

CH CONFERENCE CALL

Rocca di Papa, 16/06/2018

“Starting from ourselves”

1. Opening and greetings

With a greeting from Emmaus and Jesus and a phone call with Guatemala.

2. Italy: The ‘invisible’ people on the border

Migrants. They are not numbers, but people who carry with them a burden of suffering, together with their own culture and hope for a better future. The town of Ventimiglia is one of the frontier “hotspots” on the migrant routes of Europe. Here, some people decided not to ignore them.

3. India: Dancing beyond borders

When dance is not simply an art form giving one person a future, but does so for many. Mayur, an Indian dancer, tells his own story and that of Mayur’s Dance Academy where people come before the fees to be paid.

4. Italy – Tonadico: ‘A pilgrimage to the source’

A rather unusual group spent time in the Trentino Mountains in northern Italy recently: 20 Hindu academics from India, accompanied by the members of the Abba School. It was a shared journey to the source of Chiara Lubich’s charism.

5. Brazil, Campos dos Goytacazes: Taking risks for their own people

Building peace always takes courage. Noemia is courageous as she struggles to defend the rights of small landowners in the state of Rio de Janeiro whose land was confiscated.

6. ‘An extraordinary day’

Video summary of the highlights of Pope Francis’ visit to Loppiano on 10th May 2018, including extracts from an interview with Maria Voce and Jesús Morán at Rocca di Papa, on 24th May 2018.

7. Conclusion

Final greetings and the date of the next CH Conference Call, a special one from Manila

On Sunday 8th July at 20.00 (Italian time)

Special video spot on the Genfest Link up

01) Opening and greetings

Roberta Formisano: Hello everyone and welcome! The time we will spend together now will be enriching, hearing stories from different parts of the world, but it is also going to be a special link up.

Hugo Márquez: As we all know, Pope Francis' visit to Loppiano on the 10th of May was an extraordinary occasion and in the second part of this link up we will experience it again together, and understand more about it from Emmaus and Jesús through a short video that has been made.

But we have not yet introduced ourselves. My name is Hugo, I'm from Venezuela. I am 36 years old and I live in a focolare near Rome. Soon I will be moving to Bogota in Colombia.

ROBERTA: I am Roberta, I'm Italian from Naples. I am a journalist and work for a television company. Instead, I will be leaving, happily, on the first of July for Manila, for the Genfest!

HUGO: I will follow the Genfest from afar, with many other people, through social networks: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and the live streaming...

(In video graphics of the Social Networks for the Genfest)

ROBERTA: Today we have with us a group of focolarini from different Christian Churches, Evangelical, Orthodox, Anglican, Reformed, Catholic and Lutheran. Welcome! We are so glad you are here at this link up!

HUGO: We also wanted to say hello to all those attending the meeting of Italian New City being held today. Some of them are here with us. Emmaus, Jesús would you like to greet them now?

Maria Voce (Emmaus): Of course, willingly!

I would like to encourage and support them in their commitment to bearing witness that a people exists that believes in the world becoming one family and that highlights this family's fundamental values, with the clarity that today's Gospel put before us, saying "Yes, yes, no, no"; and with the courage that comes only from being sure to consider everything with Jesus in the midst, therefore in unity among yourselves and in the light of the charism of unity.

So good work and very best wishes to Città Nuova.

Jesùs Morán: Greetings and encouragement from me. As you yourselves wrote, today it is more than ever necessary to have means of communication and information that are truthful and authentic, and to communicate ideas of this kind, because we live in a world where there are many narratives that are not credible. So what we have at heart is that, as Focolare Movement, we can have this means of formation and information for all of us. Take courage and go ahead! (Applause)

HUGO: We remind you that you can send messages, photos and impressions to this number. Please note that the number has changed. The number is +39 320 419 7109.

ROBERTA: We can't forget the images we saw recently of the volcano erupting in Guatemala. Hundreds of people have died and thousands were displaced. We should have Marco Carranza on the phone with us now, from Guatemala City.

Marco, can you hear?

Marco Carranza: Hello everyone. We can hear very well.

Hugo (in Spanish): Hola Marco, como estás?

Marco: Hola, hola, estamos muy bien e muy contentos de estar conectados con ustedes. We are very happy.

First of all we want to thank everyone in the Movement all over the world for your solidarity, phone calls, all your prayers, unity and the practical financial help.

“Fuego Volcano” is one of 37 volcanoes in Guatemala; it is active and has constant violent eruptions. But it is the first time that its activity has caused such a disaster. Many children are now orphans and families have been destroyed, but in the midst of all this pain there has been amazing solidarity and love.

Like many other places in the city, our own Educational Centre, Fiore, managed by people in the Movement, has become a base where essential items are collected.

