

CH CONFERENCE CALL  
Rocca di Papa 22nd APRIL 2017

**“Keys to dialogue”**

1. **Opening and greetings:**  
**Telephone call with Sydney**  
**Telephone call with Colombia Mocoa**  
**Telephone call with Egypt.**
2. **Chiara Lubich: The Keys to dialogue**  
*True love means giving freely without self-interest: a few characteristics of genuine dialogue Chiara Lubich mentioned when she met with friends of non-religious beliefs at Castel Gandolfo on 8<sup>th</sup> February 1998*
3. **USA - Hope for bridging the political divide in a polarized society**  
*Nowadays politics has become a hot button issue even among family and friends. The Focolare communities in the USA grapple with this difficulty and set out to establish a dialogue that accepts diversity but avoids direct opposition.*
4. **Philippines - Agents of harmony in a world dominated by conflict**  
*200 members of world religions from 13 Asian countries attended the School of Oriental Religions in Tagaytay. It was a special experience of dialogue and sharing.*
5. **Jordan - Open doors and open arms**  
*The Restaurant of Mercy in Amman even caught the attention of Queen Rania.*
6. **Paraguay: Yvy Marane’y, Land without evil**  
*The Yari Miri Project: an encounter with the Ava Guaranì aboriginal community. A place that speaks of a journey in mutual love and rediscovered dignity.*
7. **Switzerland - Immigrants helping immigrants**  
*Regine, herself an immigrant from the Democratic Republic of Congo, goes beyond her personal drama and transforms her suffering into ideas and projects for others in need.*
8. **Australia – Syria and Iraq, “welcome”**  
*In Perth, the most isolated city on earth, young people and families from a local community connect with migrant families and their needs.*
9. **The Netherlands - Glen's Blog: reaching out to victims of bullying**  
*A teenager from The Netherlands, who was a victim of bullying since the age of 6, starts a blog and finds, through the replies, that “we are strong together”.*
10. **Remembering Cardinal Miloslav Vlk, Archbishop of Prague**  
*From window-cleaner during the Communist Regime to Archbishop of Prague and moderator of the group of Bishops friends of the Focolare. A short report on someone who contributed to the major changes of the last century leaving a*

*legacy for future generations. (Taken from a talk given to the young people at the Supercongress held in Marino 11<sup>th</sup> May 1997).*

**11. Emmaus and Jesús**

**12. Final greetings**

**1. Opening and greetings.**

Lesley Ellison: *Good morning, good morning to everyone on this side of the world and good evening to everyone on the other side of the world! The timing of our link up today means that we can be linked together live, which is very exciting.*

Welcome to all of you who are following this Link-Up around the world! We have just received an e-mail from 40 seminarians in Rwanda. Warm greetings to you! Let me remind you that you can send your comments and stories to these addresses: there's WhatsApp, and Facebook, so you can send them, and we will await them.

I'm Lesley, I'm English, and I'm an Anglican. I'm very happy to take this journey of unity around the world together with all of you.

So let's begin and let's go to Australia. Australia, hello! Can you hear me? Nicole, are you there?

Nicole Horin: Hello there, Hi from Australia! My name is Nicole I am an Australian Gen 2, representing Brisbane.

Lesley: And you are in the Mariapolis, Nicole?

Nicole: Yes, we were all gathered here for some special days together in a beautiful place not far from Sydney for our annual Mariapolis, so we would like to give a big welcome to all of you listening from all around the world.

Lesley: Bello. (Applause) *Nicole, can you tell us something more about the Mariapolis? Do you have a theme for the Mariapolis? Un tema? Avete un tema nella Mariapoli?*

Nicole: Many families, children and young people, sisters and priests made their journey to be together not only from Sydney but also from Canberra, even further away, from Brisbane and the Gold Coast. We have a theme for our Mariapolis and this year it's Be a Family and we are already feeling that and within only two days the joy has been multiplying and we have experienced the warmth of the family together this weekend. We're very fortunate.

Lesley: *We hear that you have some special visitors... Avete degli ospiti speciali?*

Nicole: Yes, we do we've got some very special guests here. Another added joy is to have Stefano and Roberta Serratore and Franco and Maria Beatrice Cardinali from the New Families Centre.

Lesley: *Thank you, Nicole! Nicole, can I ask you a question? Avete anche canguri nella Mariapoli? Do you have kangaroos in the Mariapolis? (laughter)*

Nicole: That's our greeting to you all! *(laughter)*

Lesley: *Allora thank you, Nicole, e buona Mariapoli! Have a good Mariapoli!*

Lesley: As we start this this Link-up, we greet in a very special way the Focolare communities who are experiencing very painful situations because of war. We remember Syria, Iraq, Venezuela, the Democratic Republic of Congo and many others ...

