

(English translation)

St. Peter's Square, 30 May 1998

### Chiara's talk at the meeting of the Holy Father with the Ecclesial Movements

Holy Father, I have been asked to give my testimony on the Focolare Movement or Work of Mary.

Because you have been well acquainted with this ecclesial reality for decades, allow me to consider it from your heart, to look at it with your eyes.

You identified love as being the "inspiring spark" of all that is done under the name of Focolare, and it is really true, Holy Father. It is the driving force of our Movement. Being love and spreading it is the general aim of the Work of Mary. In fact, it is called to bring an invasion of love into the world.

Indeed, Your Holiness, while recalling other spiritual Movements in the course of history, you affirmed that you could recognize in ours, a "radicalism of love".

And how could it be otherwise if everyone who belongs to the Movement constantly keeps their eyes fixed on one model: Jesus crucified in his cry of abandonment? It is there that we find the most radical love, in the apex of his suffering.

Abandoned by the Father, he re-abandons himself to the Father; feeling disunited from the Father, he reunites himself to the Father; in him we found the key to re-building unity in every division, every separation, everywhere.

In another circumstance, I took the liberty of asking you, Holy Father, how you view our Movement, its aim. Without hesitation, you answered me (underlining our specific goal "*ut omnes unum sint*"): "Ecumenical", giving the broadest meaning to this adjective.

And this is true. To be able to achieve our goal: "That all may be one," we have four typical dialogues:

That within our Church: among individuals, groups, Movements, and so forth; it is a dialogue which also reinforces the unity of the faithful with the Shepherds and with one another.

Then there is the dialogue with Christians of various Churches, which wants to contribute towards full communion among the various Churches.

There is interreligious dialogue, which interweaves relationships with the faithful of various religions.

And finally, the dialogue with people of good will who have no specific religious belief.

Furthermore, Holy Father, no one will ever be able to remove from our heart your vision of our Movement, which you expressed on that memorable visit to our Centre in Rocca di Papa in August, 1984.

After the members of the Movement's Council had presented their specific ways of serving its seventeen branches, comprising every type of lay and religious vocation; after having described the various aspects of this Movement (spiritual, apostolic, cultural and others), and after speaking of the four secretariats for the dialogues, you affirmed that you could discern in this Movement the features of the post-conciliar Church. You said: "You intend to authentically adhere to that vision of the Church, that definition that the Church has given of itself in the Second Vatican Council."<sup>1</sup>

This gave us immense joy.

<sup>1</sup> John Paul II, "An evening we will never forget", in *Living City*, New York, vol. 23, 11, 1984.

On still other occasions, in learning of this Movement's numbers and outreach throughout the world, you exclaimed: "You are a people!"

Yes, Holy Father, we are a people, a small people, part of the large people of God.

And each time our young people, in particular, communicated to you their desire to contribute toward making all humanity one big family, indeed, that they are dreaming and working for a united world, you always understood and supported them in pursuing this ideal, an Ideal which seemed utopian to many.

Moreover, you have spoken to us several times about Mary.

On one unforgettable occasion, you wished to explain to me the "Marian Principle" of the Church in relation to the Petrine Principle. The "Marian Principle" of which also our Movement could be an expression.

On that day you certainly did not know that our Statutes state that the Work of Mary "desires to be a presence of Mary, a continuation of her presence on earth."

Thank you, Holy Father, for all the confirmations you have given us throughout the years.

And, to conclude, a promise.

We know that the Church desires full communion, unity among the Movements, and this has already begun.

We want to assure you, Your Holiness, that, because our specific charism is unity, we will make every effort to contribute, with all our strength, towards fully accomplishing it.

May Mary whom you love so much, reward you fittingly for all you have done for the Movements. It is one of the masterpieces of your Pontificate.

Chiara Lubich