There are many stories we could tell you, like Hugo's. He is a young volunteer who lives with his mother and knowing that the roof on his friend's house had fallen in due to the weight of the ash, he gave him money to help repair it. An hour later someone rang their doorbell and gave him a bag saying, “This food is for you and your mother”. For him it was like having the experience of Chiara in the early times. And there have been many other stories like that.

Roberta: Thanks Marco, you know we are with you. Thanks again and greetings to everyone with you there!

Marco: Thank you. We are united in prayer. All of us here in Guatemala send our love.

Roberta: Thank you! (Applause)

02) Italy: The 'invisible' people on the border

HUGO: Migration is a worldwide phenomenon and just in the last few hours there has been increased tension between the United States and Mexico. My country, Venezuela, is experiencing a real exodus. Many countries in Asia and Africa ... there are very dramatic situations.

Italy too is a through route for many refugees. They come from North Africa across the Mediterranean. Many of them drown.

For those who make it, one of the obligatory routes towards northern Europe is the border between Italy and France at Ventimiglia, where up to now almost 150,000 migrants have crossed over, but now the border has been closed.

M. –Sudan (a young migrant, in Arabic): I thank God for having arrived safely in Italy after being so humiliated in Libya. Now I will do all I can to get to France.

Music and title: The invisible ones at the border

By Donato Chiampi and Victoria Gómez - @ventimigliaconfinesolidale

Abdul Rahmani, cultural mediator – Afghanistan (speaks in Italian, with Italian subtitles to facilitate understanding): We arrived at the border, this path is between Italy and France. Many poor guys come here trying to get into France. Someone walking along this pathway at night, fell and died.

Christian Papini, Director of Caritas - Ventimiglia, Italy: What happens here? About three years ago, when the borders were closed, people stayed on in Ventimiglia. We managed, as far as we could, to meet the needs of these people. [...] In the sense that Lampedusa is the door they came in and Ventimiglia is the door that was closed on them. People from various groups helped us: focolarini, non-governmental organizations, French people and many others. That is what happened.

Father Rito Álvarez, parish priest in Gianchette - Ventimiglia, Italy: People from more than 55 nationalities have been welcomed here, over 13 thousand people, especially recently: women, children, unaccompanied minors, sick people ... This really changed us and opened our minds; above all, it has melted our hearts. (music)

Piera Santoianni, Caritas canteen - Ventimiglia, Italy: The border is closed. We try to prepare a good meal for them, so they feel loved and not rejected, at least not by us. [...] This adventure began in 2015 when a huge number of people arrived at the station, escaping from various situations. [...] They find a thousand different ways to get into France. ... And there, fortunately, there are some heroic French people who welcome them. [...] There have been times when we gave food to 200, 300, even a thousand people. [...] We cannot pretend they are not there! That is obvious!

Father Rito Álvarez:... They felt secure, they met brothers and sisters, who embraced them.

Sandro Foretti, Caritas canteen - Ventimiglia, Italy: I do it with all my heart, and that's all! It's not because they give me ... that someone gives me money or pays me. Not at all!

Father Rito Álvarez: The church stayed open from May 31, 2016 to August 14, 2017 - 440 days. We never asked their nationality or religion, we tried to understand what they needed. (music)

Paola Amoretti, dentist - Imperia, Italy: Undoubtedly, the most vulnerable people are the women and children. In particular, the women are often sad having suffered violence during the trip, so they need special care.

Father Rito Álvarez: The service we have given is now ended, because some of the local people opposed it and the authorities - that means the city council and the police - decided to close this place down. The worst thing we were accused of was that the migrants felt so well cared for they invited other people, and this could be damaging for the city. We empathized

with all those who passed by here, and we could not but feel moved, and broken hearted, because it was really painful not to go on helping this family live and ... (music)

Gian Paolo De Lucia - Ventimiglia, Italy: *I am a policeman, working at the border patrol. I deal with checks, expulsions, readmissions, rejections. But this does not prevent me as a Christian from engaging with the many migrant neighbors who come through Ventimiglia. Already in June 2015, when the borders were closed, I realized that all this was happening just below my house. In fact, one day, just under my balcony, I saw volunteers arriving with about eighty migrant teenagers. I went down and helped them. Since then I never stopped helping my neighbors, especially the migrants.*

Abdul Rahmani *(speaks in Italian, with subtitles in Italian to facilitate understanding)*: *Look! There is a pile of clothes, here they ate and drank. Here the teenagers pass by and stop, they change their clothes and get back on the "path of death". They walk ... (music)*

Delia Bonuomo, Bar Hobbit - Ventimiglia, Italy: *Giving a bit of human dignity to these people created a connection among them. And today this place has become the migrants' bar. [...] Most of them are Muslims ... There are no salami sandwiches to be seen, because bit by bit my [previous] clients went away. A room that was used for games for older people, has now become the children's room, where they can write and play. It has a small table for changing newborn babies. It's a good place for the mothers who have nowhere else to go.*

But thanks to them I have met many people, many associations, many volunteers ..., today they support me and help me keep going.