A great tragedy struck Colombia on the night of April 1<sup>st</sup>, in the Mocoa region. Intense rainfall caused much devastation, floodwaters from three rivers destroyed a whole mountain. Some areas and many villages around it disappeared under mud and rocks. Father Luis Fernando Carvajal is the parish priest of the main parish of Mocoa. We were able to talk to him yesterday on the phone. Let's hear what he said.

Father Luis Fernando Carvajal, Mocoa - Colombia: *My name is Fr Luis Fernando and I'm from Colombia. Now I am living in Mocoa the town this disaster occurred in. I am glad to be able to share something about this situation with you, the tragedy we experienced here; It makes me feel I am not alone.*

*I am a parish priest ..., many of my parishioners died, others have lost everything ...*

*We are trying to help everyone; there are very many people here from all over the world, who immediately came to help. ...*

*They say that there are over 300 dead, ... we know that there must be more. Many were swept away by the river... Some whole districts have disappeared, all the houses have gone, everything...*

*We've tried to help, bit by bit, being there to listen, ... offering a word of support, a few words that can console them ... and make this situation a bit less painful for those who have lost everything.*

*So then I greet everyone who is listening today and I want to thank you all for your prayers, for all that you have done, for the people caught up in this disaster.*

Lesley: Thanks Fr Luis, we are with you!

We are linking up with Egypt now and with Alexandria in particular. Sami, can you hear?

Sami: Yes!

Lesley: We were saddened to hear about the bloodshed at Easter because the Coptic Christians were attacked... And now you are preparing a very hopeful event with Pope Francis's visit to Cairo, together with Patriarch Bartholomew ... We know that you are involved in the preparation of this event. What can you tell us?

Sami Creta, Alessandria - Egypt: Yes, we have been through a very difficult time in Egypt two weeks ago with the attacks on two Coptic churches in Tanta and Alexandria. It was a tragedy that helped us live Holy Week to the full, to live this suffering but with hope in the Risen Lord. You know that martyrdom has always been the driving force of the Coptic Church throughout history. So we have great hope and joy.

We are now awaiting Pope Francis, who has spoken several times about the *ecumenism of blood*, the suffering that unites the church.

It was a surprise to hear that Patriarch Bartholomew is coming to the interreligious meeting in Al Azhar. It makes the event even greater and more historic. It shows that the Pope's visit is a great opportunity for unity and dialogue. Pope Patriarch Tawadros of the Coptic Orthodox Church sees this visit as the coming of a brother. You feel there is true brotherhood in the way Pope Francis speaks, after he went to meet him in Rome in 2013 as his first official visit outside Egypt, 40 years after the former Coptic Patriarch visited the Vatican. Their meeting now in Egypt is a reason for a new hope.

At the moment we are very glad to have Chiara Luce Badano's parents with us here in Egypt. They are in the south of the country and will speak at a meeting of 1500 Egyptian young people on the eve of the Mass with Pope Francis.

Lesley: Thank you Sami! We are united with you in this time of new hope!

Sami: Thank you.

Lesley: I too have great passion for ecumenism. As I said at the start, I am an Anglican. When I was young we were forbidden to make friends with Catholics... In fact, my friends and I used to throw stones when Catholic processions went past... One day I met the focolarine who spoke to me about the Gospel, the life of the Gospel. I was very attracted by this. They invited me to go with them to Canterbury, where Chiara was to speak during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. On the train one of our group took out a Rosary. I got a shock, suddenly realising they were all Catholics. I wanted to get off the train but that was not possible. We got to Canterbury and while Chiara was speaking, God was working within me... He made me understand that he is greater than all my

prejudices and that I had to try to go beyond them. I tried doing this on the journey home.

We arrived back in Liverpool at midnight. There was no public transport to get home so I thought, I'll sleep at the station. Instead one of the families noticed and said "But we can take you home in our car". It was something unheard of in those days! To get into a car with Catholics. That was my first real ecumenical experience, which happened through mutual love. This made me certain that unity is possible if we let God act.

Some years later, I was part of the Gen Verde music group and I wrote a song you'll hear now. (*extract from song*). It is called "Bridges" because I came from the other side of the river, and I had a great desire to reach the other side, to create bridges of unity.

This is how we want to live this link up, with the idea of wanting to build bridges, to cross them and walk towards the other side.

## **2. Chiara Lubich "Keys to dialogue".**

Lesley: Now we will watch a short answer by Chiara Lubich on the meaning of dialogue. The question was put to her by Piero Taiti at a meeting of people who were agnostics or without religious beliefs. It was in February 1998.

