

Rocca di Papa, 7th December 2019

“I have married God”

1. Opening and greetings

2. Trent (Italy): 7th December 1943-7th December 2019

76 years after that December 7th 1943, Paolo Balduzzi takes us to Trent to visit some of the significant places of those early days of Chiara and the Focolare community. Today, the city from which everything began is bringing into its civil and social fabric signs and practices derived from a mentality of fraternity that from that city has reached the ends of the earth.

3. Link up with Cadine - Trent (Italy): Chiara Lubich – City World

The international exhibition dedicated to the person and charism of Chiara Lubich is being inaugurated on December 7th 2019. This is the first multimedia exhibition ever made about her. Giuseppe Ferrandi, director of the Trentino Historical Museum and Anna Maria Rossi, one of the curators, tell the story of its origins, the process and the innovations.

4. Chiara Lubich: “I have married God”

Chiara tells the story of God's call and how she gave herself to him. From Luigi Bizzarri's interview for RaiTre's programme " My Twentieth Century" of 13th August 2003, courtesy of Rai Archives.

5. Greetings from Lubumbashi (D.R. Congo)

6. Live from Ottmaring (Germany)

7. Live from Tirana (Albania)

8. Stockholm (Sweden): the focolare, a setting for living as one family

How does the life of a focolare pan out in daily life? We went to Stockholm, Sweden, where we accompanied the focolarine at home, at work and in various activities with the Focolare community.

9. Live from Suva (Fiji Islands)

10. Link up with Cadine (Trent) – brief interviews with three focolarini

11. Live from Patos de Minas (Belo Horizonte - Brazil)

12. Florianópolis (Brazil): The focolare in the “morro”

Since 2014, there has been a community of focolarini living in the "Morro della Croce". They share the simple and poor life of this teeming favela in Florianópolis. Fr Vilson Groh, who has been living there for over 30 years, says: “This is an expression of Chiara's desire to have focolares also on the peripheries of the world”.

13. Link up with Cadine (Trent) – in dialogue with Maria Voce (Emmaus) and Jesús Morán

14. Conclusion

1. OPENING AND GREETINGS

(Music and captions:

WHAT DO THESE REVOLUTIONARIES HAVE IN COMMON?

COURAGE, PASSION, LOVE

THEY HAVE SEEN THE WORLD FROM A DIFFERENT POINT OF VIEW

CHIARA'S VISION IS UNITY

Chiara Lubich: I have a dream, to see the world live as one family.

SHE INSPIRED THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE TO AIM TO BUILD A MORE UNITED WORLD TOGETHER

LET YOURSELF BE INSPIRED

(Applause)

Lorenzo Russo: 76 years have passed since that morning of 7th December 1943. A 23-year-old girl, Silvia, consecrated herself to God in secret. She will be known by everyone with another name, Chiara. And today, 7th December 2019, the centenary of Chiara Lubich's birth begins.

I am Lorenzo, greetings from Rocca di Papa!

You have perhaps understood that this link-up will be special: we will try to go the roots of that yes to God said 76 years ago, and we will travel the world to meet her charism today - this time in a special way - in the "focolare".

So, welcome everyone, and let's start. If you want to interact in this conference call, you can communicate with us through the contacts you see on the screen: email, WhatsApp or the Facebook page.

2. TRENTO (ITALY): 7TH DECEMBER 1943-7TH DECEMBER 2019

Lorenzo: As we were saying, that special day was 7th December 1943 when everything began. Let's hear from Paolo Balduzzi who has gone to Trent.

Paolo Balduzzi: *Three red carnations. Probably all Chiara Lubich could afford on 7th December 1943. It was early morning in wartime. There was wind and rain as this 23 year old girl made her way to church. It was her special day, when she would secretly give herself to God forever. And those simple flowers were a little gift for God. A remarkable story began then that Chiara could not even remotely have imagined at the time; a story that continues today and is largely still to be written.*

(Music)

Paolo Balduzzi: *Today I'm in Trent, in the Cathedral Square at the centre of a city preparing for Christmas. Trent is a bridge city between North and South, a frontier city that experienced*

divisions in its history, but also reunification, from a social, political and religious point of view. Those events have shaped the character of its citizens. Lucia Fronza Crepaz is with us today. Trent is your city. You work here doing training for active citizenship. I believe you met Chiara when you were a little girl.

Lucia Fronza Crepaz *I was 12 years old when I met Chiara and I was fascinated by this double vocation of being rooted in your local reality but open to a united world.*

Paolo Balduzzi: *We could say this is Trent's vocation. Perhaps it's no coincidence that Chiara Lubich, who was baptised Silvia, was born right here, on January 22, 1920.*

Lucia Fronza Crepaz: *Look Paolo, at the beginning of the 20th century this small city had three different magazines: one was liberal, one catholic and one socialist. That was the cultural climate into which Chiara was born, but her own family was made up of a socialist father, a Catholic mother, an elder brother, Gino, who was a communist and a partisan, and wrote for the communist newspaper Unity, and their younger sisters Liliana and Carla. Chiara herself said she learned dialogue in her own family. To get to know Chiara you have to walk through Trent and here's a map showing the important places in the adventure lived by Chiara and her first companions. So we'll go round. We won't see them all today, but the main ones. Let's start here.*

Paolo Balduzzi: *from Gocciadoro*

Paolo Balduzzi. *This area, Gocciadoro, is on the east side of Trent. A few months after 7th December, Chiara Lubich and her family took refuge up here in this wood before a massive bombing of the city. It was 13th May 1944. What exactly happened that night?*

