

CH CONFERENCE CALL
Rocca di Papa, 17 September 2016

“Small steps towards a united world”

1. Opening and greetings

2. A rainbow over Cairo

The United World Association, in collaboration with the Egyptian foundation “Koz Kazah”, runs courses for education and professional training for Christian and Muslim girls and women. It is based on mutual giving.

3. Tinku Kamayu: Women and Wool: Argentina

The Tinku Kamayu cooperative is well established in Catamarca. For over ten years it has given work to women descended from the calchaquí tribe.

4. An unusual honeymoon

A young couple decided to spend their honeymoon in Amman and did six weeks voluntary work for Caritas Jordan.

5. Ardjan, our teacher (Albania)

A teacher decided to stay in a small village in Northern Albania so as to make a contribution to the future of his country.

6. Getting involved in peace - Jordan

The Host Spot Project involved 55 young people from 9 countries in Europe and the Middle East, who went to Jordan to get to know refugee families.

7. Bruno Venturini

Talking among friends, one of Chiara Lubich's first companions shared his deep experience of old age and how to prepare for death

8. Many faces in one story

“Love which asks for nothing and gives its all” is Alfonso's secret whereby he and many others have given hope to prisoners inside and after release from the Rebibbia Prison in Rome.

9. Dialogue with Maria Voce (Emmaus) e Jesús Morán

10. Chiara Lubich

In May 1987 Chiara Lubich answered a question from a young person at the little town of Loppiano in Italy, showing how Jesus Forsaken can be found in many ways and with many 'countenances' in the context of the world today. Her words were an invitation to recognise him and love him so as to build a more united world.

11. Conclusion

1) OPENING and GREETINGS

(Applause)

Ryan: (*in English*) Hello everyone! Welcome to this Conference Call!

Maria: (*in Czech*) We're very happy to be here with you and be linked up with the whole world.

Ryan: My name is Ryan, I come from the United States, from Chicago. My city is famous for many things, like basketball, big pizza, and a beautiful view over the city.

I just graduated in Marketing and before starting work, I decided to do volunteer work for a while. I am doing this here together with other young people at the World Gen Centre.

Maria: I'm Maria, I come from the Czech Republic, a small country in the heart of Europe, known for its capital city Prague known as "the Golden City" and for the production of beer. But not only that! Last year, I graduated in architecture. And I said to myself that it would be nice to do something for others. And so I came here. I will be leaving in 3 days, and I'm glad to have had this experience.

Ryan: It's amazing that now we are talking to people all over the world. But the world is also here in this hall with us.

Maria: Let's give a big welcome to representatives of the Movement from the Americas and Oceania, who have just ended their meeting. (*applause*) We also welcome some of the people involved in the news reports that we will see during this Conference Call, including the young people from the group called "Non dalla guerra" (Not from war).

Ryan: Now let's try to make a phone call ... Let's go now "down under" to Australia, specifically to Perth, one of the most remote places. Hello Clarissa, can you hear us? Hello.

Clarissa: Hello Ryan, nice to hear you.

Ryan: Good to hear you too.

Clarissa: Many greetings from "down under" as you said. There is a small group of us here in the focolare after a winter's day. It is six in the evening and in the Islands to the East it is already after 10.00 p.m.

We wanted to tell you that here too we're involved in organizing aid for families arriving from Syria and Iraq. There is good collaboration between us and the Melkite church and various people from different parishes and the Chinese community in our city.

The focolare has become a "transit point" for help of various kinds... It is an experience of God's providence that gives joy to those who are able to give, to those who distribute these goods ... and to those who receive them. We are all involved in this love that is given and returns!

Ryan: Thanks very much Clarissa! We are with you even though you're 13,300 km away!

Clarissa: Yes. Bye!

Ryan: Bye!

Maria: Thank you! We wanted to make another call to Gabon, in Africa. But due to the difficulties the country is going through now, we are not able to connect. We know that, in general, they manage to have internet connection for a few hours in the morning ... Hopefully they can follow this Conference Call and feel that we are with them. Hi! We are with you!

Hello, we are with you

Ryan: I see that we have these wonderful people in front of us. I would like to get to know some of you. I'll walk around know and see who is here... Hello! Pleased to meet you. My name is Ryan, can you stand up for a moment? What is your name?

Maké: My name is Maké and I come from the Island of Futuna in the Pacific Ocean.

Ryan: Fantastic and would you like to say hello to everyone?

Maké: Hello everyone! *(She says hello in her language)*

Ryan: Thanks, a round of applause! *(Applause)* Let's see who else is here. Hello, pleased to meet you. Could you stand up too? What is your name and where are you from?

Roberta: My name is Roberta and I am from Venezuela.

Ryan: Ok, would you like to say hello to everyone?

Roberta: Yes, I would like to say hello to all our friends who are there, to all the communities, who are also here in all of you who help us and support us in everything.

Ryan: Thank you!

Maria: We know that the situation in your country is very difficult. What can you tell us?

