

Ottmaring Declaration

The Focolare Movement's General Council is having their annual retreat at the Ottmaring Ecumenical Centre from February 19 – 26, 2017. The programme is an opportunity for fellowship, prayer and work, focusing on one of the Movement's main goals: Christian unity.

Chiara Lubich first engaged the Movement in ecumenical dialogue in 1961, right here in Germany. Since that time, through fostering a "dialogue of life", there has been fruitful collaboration with more than 300 Churches and ecclesial communities.

For almost 50 years, the Focolare Movement and the 'Fraternity of Communitarian Life' (Vereinigung vom Gemeinsamen Leben) have been bearing witness in this 'little town' to the deep fellowship that unites Christians in the one Body of Christ, despite divisions still existing between the Churches.

Ottmaring is close to Augsburg, a city known for its ecumenical spirit, where the Lutheran World Federation and the Roman Catholic Church signed the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* in 1999. It was a deeply significant moment that marked an important step in overcoming the theological differences still present.

The October 2016 meeting in Lund, Sweden, between the Roman Catholic Church and the Lutheran World Federation was particularly significant in view of this year, 2017, in which the 500th anniversary of the Reformation is commemorated. The Joint Declaration made in Lund bears witness to the mutual trust established and calls each respective community to '*further growth in communion rooted in Baptism*' and to '*witness together to the Gospel of Jesus Christ*'. In this way, it is possible to become faithful heralds "*of God's boundless love for all humanity*".

As a worldwide movement that includes Christians of many Churches, we already live this reality of a Christian people united through mutual love. We feel strongly called to respond to the Lund Declaration. We see it as a true "kairos", a sign that God is urging Christians today to work harder for the fulfilment of Jesus' prayer, "that all may be one". We will do all that is within our power to sustain the Churches' efforts to bring about full, visible communion, for the good of all humanity.

We will do everything possible to ensure that all the Movement's actions, projects and events, at international level but especially locally, demonstrate this open and fraternal relationship among Christians. We will continue to work for fellowship among Movements and Christian communities throughout the world, devoting special attention to the "Together for Europe" ecumenical network. We entrust to God our Churches' ecumenical journey, to hasten the day when we may share together in one chalice.

Ottmaring, February 21, 2017

Maria Voce (President)

Jesús Morán (Co-president)