If I were to start again, I would do it all over again. What is important for me is to GIVE!

Don Rito Álvarez: *The "Venus of the rags" by Michelangelo Pistoletto is very meaningful here. You stop to look at all those used clothes. She says: this is what is beautiful. Not my beauty; beauty stands here before me, where there is true integration inside those clothes. (music)*

Maddalena - Ventimiglia, Italy: *I live in Ventimiglia and go by train every morning to school in Mentone, France. I cross the border every day and I meet many migrants. Once a migrant sat next to me and we started studying. When the policemen came by, thinking that he was a student like me, they did not stop him. (music and environment)*

Michele Rubinelli - Montecarlo, Principality of Monaco: *Montecarlo is a very rich place, rich in solidarity too, because there are so many associations working to help others and also to solve the problem of migration. (music and environment)*

Isabelle Ginesty – Nice, France *(in French, with Italian subtitles)*
Most of the proceeds of our stall are given to the migrants in Ventimiglia. For us it is really like living with our friends there, living as a family. It is nice to work together with other associations and other organizations.

(music)

Sister Nelly Van Gemert - Menton, France *(In French with Italian subtitles)*: *I spent 40 years in Africa and [went to Ventimiglia] to meet people from Africa who were suffering there*

too: the migrants. I work there cooking and preparing clothes, but above all, I listen to them and give my heart. What has been important to me, all my life, is the Word of the Gospel: "Whatever you do to the least of these, you have done it to me". This is the motto of my life and I hope to keep going like this for a long time.

Maddalena - Ventimiglia, Italia: I am in Italy. I am in France. But where is the border? What's is it? Yet the border has stopped a people made up of invisible persons ... But we see them!

Father Rito Álvarez: We can all do something. Each of us can truly start really important things, when driven by that deep desire of our own belief in the good of humanity. In my case, it is love for God and for my brothers and sisters, which can really change the world. (music)

03) India: Dancing beyond borders:

ROBERTA: A feature of the stories we have heard and will hear more of in this conference call is that when presented with many problems and dramatic situations, people did not just stop and look. They all set out, in different ways, to do something, enabling change that then involved other people bit by bit. This what Mayur did too, in Mumbai, India.

Mayur: My parents didn't like me dancing. My mother always said: "you can dance when we are gone!" My mom and dad passed away...when I was 17 and 16 years old.

We had our own house but we didn't have ownership papers and we lost it. I realized I had new responsibilities and I took them on.

I finished secondary school and I started teaching dance. One day someone suggested I open my own dance studio. With this support I started teaching professionally. But studies are important and I continued on to College. I worked during the day, went to College at night and practiced dance on Sundays.

When I was a child, my family couldn't afford to pay my school fees. Today I see children around me facing a similar situation. Families here cannot afford to pay school and tuition fees. Dance is a low priority. When such children come to me, I discover their genuine problems. And when this happens I tell them: "Just bring your talent. It's ok if you can't afford fees to pay.

Mayur We have to help them in this situation. I hold dance workshops and anywhere from 100-150 children attend. I do this free of charge. I don't want anything. I only want to teach them. That's it!

I have taught special needs children. This was very difficult for me because they were not able to see, not able to hear. At first I didn't think it was possible to teach them. But their passion helped them to learn to dance.

I have been to the Genfest at Budapest, Hungary. It was an awesome and wonderful experience. I performed on stage in front of a huge audience. It changed my life seeing the love that

everybody had for one another during the Genfest. When I came back to India, to my class, I tried to practice this with my kids, friends and family.

Aarya, Mayur's student, 12 years of age *Mayur sir is very supportive. If there's a competition, he always comes to see my dance. If I need any help in my expressions, energy or steps he clears it up for me and he's very nice.*

Wilson, Mayur's student, 18 years old *When I started learning dance here, I used to pay fees. Then my family couldn't afford it any longer. Mayur would say: "Let it be. Don't worry about the fees. You dance very well. I don't want anything else from you."*

Mayur *Some of my students have become choreographers. They have performed on television shows and commercials, as well as on small award shows. So they are very happy. Mayur's Dance Academy is my family. These kids are my kids and their parents are my parents.*

ROBERTA: Thanks, Mayur, we know that you are following the link up from India, so greetings and a huge thank you to you!

Going beyond borders, breaking down barriers. This is the main theme of the upcoming Genfest which, as you know will be held in Manila from 6th-8th July.

HUGO: There is less than a month to go, 6,000 young people from 96 countries will spend time together, as if in a gigantic workshop, to share experiences and projects on the theme of borders understood both as physical and geographical frontiers, but also cultural, economic and social borders. Many young people are about to travel, others have already arrived in different countries in Asia where they will take part in work camps to be able to get to know very different cultures.