Lucia Fronza Crepaz: *The siren went and Chiara's family, like many others, decided to come here to the woods because it was safer, for the afternoon and night. While the city was being bombed her parents talked and decided they had to leave. Chiara heard what they said but she had promised her first companions she would stay in the city. And so she felt the pain of losing them. Remembering that night, Chiara said: "It was a night of tears and stars": stars because she saw them in the sky and tears for her sorrow. The next morning, the most painful moment was when she had to put her own rucksack on her mother's back. Then she went back to the city and on the way met someone she knew, who grabbed her by the shoulders and said: "Four of my family have died!" There Chiara understood that she must forget her own sorrow to embrace that of all humanity, the deep pain of all humanity.*

Paolo Balduzzi: *We are now in the Androne district, one of the poorest areas in the 1940s and 50s. Today it's a smart and well-kept road. Lucia, why are we here?*

Lucia Fronza Crepaz: *As soon as Chiara and her companions discovered that the Gospel is something to be lived, they understood you have to live 'from the roof tops down' and that their commitment - having discovered God's great love - had to be to work for the poor and with the poor.*

Paolo Balduzzi: So Lucia, I've seen your friends arrive, let's go meet them and they can tell us how this commitment is going here in Trent today. Here is Elena Pasolli, the Coordinator of the "Network for teaching Italian to foreigners". Mussa is from the nomadic Tuareg people and Hussein is from Afghanistan. Welcome. So all three of you here together, why?

Elena Pasolli. Because the story we tell is one lived and built together and it began in 2011 when the Libyan refugees arrived. We immediately started thinking about how to help them, by providing housing and other things to give dignity to these people, also providing the Italian language service, help getting a driver's license, as well as entry to the schools. In 2017 we felt the need to do something for other types of poverty and opened a place where people could come to meet and talk. It's on Sundays when all other places are closed. Mussa and Hussein manage it, with our support. Our strength lies in the communion of goods, in networking and always aiming for the common good.

Music

Paolo Balduzzi. Chiara was a teacher, a profession she loved, she said: it trained me to love.

Lucia Fronza Crepaz: Yes it's true, her students said she was a very good teacher, one who didn't have a red pen, who taught the subjects well, but who especially taught them to love each other. To live being open to others. Chiara was a lifelong teacher...

Paolo Balduzzi: Now we're at the Peace Garden. With us is Stella Bozzarelli, a primary school teacher. Can you tell us about this project?

Stella Bozzarelli: It all started with Chiara. When she came to Trent she told everyone about the dream she had as a child, that Trent would be ablaze with love. That was in June 2001 and a few months later, on September 11th 2001, the tragedy of the Twin Towers in New York happened, which deeply affected the children in the school where I was teaching. They decided to transform the dice of the art of loving into a dice of peace

Paolo Balduzzi: Here it is, with the various sides. 'We'll love each other', 'I will listen to others', 'I'll forgive'. What happened after that?

Stella Bozzarelli: They wanted Trent to be the city of peace. So they asked the mayor who told the whole city about it: the 'Tuttopace' (AllPeace) project began, which then spread to the region and the whole of Italy.

Paolo Balduzzi: How is the project going today?

Stella Bozzarelli: At first there were just 3 - 4 teachers, now there are a hundred. All the schools in the province are involved and we run projects on education for peace and its values. We have an educational agreement signed by teachers, parents and children that is known by everyone and is part of the City's education policy.

Music

Paolo Balduzzi: Lucia, on our tour, we could not miss Number 2 Piazza Cappuccini. What does this place represent?

Lucia Fronza Crepaz: After leaving her family, Chiara heard that this small house was available. Just near the Capuchin Friary. It was very basic, we would say poor. There were

mattresses on the floor, a small stove, a little corridor. And Chiara and her first companions gradually came to live here. It was the first focolare.

Paolo Balduzzi: Tell me more Lucia: they weren't nuns, they weren't married, and they weren't even consecrated to God for life in the world. So what's new about this Focolare life?

Lucia Fronza Crepaz: Chiara's inspiration was that it is possible today to imitate the life of the house of Nazareth, where there are married and unmarried people together, with Jesus in their midst, so as to live out his words "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, I am in the midst of them."

Chiara said that the focus is on mutual love so as to be worthy of the presence of Jesus who lives here again in humankind; and at the same time the focolare is completely open. Chiara said - we lived so that "all may be one", the dream of Jesus, the prayer he made to the Father. And so here, at 2 Piazza Cappuccini in the small city of Trent, with all the bombings, everyone knew they were welcome: there was room for the poor who came with their requests, for bread, other things, for work. But it was also open to the rich who came here to bring their goods, their availability.

Paolo Balduzzi: So that life, lived here is now valid for you, and for me, and for all of us.

Lucia Fronza Crepaz: After a few months there was a community of almost 400 people who were showing that it was possible to live Gospel today.

Paolo Balduzzi: So, what those girls did here in Trent many years ago is still happening today all over the world in more than 600 communities of the movement, 600 focolares in five continents.

(Applause)

3. LINKED UP WITH CADINE - TRENTO (ITALY): CHIARA LUBICH - CITY WORLD

Lorenzo: Good. But let's immediately connect with Trent, with the Mariapolis Centre in Cadine. Stefania Tanesini is there. Hello, Stefania, and a greeting to all of you who are linked with us here at Rocca di Papa. But what happened today in Trent? And, Stefania, what will this centenary be like above all?

Stefania: We send you greetings from Trent!