Piero Taiti: *The concept of dialogue goes far beyond simple tolerance, which was already an achievement in its day and is always a value at risk in our society.*

*If two centuries ago Lord Stanhope could say that tolerance, ... "would one day be rejected as an insult," it was because he foresaw that one day - we hope today - people would become sensitive to higher values, like dialogue. Not only tolerating others, but profoundly respecting them, being open to different ideas, being able to talk things over, and above all building a relationship among true brothers and sisters. What do you think of this viewpoint?*

Chiara: *I'm sure that dialogue goes far beyond tolerance, even though I wouldn't totally disregard tolerance because in some places it is important, to avoid fighting and conflict. Dialogue is a completely different thing, it's mutual enrichment, loving one another, it's feeling that we are already brothers and sisters, creating universal brotherhood on earth, it's completely different.*

*Of course, dialogue is true if it is guided by true love. Now, love is true if it is not selfish; otherwise it's not love. What would it be? Egoism. In fact, you've asked me a number of questions suggesting that love might include personal interests, even in dialogue itself. That dialogue would not be built on love, so it wouldn't be dialogue at all, but something else. Proselytism. Proselytism must be kept out, it can't be allowed, otherwise there is no*

*dialogue. Dialogue means loving, giving what we have within ourselves out of love for others, and also receiving and enriching oneself. That is dialogue: becoming “world men and women,” as our Gen say, people who contain others within themselves and have been able to give of themselves [to others].*

*I remember when we first began to live this life, we understood that our path was love, but we were convinced that love is not selfish. You must not love in order to win over another person, or love to have a little group for yourself. You must not love in order to have an impact in your office or at school. No, you must love simply in order to love. Our motives were supernatural because of our Christian convictions.*

*Here, you can do it for the purpose of building brotherhood, this value of universal brotherhood, but never intending to win over others. This is why the result was that many people followed us – because they felt free and saw the beauty of this way of life. Likewise, we’ll have many contacts with people of other beliefs, if we love in this way.*

### **3. USA - Experiencing the political divide in a polarized society ENGLISH**

Lesley: To love without self-interest. “To love out of love”. This is how we dialogue. One of the areas where dialogue seems impossible is politics. Let’s go to the United States where society is strongly polarised between Republicans and Democrats. The people in the Focolare are experiencing this situation. They sent us a news service telling us what they did.

Speaker: OVER THE PAST YEAR, THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA REACHED A CLASH OF IDEOLOGIES NOT SEEN FOR GENERATIONS.

*(few words from news broadcast)*

*IN THE MONTHS LEADING UP TO THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION LAST NOVEMBER, AMERICANS FOUND THEMSELVES FEARFUL OVER WHICH DIRECTION THE COUNTRY WOULD HEAD...*

*WITH EMOTIONS... AND OPINIONS... RUNNING AT A FEVER PITCH.*

*AND THOSE WHO LIVE THE SPIRITUALITY WERE NOT EXCLUDED FROM THE DEEP DIVISIONS.*

*Scenes from the election campaign*

Austin: *I never imagined how crazy things were gonna get.*

Marijo : *I understood that it was a soul-wrenching decision for many...*

Simona: *it was very hard for me to listen to people say stuff that I didn’t believe in*

Arturo: *there is so much polarization and even demonization of others today is because there are such strong and different opinions held by people.*

*(music)*

Speaker: A YEAR PRIOR TO THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION, SOME SEEDS OF DIALOGUE HAD ALREADY BEEN PLANTED IN COMMUNITIES ACROSS THE UNITED STATES. THE FOCOLARE HAD BEEN HOSTING WORKSHOPS ON THE “FIVE STEPS TO POSITIVE POLITICAL DIALOGUE” ACROSS THE COUNTRY.

John Chesser, Iowa : People paired off and they had to choose a topic to talk about on which they strongly disagreed. The twist was first one person shared their view and then the other person had to repeat their view back before sharing his own view. And the results were pretty interesting. People gained an appreciation not just for the other person's point of view but they also reflected and reconsidered their own view. We felt like of course we didn't solve the world's problems in the workshops but we got a new hope and a new tool on thinking: maybe it's possible that we can solve these problems with dialogue.

Speaker: THEN AS THE 2016 ELECTION NEARED, TENSIONS ROSE BY THE DAY... FEELINGS OF ANGER, AND BITTERNESS BUBBLING TO THE SURFACE, PUTTING RELATIONSHIPS AT RISK ...

Marilyn Boesch, Maryland: I was very agitated. And I remember examining my soul, and saying but I want to work for unity, I want to be a person that builds bridges, not a person that accepts this divide the way it is.

Marijo Dulay, New York: After a few mistakes I learned to be more sensitive in my comments that I posted on Facebook not hurting the people who differed from my perspective.

Simona Lucchi, Georgia: All my preaching and all my yelling wasn't doing any good because either way it wasn't changing what people believed in. So I took more of like a sit back and listen stance. And by stopping to talk – I actually listened - and I found that people I disagreed with – we had more in common than I thought.

(words from news broadcast)

Speaker: AMID THE DEAFENING POLITICAL NOISE, THESE PERSONAL EXPERIENCES IN BUILDING UNITY THROUGH DIALOGUE EXPANDED INTO ACADEMIC ENVIRONMENTS... LIKE FORDHAM LAW SCHOOL IN THE HEART OF MANHATTAN... WHERE TWO FOCOLARE MEMBERS WORK.