Roberta: Yes, we are going through an unprecedented economic and social crisis. But the greatest aspect of Jesus forsaken we see is perhaps the extreme violence that occurs every day and which has affected us due to the deaths of two young people who gave their lives in order to save family members.

Maria: Thank you. This is very moving, very strong.

2. A RAINBOW OVER CAIRO (EGYPT)

Maria: Our first report takes us to Egypt, and Cairo. We'll meet some women in the Shubra district who are working in a project supported by the United World Association and the "Koz Kazah" Foundation

(music)

Caption: Cairo, March 2016

Giampaolo: *(narrator)* In Egypt today, the wealth of the past lives side by side with the challenges of the present. *(music)*

Like other cities in the world, the economic gap between social groups leads to marginalisation. While travelling with voluntary workers with the United World Association, I often ask them what can be done about the hardship people face, and their answer was an Arabic phrase meaning "rainbow", "Koz Kazah". (music)

It may seem strange, but people in Shubra, part of Cairo, have also seen a rainbow. It has 6 million inhabitants, and little to be happy about. (music)

We were welcomed with a smile by Shoinaa and her daughter. Shoinaa has been involved in the activities of Koz Kazah for years. Her story is like that of many other women here: she endured betrayal, divorce, and family pressures that took away her self-confidence. But today, you can't see any sign of this in her.

Shoina and hundreds of other women are helped to rediscover their own capabilities through the activities of Koz Kazah.

Awatef Klada *formator in Koz Kazah Foundation (A woman, speaking in Arabic):* In the beginning they would not even pick up a paintbrush because they only used to look after the house and the children. ... We then encouraged them, by doing it first ourselves.

Donna Nedi *(a woman speaking in Arabic):* My daughter came here regularly group, I asked her what it was because I thought she would have less time for her studies. ... I started going with her and I met Awatef and Imen. I now come with a friend of mine, then we met all the others and became like sisters. We are always together in any activity or party.

Giampaolo: In addition to handicrafts, these women learn aspects of health, hygiene and general knowledge. Meeting new friends is also an opportunity to share ideas about family budgets, and a way to increase dialogue between the Christian and Muslim faiths.

Awatef Klada, (a woman speaking in Arabic): ... I'll tell you what happened today: a Christian woman came and asked me if she could say something to everyone: she stood in the centre of the room and announced that she, who had not been able have children, had at last become pregnant. ... A Muslim woman told her: 'If you feel tired and need help, call me and I will come and help you'.

Giampaolo: Many women got to know about Koz Kazah through their daughters.

Alaa's mother and other women: (in arabic) We are Muslims, but we live alongside many Christians who are our friends. Even our daughters have Christian friends. We are truly sisters. There's no difference.

Giampaolo: The Koz Kazah activities have created a virtuous circle based on mutual giving. The women helped by the foundation, for example, help the Sisters of Charity on a weekly basis, taking care of elderly people in need.

Awatef Klada (in Arabic): We wanted to let the women who participate in our activities understand that, even though they have very little, there are people who even have less, but to whom they can give something. Giving does not mean only giving money: we can give our strength and help others. ... (music)

There are not only Christians but all the people the Sisters meet in the streets. ...

This activity has totally changed these women's understanding of giving because, in the local culture, you only give something in exchange for money.

Giampaolo: Why limit ourselves to Shubra? Now we have an chance to expand our activities into other neighbourhoods. Some work has already begun in a building in the Fagalla part of Cairo. (music)

3) TINKU KAMAYU: WOMEN AND WOOL (ARGENTINA)

Maria: After getting to know these people in Cairo now we are going to meet a group of indigenous women in the North of Argentina, in the foothills of the Andes in a region rooted in quechua culture. The project there has been going for more than 40 years.

(music)

CAPTION: Santa Maria, Catamarca –Argentina

"Being together for work" A cooperative of women, descendants of Argentinian indigenous peoples.

Margarita Ramirez, director of Tinku Kamayu (in Spanish): I am a descendant of the Calchaquí people: the father of my great-grandfather was a cacique, a tribal chief. During the 2001 crisis, there was nothing here; there was no work for the people and great poverty in the country. I found different forms of poverty. The one that struck me most was a group of women who had many problems. They were frowned upon and if they went out of their houses they were considered bad women. This is because we have a 'macho' culture here, in which women should not leave the home. I felt this was inequality. So I spoke to eight women and suggested that: 'If we have so many economic problems, why don't we start a weaving business?'

Maria Condori, Tinky Kamary (in Spanish): In Quechua language, Tinku Kamayu means: 'united for work'. Here I really felt appreciated as a woman. Margarita always tells us: 'You should not feel more or less than anyone, you are businesswomen!'

María Ramírez, Tinku Kamayu (in Spanish): I arrived on the first day crying; in the evening I went home crying because I could not spin, I did not know how to do anything. What I find here and helped me was that you feel you're worth a lot.