Lorenzo: Over to you Stefania. (Applause)

Stefania: You see this wonderful and very full room? There are 350 focolarine, focolarini and married focolarini here from 65 countries around the world with Emmaus and Jesús. This afternoon we were all present at the official opening of Chiara's centenary. It is a centenary with the motto "celebrate to meet Chiara". This means that every initiative or event that will take place around the world in 2020, is not so as to remember her nostalgically, but rather to be an encounter, an encounter with Chiara, with her person, with her charism.

This afternoon there was also the inauguration of the first international exhibition dedicated to Chiara, an exhibition organized in collaboration between the Trentino Historical Museum Foundation and the Chiara Lubich Centre, called "Chiara Lubich, city world". This exhibition

will stay open, it will be open here in Trent throughout 2020, but not only in Trent, let's see what it is about.

(Music)

Giuseppe Ferrandi, director of the Trentino Historical Museum Foundation:

Welcome to Trent, the birthplace of Chiara Lubich. The Trentino Historical Museum Foundation manages this museum in a space created from two former road tunnels, and here we have set up the exhibition named "Chiara Lubich city world". This is the first time we have dedicated an exhibition to a person, a person who is an historical figure for us and whose roots lie in the Trentino region, but who also had a great ability to look at and relate to the world. We decided to dedicate an exhibition to Chiara Lubich because she is a figure, a woman who represents the Trentino region. This region is located in an "in between" territory. It is a place that lived through the conflicts of the twentieth century and has partly reworked them as a setting for an experience of coexistence and the ability to build bridges. There is also a separate section of the exhibition in Tonadico in Primiero that tells the story of the experience of the Mariapolises from 1949 to 1959. Obviously we don't intend to canonise Chiara, make her into a holy picture or acclaim her. What we do want is to understand her better and to provide visitors with some keys to understanding her life. In particular, we want this exhibition to be another opportunity for encounter between the Trentino region and Chiara Lubich, between the Trentino region and the rest of the world.

Anna Maria Rossi, exhibition curator "Chiara Lubich City World"

We thought of this exhibition as if it were Chiara herself telling her story through videos, original handwritten documents, audio and photographic material, including some things previously unpublished, and we have imagined that a visitor should be able to enter into a dialogue with her. We liked the idea of seeing Chiara closely connected to the history of the 20th century, as someone who also experienced the main events of what is known as the short 20th century, not by being subjected to them, but by being an active protagonist. We feel this is also an important message for younger generations, for young people who will visit this exhibition and take from it some interesting ideas for their studies and their lives. The exhibition will be presented in a variety of ways in different cities around the world: in Mumbai, Nairobi, San Paolo, Mexico City, Algiers, Jerusalem and other cities. Each one is designed according to the characteristics of the place but also drawing on the original project that is here in this gallery.

Alba Sqariqlia, co-responsible for Chiara Lubich Centre

The Chiara Lubich Centre has provided all the documentation that is kept in Chiara's archives, drawing out a sequence that could truly express not only Chiara as a person, from this region, in the context of the two World Wars in which she was born and lived, but also the openness this charism has had both at the level of the city and of the world. Chiara always thought of every city truly as a world, but also of the whole world as contained as it were in a single city.

And this is the message that we would like to convey through this exhibition, that every visitor feels that their own city is open to the whole world and the whole world is in their own city.

(Applause)

Lorenzo: We'll go back to Trent later.

4. CHIARA LUBICH: "I HAVE MARRIED GOD"

Lorenzo: So what happened on 7th December 1943? Chiara herself explains it to us ... let's watch.

(Music)

Chiara: *It was 1943. I remember I was at home with my mother. We were rather poor because my father was against fascism and so we had only the essentials to live on. In fact, we had to walk two kilometers every day to buy milk for the family. My mother didn't want me to do housework or run errands because she felt I should study. So my younger sisters did the housework.*

One cold, bitterly cold day in winter, my mum told one of my sisters: "Go and buy the milk." "Mum, it's too cold? I can't!" "Then you go," she told my other sister, the youngest one. "No, it's too cold!" So then – prompted by the idea of doing an act of love – I said: "Mum, I'll go this time." And so, she had no choice but to send me.

I set out towards this place two kilometers away, called "The White Madonna," and halfway there, once again something rather unusual happened. I stopped because I became aware of something. I had the impression, but it was only an impression, as if the heavens opened and someone were saying to me – I understood at once who it was – "Give yourself completely to me." I understood! God was calling me. He had plans for me.

(Music and images)

At that time, I had a spiritual director. I wrote him a letter full of ardent love for God, as they told me later. In those days permission was given to young women to consecrate their lives to God for a few months, and then renew it, and so on. Instead, my spiritual director consulted an elderly priest who said: "I would give this girl permission to consecrate her life to God for the rest of her life." So my spiritual director wrote and told me: "We'll do it, then, but first come to see me because I have to ask you some questions."

At that time – it was the mid-20th century – it was customary for spiritual directors to play the part of the devil, as they say. He questioned me, pointing out all the hardships involved. One of them was this: "Look, your sisters and your brother will get married, they'll have many children, but you will be left alone." So I replied: "As long as there is a church with a tabernacle, with the living presence of Christ, I will not be alone." Perhaps this was the answer that ended the questioning. A bit later, he said: "All right, we'll have the consecration on December 7th, the eve of the feast of the Immaculate Conception. Come to church at six in the morning and you can consecrate yourself to God."