We also want to thank all those who in so many different ways are supporting the Genfest. Please continue to do so, making donations to the bank account that you see now on the screen. You will also find this on the website Focolare.org and on the Facebook page of the Conference Call.

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Indirizzo: Via di Frascati, 292/a 00040 Rocca di Papa (RM)
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ROBERTA: We have news for you. The next Conference call will be a special one from Manila, dedicated entirely to the Genfest and to the stories and activities that have been taking place over many years in Manila and the Philippines. The link up will be on Sunday 8th July at the same time as the link up today.

HUGO: Now we are going live to Canada. We're going to Ottawa where there is Fernando Montagna. Are you there Fernando?

Fernando Montagna: Yes, I'm here. Hello everyone!

Hugo: Hello Fernando, how are you? Can you tell us what you have been doing?

Fernando: We have just come to the end of the event "Chiara Lubich, an Italian woman fostering a universal sense of family" in the context of the Italian Culture Week in Ottawa, which has happened every year for forty years. I'm on the organising committee and this year we wanted to highlight the role of Italian women in the world and that is why I proposed her as someone who was an ambassador for creating a global family. This morning it was not simply about remembering Chiara but making her present through the witness given by business people involved in the Economy of Communion, Muslim friends, students from the Sophia University Institute, and the Apostolic Nuncio Archbishop Luigi Bonazzi, who put forward the Ideal of unity as a path of encounter that is very relevant in a particularly multi-cultural and multi-ethnic country like Canada. A particularly deep moment was the sharing by our Muslim friends about their meeting with Chiara's Ideal. It was a beautiful day and now we have come to the end.

Hugo: Thanks Fernando!

Fernando: Bye everyone!

Roberta: Ciao! (Applause)

04) Italy – Tonadico: 'A pilgrimage to the source'

ROBERTA: What were a group of Christian and Hindu academics doing on the mountains near Trent, in Italy? They defined it as a "pilgrimage to the source". Let's see what it was all about.

**Music and title: *On pilgrimage to the source*
By Stefania Tanesini – filming by Lorenzo Giovanetti**

Vinu Aram – director of Shanti Ashram Coimbatore (in English) I remember this conversation over a cup of tea after Chiara visited Coimbatore. And somebody said, 'Chiara, this cannot stop here' and looked at my mother and said: 'Minoti, how will this go on?'

STEFANIA (out of range) It was in India in January 2001 that Chiara Lubich first met Hindu leaders from the Shanti Ashram, a centre inspired by Gandhian principles, together with academics from Mumbai. A deep relationship began that continued over the years. So much so that Chiara decided to share with them the special mystical enlightenment of her Christian experience, that she had experienced many years before in the summer of 1949, in the mountains near Trent.

Hubertus Blaumeiser – theologian of the Abba School (in Italian): We are here in Tonadico where Chiara lived the experience of 1949; [We are from] the Abba School - the study centre of the Movement - and our counterparts are a group of Hindu friends, who are scholars of Hinduism. (...) It is an experience full of surprises, in which we experience the breath of the Holy Spirit, and I would also say a special presence of Mary who is the mother of all.

Shubada Joshi philosophy professor, Mumbai University (in English) “(...) going back to the source is essential because, for us it is essential to understand, again, in the new lights, what that the saint is trying to communicate. Then, that’s a very beautiful practice even in Hinduism. (...) There may be differences as per culture, but the common thing is that love for divinity and the sense of belongingness also and the deep passion to be one with the Divine.

Sudalaikanna Andiappan, professor of Gandhian Studies, Madurai University (in English): Today morning I have seen the church where Chiara got the spiritual matter, especially the mystic things in that church. When I entered in the church, I am feeling that I am entering in the temple of me.

Callan Slipper, Anglican theologian – Abba School (in English): I think that's the point that allows us to come together, but the profound thing behind that is the possibility of love. And love gives us the language with which to speak to one another and understand one another more deeply, and it also brings us more deeply into the same mystery that we are experiencing together.

Vinu Aram – director, Shanti Ashram Coimbatore (in English) You know what I’m finding is I’m finding new meaning of what Chiara has already given us. I am finding new meaning in the beautiful environment of this beautiful place where she found inspiration.

Deepali Bhanot, Sanskrit professor – New Delhi University (in English) When she (Chiara) talks about love, this love, which she had immense love, we should strive to be like her. And talking about the cities when we come from the crowded cities, having so many complex problems, I think another message that we take back with us is, as in our small way, whatever we can do to be of service to others. So here I am, I don’t want to go back, maybe God will bring me back again...

Karuna Saqari, professor of traditional dance (in English) I’ve never seen Chiara. But through Shanti Ashram, when I came to know the Focolare Movement, I was reminded of this very beautiful word in our Indian tradition, which is **amsha**. Amsha refers to aspects, and when we came in touch with each of the Focolare members, I could see there were amshas of Chiara.