A woman (in Spanish): Above all you feel welcomed, and fulfilled as a woman, as a mother and wife.

Margarita Ramirez, director Tinku Kamayu (in Spanish): Today, Tinku is a cooperative with 14 workers and our hope is - even though we are a only grain of sand - to help build a better world. Yes, our aim is to safeguard our ancestral origins. We said: why not go back to the work culture of our ancestors who were weaving and spinning. This restores our freedom.

A woman (in Spanish): We make garments using 100% natural materials. We buy from producers who come down from the mountain to sell wool from sheep or llamas.

A woman (in Spanish): We work using all natural techniques. We dye the cloth making use of nutshells, onions and Jarilla, a medicinal plant.

Margarita Ramirez, director of Tinku Kamayu (in Spanish): This gives us great joy because we can hand on our culture through weaving.

María Condori, Tinky Kamayu (in Spanish): A great thing happened in my life: Tinku has given me everything. It gave me back the will to live; I am now respected and valued as a woman; it helped my self esteem and I am esteemed by others. No one can take this away from me. (music)

4) **AN UNUSUAL HONEYMOON**

Ryan: The story we will see now is called "An unusual honeymoon". This says it all. Let's see.

[The entire item is in English] (music)

Cristian (in English): We met last year at the United World Week, in India. (...) and at a certain moment, looking at her, I said: she is the one!

Elaine (in inglese): So, Cristian being from Romania and I living all my life in India, I assumed that it would also be challenging, yet at the same time it would be very charming, to experience together the diversity and also find the unity which we do every single day. (music)

Elaine: We got married and the next step was a honeymoon

Cristian There is the first of May in Loppiano, which is another youth event, (...) and there we heard a video message of Wael, the director of Caritas Jordan

Wael Suleiman - Loppiano, Incisa Valdarno, Italy 1st May 2016 (in italian): Please come to the Middle East to help people ...

Cristian: He said come, come and see what the situation is. We felt like ..

Elaine: Let's go

Cristian: called like, Let's go (music)

Cristian: in TV we have seen refugees camps and so on and so we were thinking we will arrive and will be in some tents, (...) we found out that there are camps, but the refugees are more in the cities, (...) So what Caritas does is to visit them and to provide with the basic needs (...) So that was the moment where we felt a little bit down. Ok, what can we do concretely? we discovered

that we didn't come here for ourselves. (musica) In the morning we normally wake up at 6.00, 6.15, and yes 6:50 we have to leave and we reach Zarqa

Elaine: Yes, by 7.30

Cristian: What was our job concretely? It was staying with the children, helping them ..

Elaine: do craft, do art, this kind of soft skills which would be also educational and also entertaining for them.

Cristian: Of course Elaine, she has yoga sessions with refugees women

Elaine: I did yoga session keeping in mind that they are coming from backgrounds which are stressful, living disoriented, so trying to use breathing and trying to use various yoga postures which help them and which they can then take the information and try out at home.

Cristian: Then of course it was also about us: so honey moon (...) we helped other but that has helped ourselves also ...

Elaine: in our relationship

Cristian: in our relationship

Maria: It is Christian's birthday today. Happy Birthday! (Applause)

5. ARDJAN, OUR TEACHER (ALBANIA)

Maria: Now we are going to Albania to hear about what a teacher did to fulfil his dream and help his country.

(views)

Speaker Shqipëri! "Land of the Eagles" is the historic name for Albania.

It is located in the Balkan Peninsula on the coast of the Adriatic Sea. / Mother Teresa's parents came from this country. In the last century Albania spent over 40 years under a dictatorship, and the people suffered greatly. After that mass migration began that continues to this day. At present it has a population of 3 million people and there are about one and a half million Albanian migrants in the world. (music)

Dajana Olaj, a student at Bogë (in Albanian): This is the capital, Tirana, and we live here in a region where there are high mountains.

Pjeter Ukaj, grandfather (in Albanian): Our village school was built in 1928 and I too went there, for 4 years.

Anila Pekmezi, Director of the Schools in Xhaj and Bogë (in Albanian): In Albania there are several areas that are not adequately developed yet, like our mountain area. The work of our teachers is very important for the future of the children living in these places.

Ardjan ULAJ, teacher in Bogë (in Albanian): I am married and have three children, two girls and a boy. I'm a teacher. What choice did I make? To teach in a village in northern Albania, where there are fewer opportunities than in urban areas.

When did I make this decision? It was in 1997-1998, when my country Albania was living in chaos and the situation was very uncertain. All my peers and colleagues left Albania. I made a different decision, I chose to stay and serve my country. In this way, I can give hope to the country

and a chance for a better future. Was it a difficult choice? Certainly yes, if I think of the many people my age who are now living in Milan or London, with a higher income, and have better prospects for the future than I can give to my children.

Robert Gegaj, a student at Bogë (in Albanian): I'm 12 years old and I am very glad to be at this school.

Klevisa R. Rakaj, a student at Bogë (in Albanian): I am very happy to go to school because my teacher Ardjan is very good.