I went home but didn't say anything to my mother. I only told her that on that particular day I had to attend a service in church. I put on my best dress – perhaps it was the nicer of the two I had, because, as I said we were rather poor - and I set off for the church.

A storm was raging with torrential rain and... strong wind. In fact, I had to hold the umbrella open and push against the storm, almost as if someone were trying to stop me, although it wasn't true. When I got to the friary, this priest was waiting for me in church. It was empty, but the lights were all on and in front of the communion rail he had placed a kneeler for me and then at the elevation of the sacred host I would say to God: "I am all yours."

When the time came to take this step – I was 23 years old – I understood what I was doing; I was leaving everything. The impression I had was that I was on a bridge the bridge was falling down behind me, a bridge connecting me to the world. I remember that a tear fell on my missal. But I went ahead. I told Jesus: "I am all yours."

Then I went back to my seat, Mass ended, and it's impossible to describe the intensity of my inner joy. My impression was: "I married God, I married God, I married God!" I thought: "What will happen now? I can expect everything; I can expect everything, because I've married God!"¹

(Music)

(Applause)

5. SALUTO DA LUBUMBASHI (R.D. CONGO)

Lorenzo: "I have married God." Chiara's beautiful words, "I have married God". So with these words we will start our tour round the world and we'll start travelling straightaway to the continent of Africa, especially to Lubumbashi in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Amisa is there.

Amisa: Hello!

All: Hello!

Amisa: Hi! We are here with some representatives of the beautiful community of Lubumbashi, Congo DRC!

We are celebrating this year dedicated to the centenary of Chiara Lubich's birth, with the inauguration of the hospital dedicated to her located in a poor area of the city. To respond to the enormous health needs, the local community decided to build this hospital, together with the business people of the Economy of Communion, and with contributions from Europe. The needs here are not only for physical health but also relational health, the need for Love.

¹ Dall'intervista di Luigi Bizzarri per il programma "Il mio Novecento" di RaiTre del 13 agosto 2003, per gentile concessione di Rai Teche.

For this reason the hospital is named after Chiara Lubich and will contribute to the reduction of maternal and infant mortality and become a place of both medical and human education, which ensures the health of everyone and of the person in all its aspects, as Chiara taught us.

Thank you. Bye everyone.

All: Bye!

(Applause)

Lorenzo: Thank you! Thanks to all of you for your enthusiasm!

6. LIVE LINK UP WITH OTTMARING (GERMANY)

Lorenzo: Let's now go to Germany, to Ottmaring, the little ecumenical town of the Focolare where the conference of Together for Europe, which celebrated its 20th anniversary this year, ended not long ago. Ilona Toth is with us. Over to you Ilona.

Ilona Toth: Yes, hello to everyone. Greetings from Ottmaring.

All: Hello!

Ilona: At the conference there were 300 people from 25 countries and 55 Movements and Communities. Despite the problems and the physical and political walls that threaten European unity today, we can say that what has developed over the years is a real ecumenical network, begun by Chiara and other leaders of Movements in various Churches. It is made up of people who are living charisms that are both old and new. We are bound together by a pact: the pact of mutual love; we journey together and consider our differences as sources of enrichment. In short, we are a platform for dialogue among people that want to be a response to this crisis of values and relations in Europe. Now our work continues in the cities and we work above all with young people who consider Europe and the world as their home! We count on your unity.

Lorenzo: Thank you.

Ilona: Thanks from us all! (Applause)

Lorenzo: Thank you. For those who would like to know more about Together for Europe, you can visit the website <https://www.together4europe.org/> with information about the event.

7. LIVE LINK WITH TIRANA (ALBANIA)

Lorenzo: Now let's stay in Europe. On the night of 25th and 26th November, a strong earthquake struck the northern coast of Albania, near the city of Durres. 51 people died, many more wounded and thousands were displaced. The local Focolare community, the Movement's Emergency Coordination, together with Caritas and Catholic Action have joined forces to help the local population. Let's go direct to Tirana. Marcella and Damiano are there with some of the local community.

Good evening Marcella, can you tell us how you are living this experience.

Marcella: Hello everyone. People are still very frightened also because the country is completely unprepared for this kind of emergency. The government is still estimating all the damage; over 10,200 homes have been damaged, as well as schools and some hospitals. The houses of seven of our families were seriously damaged. As Focolare we have set up a working group with some of our engineers and families to help us advise people how to relate to the authorities that still do not know how to offer reliable information on what to do.

We feel very strongly at this time that our centenary celebrations have begun in a special way and that we want people to find Chiara living among us in the experience of “everything crumbles” that surrounds us. This is our experience now: we are trying to network among ourselves and be at the service of the National and Diocesan Caritas. And in particular we are visiting the various families, listening to one another, sharing everyone’s fears and the pain of those who have lost their relatives.

Some of our members said “this earthquake is like a reminder from God” that makes us believe that, even in a country already suffering from so much emigration, there is a greater Good in it that we can all discover together.

We would like to thank all those who have helped us, the individuals and groups who have sent help of different kinds, and not only for that, also for all your love. Thank you.

(Applause)

Lorenzo: Thanks Marcella, we are with you and we support you. If anyone would like to help the Albanian community they can do so through the two bank accounts, which you can see on the screen. One is of Action for New Families and Action for a United World. You will find more information on the website www.focolare.org in an article dedicated to the earthquake in Albania.