Lingam Raja Gandhigram University (in English) I consider Chiara was a unique person in a way, in a sense. She evolved the concept of love. She demonstrated, she transformed the society through love.

Roberto Catalano, Focolare Center for Interreligious Dialogue (in Italian): The experience that we are having now, even though it is a pilgrimage to the sources of a charism that is distinctly Christian, does not threaten the characteristics and distinctiveness of Hindus. On the contrary, they find themselves within a pluralism that respects the other, but which is receptive, and reciprocally welcomes this Christian spiritual source.

Stefania’s question (out of range) If you had Chiara here, in front of you, what would you say to her?

Vinu Aram – director, Shanti Ashram Coimbatore (in English) I would say, thank you.

(...) when you really hold on to someone as a teacher but you also hold on to someone as a source of infinite love, you do what they do. You follow the example, you add your own, and you look at them and say, I am continuing the pilgrimage.

05) Brazil, Campos dos Goytacazes: Taking risks for their own people

HUGO: We want to share Noemia's story with you. For a long time now, she has been campaigning and risking her life to defend the rights of small farmers whose land was confiscated. Let's go to Brazil, 300 Km from Rio de Janeiro.

(In Portuguese)

Writing on a banner: "Birica Farm". Nothing is small if it is done out of love. Chiara Lubich.

Noêmia Magalhães (in Portuguese): *When we bought this land, I found it difficult to accept. I asked God, "Why come here, when I asked you for a place with a waterfall and pure clear water and you have given me this dry and sandy land with brown water?"*

Of course, there was no answer. The answer came almost 10 years later. I needed to live the Gospel in a real way in this area.

Speaker (in Portuguese): *Brazil. District five in São João da Barra, in the northern part of Rio de Janeiro State. The news of industrial development at the port of Acu was a surprise for the 2,000 people in that region. But immediately hope for future development changed to disappointment. A decree by the state government in 2009 authorised the expropriation of dozens of small farms in the area so that the infrastructure for the port could be built. Many families were forced to give up their land. The only one left was Noêmia Magalhães' land.*

Noêmia is a retired teacher who has lived with her husband at Sítio [Farm] do Birica for more than 10 years. Thanks to her knowledge of biological cultivation, she features in a radio programme that is very popular with the local people. As time went by she ran the movement campaigning against the expropriations.

Noemia Magalhães (in Portuguese): *One day, while I was coming home from a congress in Sao Paolo, one of the farmers who was very worried stopped me on the road and said, "Noêmia, Noêmia, help us! You are the only one who can save our land. They are taking our land away!" It was a cry for help... an appeal from people who were desperate. I said, "Don't worry, we will talk about it on the radio programme and I will arrange a meeting with you and invite people." Then during the programme I mentioned this subject and the programme was immediately ended. The person whose programme it was said I should not have mentioned it, and that I was playing with a powder keg. I realised then that the struggle would not be easy and that I had to realise what I was facing.*

I went on and said, let's go. The first meeting was at my place, so the Birica Farm was the first to put up a banner against the Acu Port industrial estate.

The main entrance to the port is here. So everyone passed this place. We put up tents, banners and flags and took it in turns to be here.

At first, everyone was thinking only of themselves and did not see the need to campaign, to act as a group. Through our struggle and pain, I learned that suffering makes us brothers and sisters. My brother or sister is part of me. Nowadays there is much more solidarity amongst us than there was at the start.

There is a family here who are still resisting, but they have already lost some land without receiving any payment. They are in great difficulty.

Hello!

I am really sorry about this because I saw that my own family were afraid, worrying that something might happen to me. I was threatened four times. They worried that they might hear I had been assassinated.

Sometimes people asked me, "Have you asked God if this is what he really wants from you? Isn't it time to stop? Haven't you done enough?" I did not doubt. We cannot stop while the struggle is still ongoing, or while I am still alive. ... There is great inequality in this struggle. In a country where no one's rights are respected... You know what? We need to rewrite history, delete the past and start again.

Then, yes, I will believe in development, when there is respect and people feel involved.

They want to get on with their lives, their own story, their dreams... When they take your land, they take away your dreams and projects... They take everything from you. But everything is possible: we can take a step back and start again. It would be wonderful if the Port at Acu were to rewrite its history and start in a different way. We would all applaud!

Slide: "They tried to bury us, they forgot that we are seeds"

Man (in Portuguese): When Noêmia came here... I don't know where from... I think that she was sent by heaven!

Slide: Today, almost 10 years later, there is still an impasse. The port has never been finished. Some of the farmers were able to return to their land. Those who chose to resist have to face prosecution for invading land areas which were once their own land. 85% of the expropriated land is still not in use and many farmers have still not received the compensation they were due.