Ardjan ULAJ, a teacher at Bogë (in Albanian): I work in this small school which has about 40 students. I teach science subjects: mathematics, physics, chemistry, and biology. It's challenging, but I do my best. What is my dream? I would like this place, which has such a beautiful landscape, to be developed for tourism. I hope that by working on various projects, we can achieve something good. I went through tough times, with many difficulties, but I am happy because we have achieved good things for the community. Thank you. (music and applause)

Ryan: Ardjan's story is marvellous for me.

6) GETTING INVOLVED IN PEACE

Ryan: In August I went to Jordan with other young people. We often hear stories and statistics on the TV but being there I learned and discovered that the people I met are really like me, like my family. They are no longer far away, quite the opposite.

J Salam, Iraq (in Arabic): We used to live in a big house with 8 rooms and every girl had her own bedroom and we were comfortable, then suddenly we found ourselves living in a 3m caravan, what life is this?

Sameh, Iraq (in Arabic): We used to have our own business, we were independent but when ISIS attacked us we left without taking anything but the clothes we were wearing.

Speaker: The stories of Salam and Sameh, are two of the many lives that touched the minds and the hearts of a group of young people that met up in Madaba, Jordan this past August.

Many were meeting each other for the first time. They were from Europe, the Middle East and 3 from the USA, Argentina and New Zealand. They lived shoulder to shoulder for 12 days in a camp that up until 6 months prior had housed 114 Iraqi refugees.

Áine, Ireland (in English): I think it's really amazing that we're staying in places where refugee families would have stayed. (...) There's three people living here. There's myself, there's Haggar and there's Lina. Haggar is from Egypt, Lina is from Germany. (...) On the wall beside my bed, there's two little picture cut-outs from cereal boxes.

Anna, Italy (in Italian): Spesso magari si dice "ah ma questi giovani non fanno niente", sono magari sono un po' sottovalutati. Invece il fatto di dire – "No!" Io sono venuta in Giordania, e sono in Giordania con persone di tutte le nazionalità e sono qui perché credo sia importante quello che sta succedendo.

Speaker: But what can come out of an experience where, youth from the middle east and western countries come together to go deep into a subject that is so complex and dramatic?

Sören, Germany (in English): *I had the fear that the people from the middle east would blame me for being a young guy from a western country who comes here and wants to help. (...) And at the same time also they had the fear that we would not be interested in understanding them (...) that we would just stay very separate and maybe with a cold heart. (...) But in the end we saw that this fear was unfounded.*

Pascale, Lebanon (in English): *My country is really suffering about the subject and so it's really difficult to be objective. (...) I think it's really important the cultural exchange. I find this really important and every single time you learn something new.*

Mohammad, Palestine (in Arabic): *There is understanding and harmony between us. It was as if it was really "meant to be". Each one completes the other, so working together was really nice and fun too.*

Speaker: *Host-spot is the name of the project promoted by 10 non governmental organizations from 9 countries, funded by the European Commission.*

Caritas Jordan played a vital role in the logistics and planning. Sameh and Salam, who we met earlier, were brought in to help with the cooking for the 55 participants.

Dina, Jordan (in English): *We thought it's a nice gesture to have individuals who have actually been through the war and who have seen all the hardships to get here. It's a way to live with them and to learn from them and to ask questions; and they've become more or less participants within the project as well.*

Speaker: *The chance to visit Syrian and Iraqi families awaiting approval for relocation to other parts of the world was a very deep experience.*

Encounters with people that up until then for many were a distant reality and a statistic on the evening news, became friendships with names and faces.

Marisol, Spain (in Spanish): *Quando siamo arrivati (...) la donna era tutta coperta aveva il velo, vedevamo solo gli occhi. Piano piano abbiamo incominciato a fare delle domande, ai bambini abbiamo chiesto i loro sogni, (...) e poi ci siamo messi a disegnare con loro. E' stato come rompere le barriere e i muri e ci ha fatto avvicinarci di più, e questo ha fatto sì che la mamma si sentissi più al suo agio e ci ha raccontato come sono arrivati fin qui. (...) Abbiamo sentito il suo dolore. (...) e poi ha tolto il velo e mi ha baciato (...) E' stato come cominciare da qualcuno molto lontano e arrivare quasi a qualcuno che può essere tua madre (...) Non sono più storie così lontane per noi.*

Speaker: *Everywhere you look there is much to be done and ideas were transformed into acts of solidarity and signs of understanding.*

So many victims of the refugee crisis are children. Every afternoon there were visits to two locations to animate activities for the children of the Iraqi and Syrian families.

Shurouk, Jordan (in English): *Today we are at the educational pre-school. (...) We are here just to put a smile on their faces and let their hearts be happy again even though it's for a little while.*

Speaker: *So often the media is a source of conflicting and partial information with regard to the middle east and refugees in general. These young people want to share with truth and dignity the stories, the faces and the hopes of some of the families forced to flee their countries.*

Plans are underway to mount a social media campaign.