A WORKSHOP ON “DIALOGUE AND THE DIFFICULT QUESTIONS” WAS WELL RECEIVED.

Ana Dias, Fordham Law School: Most of them said they were there because they really wanted to understand if dialogue is really possible among such polarization.

Speaker: AFTER PRESENTING THE FIVE STEPS TO POSITIVE POLITICAL DIALOGUE, PARTICIPANTS GOT RIGHT TO WORK, PRACTICING WHAT THEY HAD LEARNED.

Endy Moraes, Fordham Law School: It was important to realize that we could engage in those difficult conversations and be able to not enter into a big, passionate argument.

Speaker: IT BECAME CLEAR THAT WHEN GIVEN THE TOOLS, EVEN THE MOST IMPASSIONED PEOPLE WERE WILLING TO PUT THEM INTO PRACTICE.

(headlines from tv news)

ELECTION DAY CAME AND WENT,  
AND TWO MONTHS LATER, THE INAUGURATION REKINDLED THOSE HOT EMOTIONS.  
SIX BLOCKS FROM THE STEPS OF THE CAPITOL BUILDING , AT GEORGETOWN LAW SCHOOL, THE DIVERSE POPULATION OF STUDENTS FOUND THEMSELVES IN A SIMILARLY STRAINED SITUATION.

Amy Uelmen, Georgetown Law School: With the students in the class immediately after the inauguration we decided on how we wanted to be together as a group during this particularly tense time.

Speaker: AMY UELMEN, AUTHOR OF “FIVE STEPS TO POSITIVE POLITICAL DIALOGUE”, USED THE SAME WORKSHOP FORMAT AMONG HER LAW STUDENTS AND COLLEAGUES TO UNLOCK THE DOORS OF COMMUNICATION AMONG THEM.

Amy Uelmen, Georgetown Law School: We also realized that often in any conversation there will be caricatures mischaracterizations, misunderstandings, information that’s just wrong, and so to agree all together to be open to correction or to working out the difficulties when different perspectives were colliding.

Speaker: THOSE EFFORTS TO INJECT UNITY CONTINUED IN ARKANSAS, A GENERALLY CONSERVATIVE STATE, BUT WHERE BILL CLINTON WAS ONCE GOVERNOR, AND HILLARY CLINTON SERVED AS FIRST LADY. THE INAUGURATION SPARKING EXCITEMENT ON ONE SIDE, ANGER AND ISOLATION ON THE OTHER.

AUSTIN KELLERMAN LEADS A NEWSROOM IN THE STATE’S CAPITAL, AND TOGETHER THE STAFF DECIDED TO TAKE A STAND ON THE AIR, AND ASK THE COMMUNITY OF LITTLE ROCK TO COME TOGETHER.

Austin Kellerman, News Director: Our team of journalists felt like we had the chance to be a voice for our city, so one of our more experienced reporters put together a commentary at a pretty hot time calling for unity and an open mind...

Journalist: There is no them, no us. There is We. We the people.

Austin Kellerman: Obviously, that's not going to fix things...it's not going to change anybody's view...but hopefully it gives people permission to think beyond their singular

view. We're going to try to keep the dialogue going and staying faithful to representing all sides and voices.

Speaker: AND WITH EACH NEW STEP, THE COMMUNITY IN THE UNITED STATES IS CALLED TO **CONTINUE** TO REACH ACROSS THE DIVIDE.

#### **4. Philippines – “Harmony among peoples and religions” ENGLISH**

Lesley: This radical love that Chiara mentioned applies to interreligious dialogue as well. Belonging to different religions has been a cause of conflict throughout history. For years now, the Focolare has been working with others, establishing dialogue. This was experienced last month at the School of Oriental Religions, near Manila, in the Philippines. Let's watch the news service they sent us.

Moderator: Dear sisters and brothers, coming from different nations in Asia and Europe, from different races and religions, of different ages and backgrounds, we come together these days from March 2 to 5 in the year 2017 in order to reflect on the theme of Harmony among Religions.

(n.d.r. scritta Harmony among peoples and religions today).

We would like to ask representatives of four different religions to lead us in prayer as we begin SOR 2017

(Prayers)

Francisco Canzani, Uruguay - Co-Director Focolare International Centre for Wisdom and Studies – Rome, Italy: We need to be nothing, Jesus Forsaken, in front of every neighbor in order to embrace Jesus in him.

Renata Simon, Germany - Co-Director Focolare International Centre for Wisdom and Studies – Rome, Italy: We communicate by being nothing. This is our way of inculturation. We need to love, not only our movement, but also the other works, not only our Church but also other churches. This is our calling, the legacy that I leave for the future.