8. STOCKHOLM (SWEDEN): IL FOCOLARE, A SETTING FOR LIVING AS ONE FAMILY

Lorenzo: But let us go back to that yes of Chiara to God. That 7th December is still relevant today. It is the feast day of all of us and in a special way of the focolares, these original communities made up of married and unmarried people, the heart from where everything started. But what is everyday life like in a focolare? We went to Stockholm, Sweden, where we followed the focolarine at home, at work and in different activities.

(Music)

Lidia Fioravanti (Italian): *There are 5 of us; we are 3 Italians and 2 Swedes. My name is Lidia; I was born in Rome but grew up in Trent. I am here in Sweden because I live in a community of the focolare. I would never have imagined living in Sweden.*

(Music)

It was quite easy to learn the language, to get a little bit into the life here and to ride a bike in any weather, not to just be there watching if it is raining or not.

I was always pre-occupied about my path in life, my vocation, what was the right thing to do. I grew up among the focolarini, with the idea that focolarini are so good, always smiling, always up? Then I was attracted to the focolare and among other things when you find your path in life it is a moment of light and with the light you see everything much better including your faults. And so I understood then that the focolarino is only a model to look at because each of them is very aware of all their limitations; they are very normal and despite this they give their lives.

You may be more or less intelligent, more or less likeable, more or less touchy, more or less holy too - because there are people who actually manage to love more. But we want to make sure that our life can be an empty channel to convey a light that we have seen but not that we are.

The focolare began to show that it is possible to take the Gospel, the words of Jesus, seriously, to allow, there to be a visible, almost tangible, presence of God, and, in a broader sense, fellowship among all as a universal objective. The focolare was born for this and would like to be a sign of this in a society.

Maggi, Margareta Emrén (in Italian): I am Maggi, I am Swedish and I grew up in Gällivare beyond the Arctic Circle, 1300 km from here, It's the land of the Northern Lights, of reindeer and there is a lot of snow. The sun doesn't set at night at certain times in summer, nor does it rise above the horizon at certain times in winter, but it's not as dark as it is here in Stockholm. There's this kind of lamp to help the body in winter. Here in Stockholm with us in the focolare we also have the married focolarine Igner and Christine.

Christine Wallmark (in English): I'm married to Jonas since 34 years and we met the Focolare Movement in a time of our life when we were very sad because we have had learned that we could not have any children. My husband remembered that he had some articles from the paper about Focolare Movement that he had been keeping in his cupboard for all these years. And then he suddenly took them down and, without any special discussion, he searched up this Focolare Movement that we didn't meet before and he went there in the evening. And he came home early in the morning. And he said "I've been in heaven". It was not his usual way of speaking so I thought this is really important. A bit sceptical I joined him; and I was swept away by Jesus Forsaken who talked right into our hearts in the situation we were in. It was so different from everything in my secular world. I'm an economist. And I have all my life worked in the civil sector. I could talk about finance and economy and business in Sweden. I won't do that because I think on the other side of the coin is this way of how we relate to each other. If we are going to become a village where people are happy, healthy, we need to talk to each other and looking to each other's eyes. And I think Focolare Movement has the key to try to help people to communicate in a better way.

Elena Briacca (in Italian): I've been in Stockholm, here in Sweden for seven years and I was in Slovakia for 14 years before coming here. I really like being out of doors. I was born in the foothills of the Italian Alps. I left Slovakia which is a wonderful country with very hospitable and wonderful people and I left a language that I had struggled to learn. And I came to a place where I didn't know anything. The language was difficult for me. I am a nurse and I work in a hospital, in a surgical department, and I like that very much. I work in a mainly atheistic environment, I am Catholic, but here we are in a Lutheran country so many people belong to the Swedish Lutheran church; I have 4 Muslim colleagues and others who are atheists. I invited them here one evening, 15 colleagues came, and I made an Italian dinner, so to build friendship. This is where Sweden struggles a bit, in relationships among people, so doing something different to create relationships among people helps a lot.

Katarina Miksits (in Italian): There is no focolare in Denmark and not even in Finland, so we often travel to these countries. Sweden is also a big country so we travel to the places where our friends live who want to share the life of the Gospel together.

Lidia Fioravanti (in Italian): Now we are going to Västerås. It is about an hour and a half from Stockholm and we'll meet a group of families who come mainly from Syria and who knew the Focolare before coming here and came because of the insecurity in their country, because of the war.

Maria Luce Moser (in Italian): I am Maria Luce, I come from Italy and I have been here for a while and I am trying to learn the language, to meet the people, get to know the culture, to love them and now I have just returned from a visit to our community in Gothenburi where we had a wonderful weekend.

Voices: Hello

Katarina Miksits (in Italian): There is another community, the men's focolare with 4 focolarini; we work together a lot; we feel just like sisters and brothers. This is a special time for us because one of them has been diagnosed with cancer and for all of us it is like our brother who is sick.

Female voice: Where do you get this sense of calm from?

Patrick: Mmm, I don't know. When I heard the diagnosis, I felt like a child in the arms of God, of Mary, nothing can trouble me, because ... "if God is for us who can be against us..."

Female voice: A word that sums up the meaning of the situation today...

Patrick: Being 'popo', a child, a child of the spirituality

Lidia Fioravanti (Italian): The focolare tries above all to offer settings and situations so that many people can experience that it's possible to live as one family, but it is not uniformity and then it can attract many to live like this and then spread this life.

(Applause)

Lorenzo: Thanks to the whole focolare, and to all the people who are following us from Stockholm! A special hug for Patrick!
(Applause)

9. LIVE LINK WITH SUVA (FIJI ISLANDS)

Lorenzo: Now let's go to the Pacific Ocean, to the Fiji Islands! Just think, it's more than four hours flight from Sidney. It's right there, in the middle of the ocean, that the most recent focolare opened a few days ago. We are connected with Lourdes ... Hi Lourdes, if I am not mistaken it's 8 in the morning there, if the calculations are right.