HUGO: Thank you Noemia for your courage.

06) Italy 'An extraordinary day'

HUGO: Many of us were able to follow the extraordinary day when Pope Francis' briefly visited Loppiano on 10th May.

ROBERTA: On that day, the Pope said some very important things to Loppiano and to the all the people who in many different ways are part of our Movement. Let's relive that visit again now, and also see an interview with Emmaus and Jesus who expand on some aspects. Let's watch the video together.

(Music and slide: Loppiano, 10 May 2018)

Speaker: Pope Francis is about to arrive in the little town of Loppiano, the first of 25 little towns of the Focolare Movement spread throughout the world. (Music)

It is the second time that a Pope has visited one of the Movement's centres.

(Music and text: Rocca di Papa, 19th August 1984)

In August 1984 Pope John Paul II came by car to the International Centre at Rocca di Papa, just outside Rome. (Music) Chiara Lubich welcomed him in what remained in the story of the Movement as an "extraordinary encounter". (Environment)

34 years later, on 10th May, Pope Francis is landing in Tuscany, not far from Florence. It will be a short visit but an immensely significant one, as this short video will tell.

(Environment - bells - and title: **An extraordinary day – Pope Francis' visit to Loppiano**)

Speaker: We ran through the key moments in this extraordinary event with Maria Voce (Emmaus) and Jesús Morán to understand better their full meaning for the Movement.

Stefania Tanesini, Communications Office – Focolare Movement: Emmaus, first of all, how did the Pope's visit to Loppiano come about and how was it prepared?

Maria Voce (Emmaus), President of the Focolare Movement: Look, it would be best to ask him how it came about, because we really don't know. At a certain point, we heard that he wanted to come to Loppiano. It was a surprise and gave us great joy. Immediately we thought, how can we prepare this visit? There were 100 days to go until the day the Pope came to Loppiano and I said, the only thing to do is to intensify the life of the Gospel, the life of mutual love among everyone so that when the Pope comes he finds a people born of the Gospel, a people living the Gospel as Chiara always saw in the Focolare Movement. And that is what we tried to do. (Music)

Speaker: From the early hours of the morning the roads were filled with people from various parts of Italy and beyond. (Environment).

7,000 people gathered near the Shrine of Mary Theotokos for the long awaited meeting with Pope Francis. (Environment).

Many more people in fact took part in the event. Thanks to the live television broadcast and internet streaming with four translations, the event was seen all over the world. (Environment).

Stefania: How did you feel when Pope Francis touched down in Loppiano?

Jesús Morán, Co-president, Focolare Movement: It was amazing. .. It was incredible to think that he was landing on the field where I used to play football so often, but we were very happy and also very calm.

Emmaus: In that moment I felt: Loppiano is welcoming the Pope and for me Loppiano meant the whole Work of Mary. The whole Focolare Movement is welcoming the Pope. But when I saw him get out of the helicopter and set foot on that field, I said to myself: the Pope is welcoming us. ... He took us into his heart and made us enter into that universe which is the whole of humanity, which he is called to lead to Oneness in the Church. ... So any anxiety or concern disappeared immediately. I felt welcomed into the Pope's heart, and the whole Movement with me. (Song)

Speaker: Christians of various Churches are here, believers of other religions, people of non-religious beliefs, as well as many people from the surrounding area.

This variety reflects the identity of Loppiano itself, a little piece of united world. (Song).

Civic dignitaries and church leaders are here too, including Bishop Luciano Giovannetti, who for over 40 years was bishop of Fiesole, the diocese in which Loppiano is situated. The present Bishop, Mario Meini is here, together with the Mayor of Figline and Incisa Valdarno, Giulia Mugnai.

(Environment)

Before the meeting with everyone, the Pope went into the Church of Mary Theotokos for a short time of prayer. (Silence)

He placed flowers in front of an original painting of Mary and the Child Jesus with Asian features, the gift of a Hindu artist to Chiara Lubich. (Music)

Emmaus: Your Holiness, dear Pope Francis. Thank you, Your Holiness, in the name of the whole ... (applause) of the whole Focolare Movement, which sees in your visit God's special look of love. ...

Speaker: Beginning with Chiara Lubich's intuitions about little towns as models of a united world, Maria Voce described the main characteristics of Loppiano, the diversity of its 850 citizens who come from 65 different countries, the places they work and study.

Emmaus: [...] Our hope is that those who come to this little town should find a home, a family, a mother: Mary!

We would want her to reign in this place, which not by chance bears the name "Mariapolis", city of Mary. In the Magnificat, Mary herself outlined a programme of life and action, and she urges us every day to open the doors of our hearts and of this town to all those who suffer, to all who seek happiness in vain on the pathways of violence or wealth.