Dr. Lalita Namjoshi, India - Former Principal of K.J. Somaiya Bhatariya Sanskrit Peebam: When we read the scripture of both the religions, we find many similarities. The first focal point of similarities is the Golden Rule: “Treat others as you wish others to treat you”.  
song

Venerable Miao Jing, Taiwan – Abbess Mabuhay Temple Fo Guang Shan: Focolare has being a family because of the youth in you. Father (a focolarino) has always been coming with the youth from different places around the world and that has bring so much interactions, fun, connections and love to the temple and to our devotees.

Randi Tampubolon, Indonesia: (Here) I (got to) know more about the interreligious dialogue. My country (Indonesia) is majority Muslim, so I can bring the grace from this

meeting and maybe I can put more dialogue (in my relations). I will practice (it) in my country. Hopefully I can do it in Indonesia.

Miss Mitali, India: This kind of meetings are very important and should happen more frequently because harmony is something which is diminishing from all our lives. Then we can become souls of love and souls of God.

Jocelyn Wadi, Philippines: We all know that Chiara's teaching is all about love, right? So, actually we are all dancers of love

Tadjanna Basman, Philippines: Here in the Focolare we can fully express ourselves. We can set aside our prejudices, our differences and all that. And we can focus more on our similarities rather than our differences.

Phra Maha Boonchuay, Ph. D., Thailand: We need to talk, we need to discuss, we need to learn of the belief of our neighbor.

Fr. Andrew Recepcion, Philippines, President International Association of Catholic Missiologists: Dialogue comes from friendship. But it is not just a friendship of peers. It is a friendship of people who are passionate about the realization of a better humanity.

Rita Mousallem, Lebanon - Co-Director Focolare International Centre for Interreligious Dialogue – Rome, Italy: This Charism can put us together, make us one, even if we are of different religions. We were born for this, to be a family.

Cardinal A. L. Tagle, Archbishop of Manila Philippines, President Caritas International: Where true dialogue happens there is hope. And you see the people are capable of forging new life.

Bishop Roberto Mallari, Philippines – Dean of School of Dialogue with oriental Religions (SOR): We will not force it to happen. We do our part and we open up to the Absolute, to God and allow Him to make it happen.

G. Vijayaragavan, Head Youth Leadership Programme Shanti Ashram: We can do, we will do, we must do.

Music and photos

Caption

Harmony among peoples and religions today

## **5. Jordan - Open doors and open arms**

Lesley: To become just one family, they have said in this report: "We can do it, we want to do it, we have to do it."

We're doing it by working, using our hands. This is what we will see in the news service about a very unique Restaurant in Amman, Jordan.

(In Arabic)

Music

Sawsan Awwad – Supervisor Restaurant of Mercy (in Arabic):

*The place we had was a disused print shop. The church gave it to us. We had the idea and in a short time the local Caritas set it up for us. In three weeks it was transformed into what you see now, this restaurant.*

*It was opened on 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2015... and has never closed since. We give hot meals every day.*

*Music*

*We don't discriminate against anyone on the basis of race, sex or religion. We welcome everyone with love and dignity. ... the people who work here are refugees too, from Iraq, Syria and all from needy families. They were able to find work here. They are glad to do this and prepare the food with great love.*

*Milad – volunteer (Iraq):*

*I was working in Iraq and I came here to help people and serve the poor and needy, the people who come here.*

*Sawsan – Direttrice Restaurant of Mercy:*

*We are usually open between 12.30 and 3.00 p.m., lunchtime. This is the hot meal we are serving. During Ramadan, out of respect for the Muslims, our brother Muslims, the hot meal is served in the evening, at the breaking of the fast. .. It was a good experience because there were Christians and Muslims sharing the same meal. They ate together; there was a good atmosphere, a family atmosphere. ...*

*Now we are aiming not only to serve a hot meal but also to see what their other needs are ... we found that many needed to have operations, surgery on their eyes, or to have medicines. Some had no heaters or warm blankets. We try to help with these things. ... Her Majesty Queen Rania came to visit us during Ramadan, which was a great honour for us.*

*Anny – cook (Armenia):*

*The moment the Queen came in we were so happy because she is our Queen. ... She was very happy with us and our work. ... I like cooking and working for people in need; when they come for their meal it is like my children have arrived.*

## **6. Paraguay: Yvy Marane'y, Land without evil**

*Lesley:* Let's go now to South America, to Paraguay. Here, several associations, including the Focolare, are working together with the indigenous community *Ava Guaranì*. The "Yari Miri" Project takes its name from the "Small Cedar" tree, a tree considered sacred by this community.