Answer: Yes, hello!

All: BULLA FROM FIJI! BULLA!

Kata (speaks in English and is then translated into Italian): We thank Chiara that her ideal of unity has reached us here in Fiji. And now the focolare has come here too!

Lourdes: We came here to Suva on November 27th and in April next year the men's focolare will be opened too.

The spirituality of unity arrived here in 1982, thanks to Father Carvill who started the first meetings of the Word of Life in the Village of Lami. Then the focolarine and focolarini began travelling from New Zealand and Australia and in 1990 the first Mariapolis was held. Last year, for the first time, a group of young Fijians took part in the Genfest in Manila.

All these years, throughout the Pacific, including New Caledonia, Wallis, Futuna and Kiribati there have been many meetings and activities where the local church and the Focolare have worked together: Mariapolises, camps for young people and children, formation for adults.

Thanks to all, it is a joy to be connected with all of you and we send you one of our greetings:

All: BULLA!!

Lorenzo: Bulla! (Applause)

Lourdes: Thanks everyone!

Lorenzo: Thank you Lourdes, a big greeting from all of us! Thanks!

10. LINK UP WITH CADINE (TRENT) – BRIEF INTERVIEWS WITH THREE FOCOLARINI

Lorenzo: Let's go back to Trent for a moment to Stefania. Stefania, there are some people there next to you? Who are you with right now?

Stefania: Yes, Lorenzo, here beside me are Oscar, Pina, and Kate, three people who have chosen to follow Chiara along the same path, the pathway of the focolare.

Oscar, you are 24 years old, you are Colombian and have just finished the school of formation, where you have deepened this pathway and tried to understand if this vocation is really for you. But I

believe that now you are leaving. Where are you going?

Oscar: I'm going to a beautiful country, Lebanon. I take this opportunity to greet all the Lebanese people. (Applause)

Stefania: With what spirit are you leaving?

Oscar: To tell you the truth, I feel a blend of emotions, thoughts and many other things. On the one hand I feel afraid because it's all new, all to be discovered, but on the other hand I feel an immense joy because I'm living the adventure that God has thought of for me.

Stefania: But tell me: isn't it madness today in 2019 to follow a path like this?

Oscar: It's really crazy. (Laughter and applause) It's crazy because you have to go against the flow, because so often what the world offers me doesn't help me to live this choice. But I think that saying yes to God is the most beautiful crazy thing you can do.

Stefania: Thank you, Oscar. (Applause)

Kate, you are Irish and have been in the United States for eight years now, tell us about these eight years, how it has been: was it easy, or difficult? Have you ever thought you would like to get married and have children?

Kate: Of course there have been difficult times, but really also many joyful moments of true happiness are always there. Of course, from a certain point of view you can say that I have left everything for God. But more than anything else I feel that He has given me everything, He has given me so much, so much, more than I would have ever thought and dreamed of. You also ask about the family, he also made me find a family in the focolare, in the Movement, but also beyond it: when I go to work, to the city, in social commitments, I try to create family relationships there. So I can truly say that the world has become a family for me.

Stefania: Thank you, thank you Kate. (Applause)

Pina, you're Italian and you're a married focolarina. So, what is the contribution that married focolarini make to the focolare?

Pina: Well, first of all, I would say openness to the world, then the family, with what is the simplicity of the family, facing the difficulties together and sharing times of celebration and joy. I also feel a bit like someone who is safeguarding this life as a focolare, this reality, and at the same time it is also a gift because I go home recharged for everyday life. (Applause)

Stefania: Thank you, thanks to Oscar, Pina and Kate for giving us a glimpse into your life and your choice. Lorenzo, back to you now

Lorenzo: Thanks Stefania, we'll get back to you in a bit.

11. IN DIRETTA CON PATOS DE MINAS (BELO HORIZONTE - BRASILE)

Lorenzo: Thank you. Let's go now to Brazil. We'll try anyway because the connection comes and goes. We want to go to Patos de Minas, in the Region of Belo Horizonte. During these days they have been celebrating the 50th anniversary of the arrival of the Focolare there. With us is Álvaro José. Alvaro, who is there with you?

Álvaro José de Silos Araújo: Hello, everyone, we're glad to greet you on this very

special day. We are around 80 people, gathered together, at the end of our celebrations for the 50th anniversary of the presence of the Focolare Movement in the city of Patos de Minas and its surrounding area.

It all began when a small group of people from here, Alice, Auxiliadora and Abadia, went to a Mariapolis in the city of Caxias do Sul in 1968, 1969 and the following years.

Since then thousands of people have had contact with the Ideal in meetings, day events and Mariapolises, here in this city and in nearby cities.

Greetings to everyone!

Lorenzo: Thank you Álvaro! (Applause)

12. FLORIANÓPOLIS (BRASILE): IL FOCOLARE NEL “MORRO”

Lorenzo: But let's stay in Brazil. Since 2014, in the "Morro della Croce", a community of focolarini has been sharing the life of this very densely populated favela in Florianópolis. Father Vilson Groh, who has lived there for over 30 years, said that the focolare is there because Chiara wanted there be focolares also in the peripheries of the world. Let's see.