Holy Father, we have a very high goal, we want to "aim high" as you told us four years ago. We would like to say to everyone, "Come and see. When mutual love is the law of shared

living, you experience the joy of the Gospel and feel you are on the front line in writing a new page of history.” ... [Applause]

Pope Francis: Thank you for your welcome! I greet all of you and each one, and I thank Maria Voce for her introduction ... clear, all very clear! Yes, I see that she has clear ideas! (Laughter)

I am very happy to be here today among you here in Loppiano. ... Everyone feels at home in Loppiano! (Applause)

Speaker: The Pope was asked some questions to which he responded with very meaningful and challenging words, full of encouragement.

Aurelia Nembrini: After the time of foundation lived with Chiara, we are living a different phase. Perhaps for some, the stage of enthusiasm has passed; it is certainly more difficult to identify the paths we should take to live out the prophecy of the early days... Your Holiness, how can we live this period?”

Pope Francis: [...] First of all thank you, thank you for what you did, (applause) thank you for your faith in Jesus! It is He who worked this miracle, and you [had] faith. And faith lets Jesus work. This is why faith works miracles, because it leaves room for Jesus, and He works miracles, one after the other. Life is like that! ...

It comes to me spontaneously to say the words that the Letter to the Hebrews addresses to a Christian community that was living a phase of its journey similar to yours. The Letter to the Hebrews states: “recall the former days”. Please, memory. With this framework of memory one can live and breathe, one can go forward and bear fruit. But if you have no memory.... The tree’s fruits are possible because the tree has roots: it is not uprooted. But if you have no memory, you are uprooted, rootless, there will be no fruit. Memory: this is the framework of life. ...

Stefania: Jesús, a significant part of the Pope’s talk was dedicated to the subject of memory. Chiara left us a hugely important legacy, nothing less than the unity of the human family. What does recalling the early days, remembering the charism mean for us today in the Movement, but also in humanity with the change of era we are experiencing, as the Pope himself defined it?

Jesús: Speaking about memory and remembering was very important because this is what we must always do. In the history of a charism, remembering means going back to the original experience of God, and interestingly it has a particular outcome: the more you return to what you recall, to preserve it, the more the charism itself is lived and applied. And this is what is happening: we are going back to the foundational nucleus of the spirituality of unity, of this great culture of unity, and we discover with new light Chiara’s passion for the unity of the human family. ...

The Pope has often emphasised the phenomenon of a piecemeal world war, as if violence was spread throughout society. How is it possible to counteract this phenomenon if not through a similarly widespread, capillary action? If not through a piecemeal culture of peace, as someone has said. I believe, at least the effect the Pope's words had on me, was to make me think we must work for the human family at a pre-political level, at a cultural level, a deep level. Efforts at an organisational, institutional level are not enough. This is truly a present day application of Chiara's dream, as she always saw one family, starting with what we are called to be.

Pope Francis: [...] The charism of unity is a providential stimulus and a powerful support...

Speaker: Pope Francis went on to emphasise – as he said – the powerful support that the charism of unity can offer for a spirituality of “the we”.

Pope Francis: [...]. A priest who is here ... said: "Tell me, father, what is the opposite of 'I', and immediately I said, 'you'. And he said: "No, the opposite of every individualism, both of "I" and of "you", is 'we'. (Applause) The opposite is we". The spirituality of 'we' is what you must take forward, which saves us from all selfishness and self-interest. The spirituality of we. This is not only a spiritual fact, but a concrete reality with formidable results – if we live it and if we authentically and courageously affirm its various dimensions – at the social, cultural, political, economic levels.... Jesus redeemed not only the individual person, but also social relations.

Speaker: Regarding the answer as to what Loppiano's mission is, the Pope invited everyone to change their point of view.

Pope Francis: [...] The history of Loppiano is but at the beginning. You are at the beginning. It is a small seed cast into the furrows of history and already sprouting and thriving, but it must root itself firmly and bear substantial fruit, at the service of the mission of the message and the incarnation of the Gospel of Jesus which the Church is called to live today. And this requires humility, openness, synergy, a capacity to take risks. (Applause) ... The challenge is that of creative faithfulness: being faithful to the original inspiration and together being open to the breath of the Holy Spirit, and bravely setting out on the new paths that He inspires. ...

Stefania: "The story of Loppiano is just beginning", Pope Francis said, and then he added, "You are at the start". In the many interviews you gave that day you said that there is a "before" and an "after" for the Movement with regard to the Pope's visit to Loppiano. If there is "before" and "after" and if we are just at the start, where do we start from, Emmaus?

Emmaus: Now we are in the time "after", and I would say we must start by reflecting on what the Pope said, what he gave us, in order to put it into practice, not just to remember it and be glad about the fact that we were with the Pope, and that it was an extraordinary and marvellous event. By saying we are at the start, the Pope put us in front of history, in front of the future. He does not want us to stand still. If we are at the start, we must go ahead. What does that mean? It means trying to put into practice what he said, being able to instil into society – therefore not only in our Movement but in society around us – those seeds of the Gospel that can transform it. ...