[In Guaranì and Spanish]

*Bernardo Benítez – Chief of the Yary Miri community:* *In our country there are 17 different ethnicities /with different cultures, languages, customs and even beliefs; ... all the indigenous communities at national level have been completely abandoned.*

*Through lack of education, health care and technical formation, people can't plant crops and contribute to their own development. ... City life does not suit our indigenous community; we suffer in the cities. We can't develop our culture, what we truly are ... There is no way out; we live in areas where soya is grown and pesticides are used, children get sick and die... 8,000 indigenous people live on the streets in Asuncion, others in Encarnacion, about 20,000 of us in all.*

*Diana Durán – Volunteer in the Yary Miri Project* *The Avà Guarani people we first met in Asuncion 18 years ago had settled close to a garbage dump site, almost on the banks of the River Paraguay. They worked recycling waste. When the River Paraguay flooded in 2014, they moved temporarily to a very busy road and then we got to know them better. We remembered Chiara's experience about Jesus forsaken who says "if you don't love me, who will love me?" and we were encouraged by Pope Francis' appeal to go out to the peripheries of humankind, to love in concrete ways and we went to the camp where they had settled.*

*The first thing we did was to give them all kinds of help: food, clothing and so on. This established a relationship of trust and love that grew. ... They explained they needed some land, at least two hectares so as to plant crops a place for training and decent homes. We did some research out beyond the town until we found 5 hectares in a place about 30 kilometers from Asuncion where they settled.*

*Bernardo Benítez* *We are happy here. In a short time there is already water, electricity and the road – which really helped – We have already grown crops and we eat our own produce...*

*Hugo Cáceres – Volunteer in the Yari Miri Project:* *I am really happy with this Project ... This is not just about giving or solidarity, it's a development Project in which the Avà Guarani community are in control.*

*Padre Enrique Gaska – Coordinator of Pastoral work for the Indigenous people*

*The first thing we must do is uproot racism from our minds and hearts, ... We must treat them like one of us, like our family. The State of Paraguay should treat them the same as all other citizens. ... Many people say "why don't you go back to the mountains?". Which mountains? They are not available to them ... It is a new reality and we must all be united, strong and stay together with them.*

*Diana Durán – Volunteer, Yary Miri Project.* *In the Guarani people's world view there is something called Yvy Marane'y which means "land without evil". For them an earth without evil is not only land where they can grow crops, but a place where mutual love*

*is lived. ... In fact, they say that since we met, God has been looking at them with special love. They are the first to commit, doing all their part so that the “land without evil” can truly come about where, as they themselves say, mutual love reigns.*

Lesley: Those were two very strong stories, weren't they? The restaurant in Amman and this “tierra sin mal”, “land without evil”. Thank you for these stories.

## **7. Switzerland - Immigrants helping immigrants**

Lesley: Régine who migrated from the Democratic Republic of Congo has been living in Switzerland for 30 years. The love she received gave her the strength to transform her own difficulties into ideas and projects [for others]. She founded the Association of Friends of Africa.

[in French]

Régine Mafunu Déneraud: *My name is Régine Mafunu, I come from the Democratic republic of Congo and have been living in Switzerland for 30 years. I studied at Fribourg University.*

*My first visit to Montet was with my husband and children. When we arrived, everyone welcomed us as though they knew us already. We experienced the love that you find there: everyone is ready to give, ready to receive.*

*My husband went away to the funeral of his brother who was a bishop and I stayed with my children. The youngest was 11 months and I could not really cope. Without the people from the movement, I would not have managed on my own.*

*After that I said to myself, you have received a lot, and still do. I had the idea of forming an Association of Friends of Africa (AMAF). We make rather too much noise for the neighbours but people come here to meet us and share our values, sharing the difficulties we come up against. Some of them have never seen snow, have never lived in a city.*

*We invited some of them; they prepare food and we eat together. We want to hear about how they came here.*

Naima (Somalia): *I did not know how to write my name because there was no school where I lived. When I came to Switzerland I signed like this. Now I can write my name, my address, and other things!*

Régine Mafunu Déneraud: *At a certain point, we drew up a project for harmonious living, where people can learn how to live alongside one another. Almost without thinking about it, I sent it to the Swiss Confederation.*

*On the Monday morning I got a phone call from the confederation, “We got your registered letter. We are interested in your project but it needs to be completed. We will give you another week to finish it.” I thanked God for having more time.*

*JEAN-FRANCOIS STEIERT – Consigliere Nazionale Gestione Territorio: When I found Friends of Africa (AMAF) I found a whole family, people who don’t see integration as something unilateral but reciprocal... the language and culture of others; people who seek to share in all kinds of ways because sharing means living, whether that is sharing among individuals or sharing among cultures.*

*Madame Anne-Claude Demierre Consigliere di Stato, Sanità e Affari Sociali: I really want to thank the Friends of Africa team from the depths of my heart, the professionals here as well as the volunteers. They made it possible to build this bridge between Africa and Switzerland.*

*Régine Mafunu Déneraud: We have the joy of living as humanity. We still need to give, but I believe that I receive much more in return : their smiles, all they tell me. I thank God for this.*

Lesley: Thank you, Régine! (Applause) Thank you truly. This is a wonderful example of what can happen when you are “the first to love” isn’t it?

## **8. Australia – Syria and Iraq are “welcome”**

Lesley: Let’s go back to Australia. The community from Perth sent us this experience they want to share with us.