Massimiliano, Italy (in Italian): *Il senso di questo viaggio è dare una continuità, dare un futuro a quella che è stata questa esperienza (...) far conoscere alla gente, per informare le persone (...) su una realtà che dovrebbe essere molto più capita e vicina alla gente.*

Kristóf, Hungary (in English): *Most of my pictures are happy moments, or very personal moments. Because(...) if you see these pictures in Europe than we can connect with these people that we look: they play in the same way with the children as we do This picture is life and it tells a lot about this family because also this family was so hopeful.*

Wael V. Suleiman, General Director Caritas Jordan (in Arabic): *We have eyes to see the war, the destruction, the death, the hatred, and the violence, and the conflicts, and the divisions. However we have a heart that sees the future. And the future is a single human family without poverty or hunger or hatred. The future is similar to a beautiful mosaic. (...) We don't know when this future will be a reality though we are working at it now and we're going to keep working until it is so.*

(Applause)

Ryan: Something that stayed with me after going to Jordan was what a mother said who had suffered very much. She said to us: "We must always keep hope alive. If we lose hope, we lose our lives".

7. **BRUNO VENTURINI**

Maria: Now we want to tell you about someone who many of us knew, Bruno Venturini, one of Chiara's closest collaborators over the last 30 years. He died on August 2nd.

Here with me is Franz Coriasco, a journalist who met Bruno when he was a boy, as many others did. Hi Franz.

Franz: Hello!

Maria: He wrote about Bruno on his blog which has been read by thousands of people.

Franz Coriasco: To try to say who Bruno was is a bit like trying to speak about the sea using a sardine tin. Bruno himself was someone who used few words.

For all those of my generation who had the good fortune of knowing Bruno, I would say that he had been a father, an elder brother and a friend. Certainly we would go to him when we had our problems: not because he could solve them but because just talking them over together was enough to help us see things more clearly. That was how it was. Because for him it was only in that being together that life and its darkness could find meaning and, perhaps, bring some light.

Bruno was not a problem solver, nor even a confessor, in the original meaning of the term. He was someone you went to, being sure of coming away with a broader vision and a calmer heart. We certainly came away knowing that we were always in his debt, knowing we received much more than we gave; instead he was the one who thanked you, as the great Olympian of thankfulness, modesty and self-giving that he always was.

It was only towards the end that I began to understand that those gifts were not his genetic makeup but if anything something acquired through effort and without ever mentioning the price: in his very special way of knowing how to disappear and to be there, in the deep simplicity that

had always conquered other by taking himself out of the picture. I think he was the most Marian of the men I have ever met; and in what Chiara called the “art of loving”, Bruno for many of us was an unmatched teacher and at the same time the most humble of champions.

I think that even this video clip that we show you now, recorded on the spot during one of the many dinners that we had together, expresses a bit of all this.

Franz Coriasco: Once we asked what you thought, how you would like to be remembered, and you said, I would like to disappear! Can you confirm this affirmation, or explain it better?

Bruno Venturini: Yes, because it is the natural consequence of what I feel at this moment: if you feel you are a failure, well then, it's better to disappear! I confirm that statement, yes!

What bothers me most is activism well...

Maybe I don't manage it, but the fact of disappearing is valid not only for afterwards, but for now too. It's a very simple fact: after all these years with Chiara, now you are completely out of the picture.

... It's not easy, to tell you the truth! Sometimes I feel bad about it, sometimes I would like to ... but in the end I'm happy, I rejoice for others ... But that's it...

But my experience this year, this summer: at some point, I don't know, due to an external situation ... I don't know ... I felt a sudden physical and psychological decline... and I said to myself: what's going on? As if suddenly these nearly 90 years came to fore and I felt the weight of them. Then I said, but that is how it is? So go ahead!

You don't have the strength you had before; you are not able to do as much ... that's it... okay! That's life, right? To lose everything, in real terms. I felt that what Jesus had always asked of me was coming about and that I had given him in some way ... I don't know how to explain but it was a wonderful experience.

I remember that on some days I could not even move, I was really struck down; then at last you have been able to say the 'yes' to Jesus that I had promised him 60 years ago.

... You see, it's not necessary to do who knows what, but to “be there”, yes! To do your part, living moment by moment, accepting ...just to say that the more I don't exist, the more I am

Ryan: Thank you Bruno, for your example

7) MANY FACES FORM ONE STORY (ITALY)

Ryan: Now we will hear how prison walls cannot stop love entering the lives of people inside, and when they are on the outside too. They become friends on the journey.

(Views)

Rosalba Ciocca, mother of Patrizio: Alfonso was fantastic. He helped my son in prison... If it were not for Alfonso who persuaded him there is no point in stealing...! They are like angels around you!