(Music and images of the city)

Keles Lima: *Today we have a complex of 17 communities called Mount Morro della Croce. About 25,000 people live here, around 5,000 families. The place is rife with violence and drug trafficking, the problems of unemployment and today also issues related to immigration.*

The Focolare community started here in 2014, but some years before we started to spend time here and visit the favela with Father Vilson who has been living here for 37 years. Together with him we had some experiences living here in order to be with the people here on the outskirts of Florianópolis.

(Music)

Olinda Teresinha Rosa Machado: *When we came, there was nothing. There was no water, no light, nothing. We had to go to a well far away in the woods. At three in the morning we hurried to get water, because there were so many people...*

Romalino Martins Moraes: *The community has grown.*

Olinda Teresinha Rosa Machado: *We started our battle here in this community - where there was nothing at all - in 1997. A shed was built; there was the first outdoor Mass up here on Christmas Eve, the 24th.*

We brought Father Vilson up here and he said Mass. We had a wonderful party, here's a photo. We did a great job here. It's been easier since Father Vilson has been with us. If we did something to improve the neighbourhood he was with us. He is always with us. Today too, he does not abandon the community. He is a wonderful person!

Father Vilson Groh: Let's go through here. We rebuilt this part completely; it was called "The Waste Dump". Today we have created a place for art.

I came to live in the favela in 1983. What attracted me fundamentally was the Gospel, and in the Gospel what stole my heart was: "Whatever you did to the least of these members of my family, you did it to me." This is my mystical strength and within it I found the cry of forsakenness. I found the cry of forsakenness that I found in the Movement of Unity, in what Chiara Lubich understood.

And this deep understanding of that cry is what gave me the strength to go and live in these very poor areas.

It's an encounter with Jesus forsaken, a Jesus who has a name, a face, a place to live, and a location. It is a Jesus that I touch every day.

Various voices:

Father Vilson Groh: I didn't come to live in the favela only for the poor or because black people were here or because it was a matter of social injustice. I came to live here because this is a place of mystery, a place of theology, where you meet forsakenness, which cries out loud. In all my years here I've lived this exercise of being like Jesus at the washing of the feet. The presence of the Focolare in this favela today it is a great gift from God. It has this dimension linked to Chiara's understanding when she said that her great desire was the focolare in the "mocambos", in the very poor areas.

Lucival da Silva: You see, it's a very special experience, very different from all the others I've had in other focolares. It's a challenge. We try to live as much as possible like people do here, also from the point of view of the house. So that people, our neighbours, can come to see us, have a coffee, talk and feel at home.

Marco Aleotti: In this house, one thing that struck me is that there isn't a television.

Lucival da Silva: Yes, we made that decision when we came. The house is small and our goal was that it should be an open, welcoming home, where people don't come to sit in front of a television, but where we could establish real relationships. So we thought it wasn't right to have a television here now. And we don't miss it.

Marco Aleotti: These are wooden houses. Probably the first houses built by the people from the favela. Then they started building with bricks and cement.

Helson Pereira: These are houses that have been enlarged; they build them next to each other and rent them to families. A whole family lives in a place with a bedroom, a bathroom and a kitchen. This is the reality here.

Marco Aleotti: *Your focolare is right on the street. So many people come to visit you and you also go to people's homes*

Helson Pereira: *Yes. Many people from here... It's now four years since we came, four or five years. The focolare is at a very strategic place. It possible to have good relationships with many people out on the street. You always meet someone.*

We're also here to pray, and we go to families, to the family prayer group, or we visit someone who is ill ... Everything becomes an opportunity to create new relationships.

Marco Aleotti: *Apart from Helson who is retired, the other focolarini study and work. Clifford works with migrants from his own country, Haiti, Lucival at the Fazenda da Esperanca while Keles teaches at the Marist Fathers School, where there are over 500 children from the favela.*

Keles Lima: *We work with the Marists to strengthen this social transformation. But not for its own sake. This social transformation acquires, you might say, the perspective of the Kingdom of God. Starting from people's dignity, the dignity of everyone, of the children, adolescents and young people. We try to make them discover that love among all is the most important thing.*

In 2018 we had a congress with young people right here in the community and for them the most important thing was staying in the homes of families here. The young people left here very happy with their experience. And it is an experience we will repeat in the coming years.

Father Vilson Groh: *I always tell the focolarini how important the focolare is as a presence of light in the periphery, a presence that amplifies an understanding the Movement needs, on the importance of what happened with Chiara, in Trent, when Chiara embraced humanity in that woman who had lost her children, while she herself had lost her parents, who went away to the mountains. And she met humanity that was crying out. Then she discovered Jesus forsaken during her whole life, which is a great gift for the life of the Church, and a great gift from the point of view of continuing Chiara's experience at the meals in the first focolare: a focolarino and a poor person, a focolarino and a poor person.*

Today a great many social works have grown up in Brazil that are the fruit of the Movement for Unity, of the charism, and they are the arms of Jesus forsaken who today embraces the great Jesus Forsaken of Chiara's intuition.

(Environment and song)

(Applause)

Lorenzo: *Thank you Father Vilson and thanks to the focolarini in the Morro!*

13. IN COLLEGAMENTO CON CADINE (TRENT) – SALUTO DI MARIA VOCE (EMMAUS) E JESÚS MORÁN

Lorenzo: Let's now go back live to Trent; over to you Stefania.

Stefania: Here we are Lorenzo; I'm here with Emmaus and Jesús.

Jesús, let's stay with what we have just seen and heard from Florianopolis. What is your impression?

