

(English translation)

Castel Gandolfo, 1 June 2001

## **Message addressed to a group of friends of non-religious affiliations gathered together for a meeting**

Dear friends,

A cordial welcome to all of you, our dear friends, and my heartfelt thanks for your presence here!

This wonderful conference attended by people with different convictions is very important. You are here because you are interested in the spirit that brought to life and motivates the Focolare Movement, in its goals, in its life and achievements. You are full-fledged citizens of our Movement, you are an essential part of it.

And yet someone might wonder: can a Movement like that of the focolarini, born from a very profound religious conviction, from the choice of God as the ideal of their lives, be of interest to men and women of other convictions?

Yes, it can and I will tell you why.

Yes, because we, focolarini, believe in a religion that is not relegated only to heaven, so to speak, but which is profoundly human.

Like all Christians, we certainly have faith in a transcendent God, but a God who became incarnate on this earth, who became man. Therefore, if God who is all spirit, the most Blessed Trinity, is of the greatest interest to us, we know that this God is Love, and this is demonstrated by the fact that he did not remain only in heaven to enjoy his infinite beatitude, but he became one of us, a man with us men and women.

He did not jealously keep his greatness, his divinity for himself, but he wished in some way to share it with us, to enable us to participate in it by making us too children of his Father, sons and daughters in him, the Son of God.

The fact that he assumed our humanity is – I would say – the qualifying point of our religion which the Movement fully emphasizes.

This great reality creates a deep bond, a communion with you, committed as you are to respecting, to potentiating all human beings by enhancing and safeguarding their values. We must do this, too, and we want to do it with you.

Because of our faith, then, we believe that Jesus is both God and man. And, while we look at Jesus as God when we dialogue with other Christians or with people of other religions, we fix our gaze on Jesus as Man when, with you, we spend ourselves for the good of men and women, for their needs, but also when we seek to understand their immense potentials and resources.

Dearest friends, this is the answer to your question. But someone might still ask: have there been any signs in the history of our Movement which show that we are on the right track? Can we be sure that we are pursuing what we should, that all that we are doing can contribute to the great design that stands before us: universal brotherhood for a more united world, indeed, for a united world?

I think that the development of your branch, you, friends of different convictions in many parts of the world, is already an indication of its precious worth. Indeed, it increasingly shows that more than ever before every authentic human situation today cannot do without the great shared values of humanity: peace, justice, solidarity, freedom and the dignity of each person.

This is why we consider our dialogue with you to be absolutely necessary. And not only our dialogue, but also our active collaboration with you.

In my last message, I wrote to you about our “economic activity” founded on love towards everyone, on mutual love from which solidarity and concrete achievements arise. Many of you have worked with us in the birth and development of many of these in an effort to resolve the problems of marginalized people. This year, as you probably know, besides our economic activity, you will hear about our “political activity”, which is also aimed at contributing towards the accomplishment of our great ideals.

But other achievements in various human spheres are in sight and already in their early stages of development: education, for example, law, health care...

Dear friends, I am certain that you will be with us – if you are not already – in giving shape and substance to many other initiatives towards building a better world. This is why I count very much on you, on your particular sensitivity, which assures us of your indispensable contribution.

I heartily thank you even now for your friendship and for your commitment.

Chiara Lubich