Patrizio Ciocca, assistant at a pizzeria: One day he came to see me in Rebibbia, at the Casa Circondariale... I even asked him how my son was, because I was not able to see him every day... We've become like family now..., he is like my father... Just the same! Sadly, life is like that... one day you're find, the next you're down... then okay again..., that's how it is.

Beforehand the relationship was mine and his, then it became mine, my father, my mother, because my mother and father really like him too. Now there are many of us. That is a good thing!

Alfonso Di Nicola, focolarino, founder of the "Always a Person Project": About 20 years ago a friend gave me three addresses of prisoners... I wrote to them and one wrote back, it was Giorgio. I asked him if he wanted to be my friend. He said "Of course, I'd be glad to. God has sent you." Then he asked me a favour: "Could you please visit my mother? Go and see her and give her a hug from me". This lady began to cry... "I'm dying" she said, "I'm very ill... I see that you really care for my son and I entrust him to you". I went to see Giorgio and he was very happy. Then he said: "Could you do me a favour? I have a friend here who wants to speak to you. If you have time..." So there were always new contacts. Then some people wanted to help me, now for example there are more than 30 helpers. Many of them are former prisoners. We are in touch with over 200 families.

Anna Del Villano, Deputy Governor Casa Circondariale Rebibbia (Roma) The "Always a Person" association has built up a good rapport with us so that the staff here can inform them about prisoners whose families have got problems; there is a flow of information which is very important.

This happens when people leave prison too, because it is a difficult time due to lack of resources. There is much voluntary work going on in prisons, but most of it happens inside. Outside there is really a need and this project is doing great work.

Alessandra D'Orazio: I have known Alfonso for 9 years. He's always been here... He is important to me. He's like a daily message [?] "Good morning Alfonso" "Hello Alfonso"... and I count on him ... and I get emotional... (tearful) I know... because he is like a father to me!

Alfonso Di Nicola: I would not manage ... to care for them if I did not stop for a moment, during the day, to try to find, in God, the strength to be able to love... so that my heart should reach out to their hearts, and touch them.

Franco Lippera: I was involved in an armed robbery... Because I am a professional; if I do something I know what needs to be done... I am deeply convinced that a miracle happened because if 14 bullets are fired at you, you can't only be hit by two, one in your foot and one in your side... That is how God speaks to you, you don't understand by yourself... Okay... I lost my family, I lost everything, I don't care. I found Alfonso, who is a real friend! When you come round, I am happy. Why? Because you are there, people don't die of hunger. But you do it because in you... you know? It's ... a favour you're doing for God! (Music)

Massimo Mallini, finance person with Renault, volunteer with the "Always a Person Project": Here there are so many feelings... we are glad to be able to say, once they have left, that they have become true and happy people again. Their stories, their hopes, their successes and what went wrong, at the end of the day it all writes a story, a wonderful story!

Marco Beraldi, motorcycle mechanic: *Just the thought, knowing that you have a reference point for life inside, and I hope outside too, someone you can count on, meaning: you know that he is someone you can always count on... a real friend! I really want keep up this friendship when the bars have gone [when I've left the bars behind] ... which I hope will be soon. When I get out of here, one way or another, I want to help others in the way they are helping me!*

D. Roberto Guernieri, Prison Chaplain Rebibbia: *One of the worst things that can happen here is not being able to help. This is dreadful for us and we want to help as much as we can. But the fact of being here, in among these situations and stories, means that we can light the fire of hope...*

Roberto Mirco, cook: *I thought my life was over, that I would end up on the streets, because people's indifference and their judgement kills you little by little... but he made me hope again and gave me strength and new meaning to life... and this really helps people. It might also be because I did some bad things in the past... I hurt a lot of people, made people suffer... But I wanted to start afresh... But when you come out of prison, doors don't open for you... Many people even spat at me... Thank God and thanks to Alfonso I was able to meet Pope Francis... I would never have thought it could happen... This is the power of God's mercy that leads you... I am happy. I feel loved.*

Alfonso di Nicola: *Since I began caring for these brothers here, my life has changed. I feel that there is a fullness. I would want many people to experience this! A love that asks for nothing and gives its all. That is enough. It is essential to be alongside people, and then you do what you can to take their pain away. I hope that there will be thousands and thousands of us who take the pain away from these forsaken Christs.*

(Music and applause)

Ryan: This story truly touches us deeply, thank you.

9) DIALOGUE WITH MARIA VOCE (EMMAUS) AND JESÚS MORAN

Ryan: Now we invite Emmaus and Jesus to speak to us. We know that you have just finished the meeting with [the Movement's] representatives from around the world. How did it go?

Emmaus: It went very well. A good number of these representatives are here now and seeing these wonderful stories we have seen in the conference call I wanted to thank God, of course together with all of you. And I thought: but these are just a few examples, practical outcomes of a life that exists throughout the world and which these representatives, from the Americas, because this time a third have come, from the Americas and Oceania, then two other groups will be here in the coming weeks – these representatives brought this life with them, they brought stories about life, stories about resurrection, real change, stories about people who started over again who rediscovered their dignity, who rediscovered they could give to others and so they set to and changed things around them, changed society. I said to myself this is something really great, really great!