(in English)

*Perth Australia. Population nearly 2 million. This year Perth has committed to taking in 1.000 refugees from Syria and Iraq. Various groups throughout the city are joining forces to help with their many needs.*

*Tom, (a youth): Here in Perth, the Focolare has been in contact with refugee families and has become a centre point of a network of helpers across the city. We’ve been asked by ASeTTS – which is an organisation providing support for refugee families - if we could lend a hand on the weekends looking after the kids while their mothers attended information and English seminars. So together with youth from the archdiocese, we’ve been teaching the kids maths and playing games with them and doing artwork. For me, at first, I thought: “how is this something I can do with the busy-ness of life and my work load...”. But then I thought, “ok, this is an opportunity to reach out to my neighbor, and share small acts of kindness with them.” And it’s been so great even to see a simple mathematical calculation make sense and click with the child.*

Shaad I like how we did a lot of activities together and all the adults were pretty nice.

Tom Next we're hoping to do the "Run for a Reason"\* with these families for the Run4Unity! So... keep your eyes peeled! It's been great. Thank you so much. A big hello from Perth!

Lesley: Thank you, Tom! Thank you for sharing this news with us. (applause) We'll certainly going to keep our eyes open for your Run4Unity! We'll keep our eyes open for the "Run for Unity"!

### **9. Holland: Glen's Blog**

Lesley: Very many people, and many of us have had dealings with people who are violent..., people have been discriminated against, even hit and publicly humiliated. We are talking about bullying, which is more widespread than we might think. Glen, a boy from Holland, told his story. He had the strength to bring about change in his life. Let's see how, and go to Rotterdam.

Glen: (in Dutch) I was bullied from the age of 6 to 16. It all began at school one day when we were standing in a circle talking about things we liked and what we wanted to do when we grew up. I said I wanted to be an actor or a camera operator or something like that. I really enjoy acting. They began laughing at me and excluding me. They did not like theatre, especially the boys, who only wanted to play football. That is why they started saying I was a girl. The girls thought I was strange too.

Later on they did not want to have anything to do with me.

For example, at gym lessons, when we were changing, they said "you are a girl so go to the girls changing room. You should not be here".

Then they started kicking my things around, or hiding them and I had to go and look for them every time we had gym.

The teacher who saw it all did not say anything. I often complained to him but he seemed not to see what was happening.

The more it went on, the worse it got, until no one wanted to sit beside me.

It was as though I had a contagious illness. I felt lonely and isolated.

When I was 11 I left that school and went to another one to start over. I thought "start from scratch".

At first it was alright, but then it all started again, but worse. They swore at me.

They held me and hit me. I did not want to go to school anymore.

Even when I was 9, I said I wanted to die. I had no one. Only my mum, nobody else.

I felt it was impossible to change the situation, until I got to high school.

*I was very sad and started to write down what I was feeling, which helped me very much. So I thought “wow” I could do something now. Then I had the idea of setting up a website against bullying, to help other young people who feel alone and isolated, who have been victims of bullying, to help them and support them by talking about it // because this helped me and boosted me so much. That’s how the site began. I started with a short blog asking “what do you think about bullying?” or “what could we do to stop bullying?” After two days I had 40 contacts, all kinds of people “friends in tribulation” who are, or were, victims of bullying and whose ages ranged from 13 – 40 years old. ... They all wrote their experience signing their name and I was glad they did that. They too found saying what they felt helped them. Now I am happy to be able to help other people through the site; it makes me feel good. Together we are strong.*

*- At school I am worried that people won’t like me*

*- They don’t think I’m nice*

*- will they listen to me?*

*- will they see me?*

*If people who bully come to my site I would like them to see things in a new light and think “what I am doing is not really so good” because bullying causes great harm. In most cases they don’t realise it. They see it like a game.*

Lesley Thank you, Glen, and thanks for your courage! I think this site of yours is a real brige, thankyou!

## **10. Remembering Cardinal Vlk, Archbishop of Prague**

Lesley: From window-cleaner on the streets of Prague, under the communist regime, to archbishop and cardinal. It is the story of Miloslav Vlk who died on 18<sup>th</sup> March. Many newspapers and TV channels broadcast appreciation for the Archbishop of Prague who had many different areas of responsibility within the Catholic Church and was moderator of the Bishop Friends of the Focolare Movement for 18 years. We want to remember him hearing what he said to about 9,000 teenagers from all over the world who met in Rome in 1997. He gives them a task for their lives.