Jesús: You have all seen Florianopolis, the experience of Morro, the focolare in the Morro, and the experience of unity with Father Vilson and the Marists, with his religious order. There is a formidable incarnation of the charism in that place. I was with Father Vilson a month ago and I see him as a mystic; he is a mystic of Jesus Forsaken. He was able to perceive this cry in a very specific place and his passionate love, because he is someone in love with Jesus Forsaken, has transformed that reality from top to bottom.

The impression you get when you are with him is that he communicates the pure, incarnate Gospel to you. In this sense it does not leave you unscathed, it is something that transforms you. Because now we have only seen the poor, but he is so Gospel-like in his way of doing things that he has managed to build bridges even with the people who live down below, who are rich, and therefore he has transformed the mentality of the rich too, so that they become aware of the injustice there is in that city, which is like a blot. And he has involved them in this work of social transformation.

So this is Chiara's prophecy in its fullness, lived out. The focolarini there - as he says - are bringing a light, a light that is this constant presence of Jesus in the midst.

Stefania: Thank you Jesús.

Emmaus, let's go back to today, this very day and to the surprise we had this afternoon - we can say it's a surprise because we only heard about it a few days ago. You have been awarded an honour by the Autonomous Province of Trent and it is the Seal of St Wenceslas. In what spirit did you accept it?

Emmaus: Well, it certainly was a surprise, so I was very surprised and moved. I absolutely did not expect an honour to be given to me, personally, and if it were only for me I would say that they wasted time looking for an honour. Instead, I was very moved because the explanatory statement referred to Chiara's person and charism. So in this sense, as an expression of this charism of which I am in some way the bearer at this moment, I was very happy, because I said to myself: this is a prize that goes to the charism of Chiara and to Chiara's people spread around the world, and we are seeing some of the fruits that there are in this people of Chiara scattered throughout the world - so it's being given to everyone. So in a sense we all belong to this people from the Trentino region from whom Chiara was born, who then transmitted this "Trentino nature" of hers to the whole world. So I am moved and grateful to accept this award.

Never more than today would I say that you feel the whole world is present here, because it is true that we are in Trent, we are in Cadine, we are where everything began, but it is also true that the whole world is represented here, all generations, all cultures and this seems to me to be a representative part of Chiara's people in the world, which is beginning her centenary.

Stefania: Thank you, Emmaus. (Applause)

I would like to go back for a moment to that 7th December 1943 when Chiara said: "I have married God and from Him I can expect everything". Are these words of Chiara's still valid for us today? What more should we expect from God? (Pause) A simple question! (Laughter)

Jesús: I think they are very relevant words. We have seen this in these few days in this meeting here, especially seeing these young focolarini who starting their adventure, but not only them, even the older people (laughter), the loyalty of the older ones, which is important.

I believe that on a personal level we must expect to always live in the newness of the Spirit within us, which is the only possible fullness. And then, on a social level, after having seen this report on Florianopolis, I believe that we can expect from this Spouse the fulfilment of the values of the Kingdom, that is, the achievement of the Magnificat on earth. I think we can expect it, we can believe it.

Stefania: Thank you.

Emmaus, one last question. We have opened the centenary year. How are you preparing to live this centenary?

Emmaus: I'm going to live it as a year of light and fire. Of light because Chiara always showed us everything in the light, she gave us a great vision, she repeated it to us a little while ago in her talk, this vision of a united world, this vision of a genuine sense of family. And I feel that this light will illuminate all the people who come to know about Chiara and her charism, especially during this year. I feel that they too will know this vision and will no longer be able to live without it. Therefore, I also expect a year of fire, because I expect that from this meeting with Chiara, all those who have the opportunity to meet Chiara, here in Trent, but not only here, at all the exhibitions that will take place in other continents - as we have seen - in all the small or large events that there will be in the small or large communities to celebrate this centenary - there will be this special opportunity to touch the charism of Chiara, and be a little bit, a little bit set alight by this fire, to become sparks of this fire and then go back to where they are to light other fires around them and truly bring about that transformation of the world that only God can bring about. So, to bring this fire of love into the world to fulfil the transformation that God can do and that God wants. (Applause)

Stefania: That's it, Lorenzo. Thank you Emmaus, thank you Jesús.

With this wish, Lorenzo, we go back to you in Rome and say goodbye from Trent.
Bye!

(Applause)

Lorenzo: Thank you Stefania, thanks you to all of you. (Applause)

14. CONCLUSION

Lorenzo: A reminder that you can follow us on the websites: on the www.focolare.org Website and the other sites www.centrochiaralubich.org and www.centenariolubichtrento.it and, especially for the young people, through our social media: Facebook, Twitter e Instagram.

I also remind you about the latest book - for now only in Italian - on Chiara, by Maurizio Gentilini, published by Citta Nuova. "Chiara Lubich, between history and prophecy- a road map to unity".

Last Sunday, Pope Francis wrote to everyone about the meaning and value of the Nativity Scene that "always arouses amazement and wonder".

And then I remind you that the Gen 4, the children of the Focolare movement, once again this year are carrying out their Christmas activity called "They have evicted Jesus". It aims to put Jesus' birth at the centre of Christmas. In order to do this, all over the world, they will offer small figurines of Baby Jesus made by the Gen 4 and the proceeds will go to an institute for deaf children in Lebanon that is in danger of closure and to the Unidad Social Centre in Bogotá, Colombia.

So thanks to the Gen4 around the world!

Just to remind you that the next Conference Call will be on February 1st 2020 at 12 noon.

Happy Christmas to all and goodbye!

(Applause and music)