

RELIGIONS FOR PEACE

ADVANCING A MORAL ALLIANCE AMONG THE WORLD'S RELIGIONS FOR AN "INTEGRAL ECOLOGY"

Rome, 19th October 2017

SESSION V, 12 NOON - "MOBILISING SUPPORT FROM THE RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES"

**Emmaus - Maria Voce,
World President of the Focolare Movement, Co-president of Religions for Peace International**

Dear Secretary General, Dr William Vendley,
Your Eminences,
Your Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

We have spoken of the many challenges that today's world puts before us and the role of collaboration among people of different religions with regard to the most urgent challenges.

I represent a Movement whose commitment in many areas of human life is rooted in a strong spirituality. This spirituality is founded on the awareness that God is father of every man and woman on earth and therefore, since all people are brothers and sisters, they belong to the same human family. This basic equality among all people urges us to do all we can to build true fraternity, as much as possible, wherever we find ourselves.

For over 70 years, we have experienced that every person of good will can share this commitment and this perception. Because in every culture and religion we can find the Golden Rule which invites us to "Do to others as you would have them do to you"¹ and "not do to others what we would not have done to us".

By adapting the original definition found in our sacred texts, we can make a commitment to treat people of other ethnicities as we would wish to be treated; to see people of other religions as we would wish to be seen; to value and appreciate other countries as we would wish our own country to be valued and appreciated; and to work for the protection of the environment in our own context and in other contexts as if that place were truly our own home, anywhere in the world.

¹ (Luke 6:31)

These attitudes can permeate our life as individuals and as communities, both at local and international levels, generating a positive current in a world fraught by tensions and divisions of all kinds. In fact, we see that practising their faith in depth leads young people of various religions, who live mutual understanding, to discover fraternity, to share their goods, to work for the development of poorer areas, to respect nature and not waste resources.

This has been our experience in contact with many movements and religious communities represented here, with whom we have been working together for decades for a more united and peaceful world.

We go ahead on this path, being open to what God, the Absolute, Father of us all, will make us understand step by step. We are committed above all to the **formation** of this mind-set both in those who are part of our Movement and in all those we meet. Two examples are:

- *The Run for Unity*. This is a relay race run by thousands of teenagers, in which a ‘virtual baton’ passes through the different time zones and unites places particularly affected by war, conflict, division and problems of all kinds.

- And the Genfests (Gen/youth festivals), like the upcoming Genfest which will be held in Manila in July 2018 with the slogan “Beyond all borders”. It will bring together 10,000 young people from around the world and from different ethnicities, cultures and religions, all of whom are motivated by the idea of building a united world.

Therefore, as Members of the Focolare Movement, we wish to continue working with other groups, organisations, movements and communities, in new ways according to the needs of our times, but always with the same spirit, the spirit of love, mercy and compassion that inspires all our faiths.