Then we discovered the root of all this life, because the root of all this life, the one root which has enabled all this life to grow, is Jesus crucified and forsaken. And we rediscovered this here at our meeting.

We rediscovered – as Chiara herself did – that Jesus is the proof of God's love for all people. Why are we able to love one another? Why are we able to love others? Because God has loved us and loved us in an extraordinary way, sending even his Son to die for us, to become human like us, to die. Being someone like us which means, yes, dying too, because we too will die. People die and he died too. But it was not only about dying, but about going through all the sufferings that humankind experiences. He was betrayed, hurt, he felt a failure, humiliated, stripped of everything, he was poor. He experienced all of humankind's sufferings, to the point of that greatest suffering which Chiara felt was like God's love calling her, the love that was expressed in that cry: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?", which means loving even to the point of feeling that God was far away.

And how many people are there today, people of our own age, who feel that God is far from what they are experiencing, in all the sufferings that exist?

We have the opportunity to reach out towards these sufferings and say: "It is not true that God is far off; God is here in this suffering, because he went through it too. God is here. God is here". So we have the opportunity to meet God in these sufferings, to embrace this forsaken God, this God who became man. So in Jesus forsaken we have the chance to be fully human and to share in his divinity, because Chiara defined Jesus forsaken as "a window" a window which lets God see human beings and lets human beings see God. Why? Because he is the human being, the man of sorrows, the one with the refugees, the person experiencing all that we see in the world. He is this man. So God sees all these people in Jesus forsaken.

And at the same time he is God, because he is the Son of God who became man.

So we people can meet God face to face through him. And do this in all circumstances.

So truly we are leaving this meeting with this great treasure which we have received and we know that not only the 80 people who came here and are in this room will go back with this love, but that you too in the zones have this love, all of those who have followed Chiara have made this discovery, all those who have got to know this charism have made this discovery.

So we expect truly that this love for Jesus forsaken will help us rediscover that we can live with God in every circumstance.

This sums things up. (Applause)

Maria: Thank you. And what was your impression, Jesús?

Jesús: I have little to say after this (laughter). And especially after seeing all these powerful experiences. I have in mind what Pope Francis said this summer, in Krakow, when he told the young people that the greatest gift God the Father gave humanity is Jesus, so a person, a man who is God, as Emmaus said, who took on all that is ours, who became man in all that concerns us, seriously, who took on... precisely: refugees, prisoners, violence... all this. And God's gift to the Son is the resurrection.

I believe that is story, which speaks of love, is the only one that makes God credible today, only this, so we must go on telling this story with our lives.

I was very struck by what we have seen today. So what can we do? We can do a favour for God. This is marvellous. What is our role in this story? We are doing a favour for God by carrying on telling this story, this story of love.

Maria: Thank you very much. (*Applause*)

10) CHIARA LUBICH: JESUS FORSAKEN AND THE UNITED WORLD

Ryan: This is a very beautiful gift for me, but we can also say it is, - as we say in English - like a "drop in a bucket", a drop in the ocean. What do you think about this?

Emmaus: Look, concerning this, I think we can now listen to Chiara, because she gave an answer to the youth who asked her: "What is this reality of Jesus forsaken?" And Chiara explained it, she mentioned all the places where he can be found, where she could find him. Then, she said, it may seem that you do very little – you said it too - it may seem that you do very little. And I understand what you said, but in the end what is it? A drop of water in an ocean. Yes, we tried to help some refugees that we met, we tried to give new life to these few prisoners with whom we came in contact. How about all the others? And the rest? This could happen.

But I think, as Chiara will tell us now, we must be sure that we are putting a divine spark into this small action, because it's God's work, not ours. So into that small action we put a divine spark, and this divine spark will certainly make a huge impact, because God is the huge impact. So it's not a drop in the ocean. It may be a drop in the ocean but that drop is the one that will transform the ocean, that can dry up the ocean little by little, little by little.

So, courage! Let's now listen to Chiara who is encouraging us with her final message.

As I said, this is an informal meeting that Chiara had with some young people, so it's not something public. Some young people asked her a question and she gave her message to them.

10) CHIARA

Gen: "... What you feel within? Who is Jesus Forsaken for you?"

Chiara: Jesus Forsaken is something enormous because He is the entire life of a focolarino, of a Gen - he is our secret. ... The world is filled with consumerism, secularism, materialism and hedonism, with all kinds of "isms." (*laughter*) We have to conquer the world, which we also have within us. We are attached to things, attached to people, to our family and country. We are attached to our studies... to all kinds of things that impede us.... We are suffocated by all these "isms" around us.

Jesus Forsaken is in all these sufferings, in all these obstacles: I feel I have come to a standstill. I'm no longer able to smile at the other Gen! It's Jesus Forsaken. You embrace that

“standstill” because He also felt... “Oh, my God, why have you forsaken me?”¹ And then at once, “*In manus tuas, Domine*,”² [“Into your hands, O Lord...”]. He freed himself at once from being at a standstill.