So we must start looking around and saying: "Where can I instil a spark of that Gospel seed that I have been freely given?" and do it. And we must do this at all levels, everywhere, through living mutual love amongst us and towards everyone.

Pope Francis: [...] And together, one last thing that I want to tell you. We are gathered here in front of the Shrine of Mary Theotokos. We are under Mary's gaze. ... And do not forget that Mary was a lay woman, a lay woman. (Applause)

Jesus' first disciple, his mother, was a lay woman. There is a great inspiration here. And a good exercise that we can do, and I challenge you to do it, is to look [in the Gospel] at the most conflictual episodes in the life of Jesus and see – like at Cana, for example - how Mary reacts. Mary says something and intervenes. "But, father, [these episodes] are not all in the Gospel ...". And you imagine, imagine that the Mother was there, that she had seen this... How would Mary have reacted to this? This is a true school for going forward. Because she is the woman of faithfulness, the woman of creativity, the woman of courage, of parrhesia, the woman of patience, the woman of forbearance. Always look to this, this lay woman, Jesus' first disciple, how she reacted in all the conflictual episodes of her son's life. It will really help you.

Stefania: Pope Francis made an important reference to Mary, Mary as a lay person. Emmaus what does this mean for you and for the whole Movement?

Emmaus: It was an amazing moment, also because he set aside his talk just then, the reference to Mary was not written in the talk.

This was very significant for me. Before speaking to us he had made an act of devotion to Mary, as he usually does, and placed flowers in front of the picture of Mary. But I believe that coming out [of the church] he saw Mary present in that multitude of people in front of him and so he felt it necessary to refer to Mary again at the end. I mean, Mary was there, Mary was in that people, in that people which was Church. ... In that people which was so varied, because the families were there, young people, children, priests, people of other religions, of other Churches. ... Seeing this presence – I dare think this – he felt he could say who we were, and in that moment, by saying who we were, he made us be what he said, that is, Mary who has the qualities he had mentioned in his talk: frankness, patience, courage, bearing all things.

Then he referred to the conflictual times, the times in the Gospel, - at least I would interpret it like this – when Jesus might often have felt he was not understood by his apostles, or when the crowd wanted to throw him off the cliff, or when he was with the merchants in the Temple. The times when Jesus made a stand. What was Mary doing then? How did she live those times in Jesus' life? The Pope said, "Imagine, try to imagine it". ... Try to imagine what Mary would do in the conflictual moments of Jesus' life and in the life of humanity today, and try to do our part, Mary's part, which is that of a mother who consoles, who understands, who turns situations around, who manages to find a solution for the good of her children.

I believe this is what the Pope saw and what he wanted to send us out to do.

(Song, environment – greetings and gifts to the Pope)

Stefania: At a certain point we saw Pope Francis signing the Pact, in a quiet way we might say, but it was a gesture that has foundational value for the little town and the other

little towns. It is fundamental for us in our relationships within the Focolare Movement. So what is its universal value? What does it mean? Or was it simply a signature?

Jesús: No, it wasn't just a signature. Actually, due to lack of time we weren't able to give it the visibility we wanted at the time, but neither did we want to miss out on it, so it happened just the same but without anyone really noticing. That is why I picked up the page and showed it to everyone. The Pope was signing the pact of mutual love of all the citizens of Loppiano. He was putting his signature, his commitment to it. In that moment, the Pact acquired a dimension of Church that it did not have before. .. And for us, the Pact is the foundation of all that we do.

I mentioned the human family before: first of all we must be a family amongst ourselves, but on what foundation? The foundation is the pact.

(Song and environment – farewells and the Pope's departure)

Stefania: Jesús, it seemed as though the Pope felt at home ... Is that really true?

Jesús: Yes, really, right from the start, because I spoke to him first in Spanish, "Bienvenido Holy Father" and he said, "'Como andás?" in the Spanish spoken in Buenos Aires! "Como andás?", so he is someone who puts you at ease immediately. But later we saw how happy he was. And at the end we felt we could ask him, "Did we tire you?" He said, "Me, I enjoyed myself". Then he said a few things privately to us, but they are private!

(Song and environment – departure by helicopter)

(Slide: Videos by Vatican Media and CSC Audiovisuals)

(Applause)

07) Conclusion

HUGO: Thank you! We have spent a fantastic hour together.

ROBERTA So, see you in Manila! Just to remind you about the Special conference call on the Genfest, on Sunday 8th July at 8.00 p.m., the same time as today. MABUHAI!

ROBERTA AND HUGO MABUHAI! Bye everyone!

(Applause and song - Promo special CH Genfest in Manila)