

Rocca di Papa, 20 January 2020

### **Message from Maria Voce, President of the Focolare Movement**

Today is January the 22nd, 2020.

One hundred years ago, on January 22<sup>nd</sup> 1920, Chiara Lubich was born.

Today, a global hymn of thanksgiving rises to Heaven for the immense gift that God gave to the world with the birth of Chiara.

Chiara was a woman who lived so that all people in the world could rediscover one another as brothers and sisters. She lived so as to build the family of God's children, united by mutual love. She did this day after day, establishing relationships with all the people she met, not stopping at differences in culture, religion, sex, ethnicity or age. Chiara was convinced that God is the Father of all and so all people are brothers and sisters.

I believe her message of unity is still extremely relevant today. It is important because currents of division and narrow political interests are continually emerging. New walls and new frontiers continue to appear. I feel a compelling desire to focus once again on our one goal, which is the same for all of us: to live and act in order to build a world that is different from the one in which we live, *a united world*, according to Jesus' vision, "May they all be one".

This is why the title we have chosen for the centenary is "Celebrate to meet". We do not want to remember Chiara in a nostalgic way but to *meet Chiara*. She is living in the spirit that she shared with us, in the Movement she founded and in the countless people, scattered throughout the world, who have followed her.

And so, I invite all of you who have ever met Chiara and her charism - whether you are currently in touch with the Movement or not - to live what is perhaps our main characteristic: to be people who can create relationships and welcome others without prejudices, without preconceptions and without agendas, and be bridges for others.

Let us celebrate Chiara's anniversary. Let us take ahead her message, the great dream of unity. Let us celebrate and *let us do it all together* - Chiara can see us and wants us to be united - by participating in the various events that will be held around the world and in particular the ones taking place in Trent, her hometown, and at the International Centre of the Movement here in Rocca di Papa.

Be sure that with great joy we are looking forward to welcoming you!