Another example, “I feel overwhelmed by fear.” Another: “I’ve lost all interest; nothing is important anymore.” Just think, even Jesus seemed to have lost interest, because up until then he succeeded in living royally, majestically on the cross. He had given his mother to us. He had forgiven those who put him on the cross. He had done everything as Jesus would. In that moment, he really seems like a failure. He seems feeble. He seems to be a weakling - he seems to be, but the fact is that the trial was infinite. All hell was probably against him. And so he felt weakened: “Why?” “Why?” We would ask the same thing in certain trials. But he immediately said, “*In manus tuas, Domine.*” So we have to immediately embrace Jesus Forsaken and resolve all that hinders us, resolve it in order to live the Resurrection within ourselves, to have the Risen Lord in our midst, to bring the Risen Lord among young people and to make room, room, room for the kingdom of heaven.

Then we see that Jesus Forsaken is also in others because other people suffer, too. Someone might be an orphan ... We have to love him or her and be a father or mother to them. Someone else might be desperate or feel betrayed or a failure. Someone else may be divorced, alone or in prison. We have to take away these sufferings from everyone. What hurts the others is mine. I have to take it from them out of love for Jesus Forsaken in them.

Then we see all the barriers, tensions and wars between East and West, the difficulties between North and South, between generations, between races It is all Jesus forsaken and we have to work to overcome all these things.

... Have you understood? So you should see Jesus Forsaken not only in the trials, but you should also see him in all these divisions. They may say to you, “You are fanatics. How can you possibly hope for a united world? Don't you see how things are today? There is terrorism. There is war. Now they even talk about star wars - there are all kinds of things, like the arms race. What can you possibly hope for?”

Instead no, no! I said before and I will repeat this example here because it is important. The question of ecology did not exist before. You are young and you might believe that the problem of ecology has always existed. Nothing existed, no one ever talked about it probably because nature was still able to absorb whatever smoke there was or the trash that people threw all over. Now it has become a serious problem. It has become public opinion and everyone wants to work, me too, to work to resolve the ecology problem, because it is ruining nature which was created for us by God. People can no longer live in this situation because it has really become impossible.

How did this come about? It all started with a few people who began to deal with the problem. Then there were others who followed, then small-scale activities, like going to clean up a

¹ Mt 27:46

² Lk 23:46

neighbourhood. Then they might have collected signatures against Chernobyl³ or against something else of this kind, and little by little an ecology movement developed. In fact, now everyone is speaking about this problem: in America, in Austria, Germany and Italy and so forth. Now there are even political parties - the Green Party [in Italy], which represents the ecology movement.

My point is that we are working for a united world and we promote small activities which might seem to be nothing when you think of all the disunity that there is in the world, of all the wars there are in the world, in Iran, Iraq⁴, here and there - it might seem that you are doing nothing. Instead, you are creating public opinion, creating it more and more, until everyone begins to think like this: "Well, maybe, maybe it is right to aim towards a united world because we have reached the point where either we unite or we die, also because of the atomic bomb." As Foco⁵ used to say, "Either we unite or we will all perish, we will all die."

It will go ahead, like with the ecology movement. Now we all feel that it is right to work for ecology and a short time ago we had never even heard the word. Likewise, the ideal of a united world will become part of public opinion, young people will make it their own and work for it and they will be shocked when they see two people fighting or when they see black against white, or one generation against another, maybe young people against the elderly. They will be scandalized because a new mentality has come about, an opinion, a public opinion and this will open the way for you. It will open the way for you, and Jesus will be able to go ahead. (applause)

12. CONCLUSION

Maria: We will say good bye now having heard these words from Chiara.

Ryan: For more information on the projects we have shown or to suggest other ones to report on, please go to our website and the Facebook page "Collegamento CH"

Maria: The next link up will be on 19 november 2016, at 8.00 p.m.

Ryan: Thanks to everyone. See you at the next conference call.

Maria: See you next time! (*Applause*)

³ Chernobyl disaster - In the early morning of April 26, 1986, the Chernobyl nuclear plant in Ukraine (at that time it was part of the Soviet Union) exploded, creating what was the most serious nuclear accident ever. The explosion released large quantities of radioactive materials, 400 times more than the Hiroshima (Japan) bomb, contaminating more than 200,000 square kilometers of Europe. It is one of two incidents classified as catastrophic with the highest level on the [International Nuclear Event Scale](#), the other being the [Fukushima Daiichi nuclear disaster](#) in Japan in March 2011.

⁴ There was war between Iran and Iraq from September 1980 to August 1988.

⁵ Igino Giordani (1894-1980), a man of culture and one of the 'co-founders' of the Focolare Movement, together with Chiara Lubich. See also <http://www.focolare.org/en/chiara-lubich/chi-e-chiara/igino-giordani/>