They don't hold us back anymore.

We also find Him in the bigger separations in the world, for example, in the separation between the Churches. This is why we went to meet people of the Anglican, Reformed, Lutheran, and Orthodox Churches. We are all brothers and sisters and there are many of them in our Movement, you know this.

Likewise, in the other divisions of the world, the divisions between different religions: we feel we are different from one another because a Buddhist is not a Christian. A Hindu is not a Christian or a Buddhist or a Muslim.

We see Jesus forsaken in these divisions too... Instead of becoming discouraged and turning back, we go ahead out of love for Him to talk and dialogue with these brothers and sisters of ours, always seeking the foundation of unity, what unites us. There is always something that unites us.

For example, regarding other religions there is a sentence in the Gospel: "Don't do to others what you wouldn't want them to do to you." These words are in all religions. So, on this basis we can already find a very strong unity, with members of other religions.

So, as you say, we find Him in becoming empty to welcome our neighbour; in personal sufferings; in the divisions in the world, in the religious world and in the human and civil world. There are divisions between parties: instead of despairing or suffering over it ... we try to understand, to have a conversation, to build a relaxed atmosphere. Do you see, Leonardo?¹

9. Final Greetings

Emmaus: That is very beautiful. Let's thank Chiara for this thought and for all that she showed us before, because all that we saw before is the fruit of Chiara's love and the love of all those who have followed her for Jesus forsaken. It is the fruit of love for suffering that makes us see, that leads us to make ourselves one with the sufferings of others and seek, and very often find together, ways of helping them.

So, I think we are ending this conference call re-charged in the sense that we will go to seek Him out in everyone else's suffering, we'll look at it, make it our own and say, "What can I do? What can I do? What can I do?" And Do it! That's it.

Best wishes to everyone. Bye!

Rafael: Thank you, Emmaus!

¹ From an answer given by Chiara Lubich to some friends of non-religious beliefs at Loppiano (Italy), on 07/05/1995.

Mariana: Thank you very much, Emmaus! (Applause)

Rafael: We have come to the end. Thanks to you all for having taken part in this conference call. The next appointment is on the 22nd April at 10.00 a.m. Italian time. Bye everyone!

Mariana: Bye, adios!