Cardinal Vlk: *Ten years after I was ordained priest, the communist regime took away my licence. What was that licence? The communist state gave each priest a permit to work as a priest. They took my licence away, my permit. So I became a layman. I could not celebrate Mass, or preach, I was obliged not to preach. ... I used to clean windows in Prague, the shop windows and became a nobody. I went round the streets of Prague cleaning windows. Those times, a whole ten years, were very tough years, very tough and I call them my university of life, ... (applause) because I was able to live every day in close communion with Jesus crucified and forsaken. ...*

*Despite that I often had doubts. You have to do this very menial job, but where is your priesthood, where has it gone? ...*

*I found my new identity, ... and I discovered that ... you are a priest when you are close to the cross of Jesus, because he became a high priest on the cross. So then I understood, I felt, that being at the foot of the cross or close to the cross and embracing that cross every day, ... I became a priest and found my priesthood in being nothing. ...*

*It's easy and simple to say this, but I must say that living this spirituality and this Ideal as a bishop is more difficult than when I was a window cleaner (applause) because, being a bishop, we always think we are somebody or something. You must stay close to Jesus' cross now too.*

*The life and experience that I have told you about gives me strength and ideas to live by now. ... Then in the dark times during communism ... I was able to live in the focolare with the lay focolarini, a group of people who have decided to live this spirit to the full. ... So this sport, you might say, this training in being nothing, helped me have the experience of Jesus among us. I truly strongly experienced the presence of the Risen Lord among us (applause) and these two things, embracing Jesus Crucified and Risen, and strongly experiencing the presence of the God close by, God who is Risen in our midst, in our love - these are key principles of my life as a bishop, archbishop and cardinal. ... I trust that you will make this spirituality become the pathway for your own lives, for your future, for your plans, for yourselves, for your entire lives (applause). ...*

Lesley: Beautiful, thank you, what a wonderful legacy he left to us too.

## **11. Emmaus and Jesús**

Jesús: We should say something...

Lesley: Yes, good.

Jesús: It is not that we have prepared something to say, because we wanted to be inspired by all we heard. You would not know where to begin because one thing is more beautiful than the next. For example, the last one on Cardinal Vlk, because we experienced so many things together with him and his testimony on what it is to be a priest or a bishop today is very striking and modern; this experience also with the lay aspect which shows a completely different type of Church.

But the whole link up! I am very impressed, very enriched and I think that more and more the conference call makes has have an experience of being “global people” with

the added factor that we connect with some of the people really in the front line of the Movement today.

I feel very strongly that I want to thank all the people who are behind the scenes in these experiences. There are so many more than we actually have seen, because they are the ones in the Movement today who are pushing us towards actually bringing about the great objectives that we put before us in 2014. The “going out” towards people today to bring unity; working for unity being alongside people today just as they are, with their difficulties in dialogue, people who migrate, people who suffer violence, like this boy from Holland.

I feel very grateful and want to say, “Look we are supporting you above all! You are not the only ones, but you are there in the front line”.

That is what comes to me now, from my heart.

Emmaus: Beautiful. In fact the one thing I would like to say after seeing all these stories is, you can see how much can be achieved by love, how much is achieved by love! A gram of love added to every action in your life can start a revolution. But you also see that love is not love if there is no suffering; love costs’ you see that love asks much of us; it can achieve much but it asks much.

I saw that in each of these stories there was a common denominator: it is paid for, paid for, paid for. As if God were saying to me, “Are you ready to pay? Are you ready to pay? Are you ready to pay? This time too? Even in this situation? Even in this moment? Even when faced with the tragedies of humankind? Are you ready to pay?”

I said to myself: but I am not the only one ready to pay, there are so many others. This is the biggest treasure, this unselfish love that Chiara spoke about, that love is not love if it is done out of self-interest, love is love if it is unselfish.

This unselfish love exists, it exists! We know this, but the conference call comes round every time to tell us: recognise the fact that it exists, that it is not a dream, it is not something yet to happen, but something that already exists. So discover it! And immerse yourselves in this river of unselfish love.

This river of unselfish love has the power to change the world, to change us first of all, but also to transform the situations around us as we have seen for example in this link up. So it is only one example of the thousands of beautiful things that are out there, but which show that it is possible to have an effect so as to transform the world, which is what we want, isn't it?

One of the beautiful things in this link up is what Régine, from Switzerland, said at the end, “We have the joy of being humanity”. So we can say this to everyone, we have the joy of being humanity, this humanity, not another one, this one. We have this joy and with this joy I think we can go on living our Easter, living with the Risen Lord amongst us.

Bye to everyone and thank you! (applause)

Lesley: Thank you, Emmaus, thank you. (Applause)

Jesús: We said that the “land without evil” is also beautiful, truly it is a good slogan that we can all build a land where...

Emmaus: ...where there is no evil.

Jesús: ...where evil disappears. Thanks to those in Paraguay.

Emmaus: Because there is mutual love. Beautiful, thank you.

Jesús: Thanks, Lesley.

## **12. Final Greetings**

Lesley: Thank you everyone! We have had a good journey together today, truly, thank you! I just need to remind you that the next Conference Call will be on 17th June, at 8.00 p.m. We will wait for your stories and experiences. Send your stories, so maybe next time we will see your stories.

So. Good night to everyone who’s on the way to bed and have a good day everyone who’s just starting the day. Good night!

(Applause and music)