

Who are the Volunteers of God

In Singapore the movement's work with CHARIS is carried out by a branch of the Focolare known as the Volunteers of God.

Since the beginnings of the Movement, Chiara Lubich felt urged to run out to humankind. Recalling those early days she stated: "I believe that our experience of when Jesus in our midst multiplied the loaves to help solve the social problems of Trent, it was an early manifestation of the vocation of the Volunteers, like a first seed."

The seed took on life and form in 1956 when, under the pressure of the tragic events unfolding in Hungary, Pope Pius XII pronounced his heartfelt plea: "God, God, God. . ." to make "the name of God resound in the public streets, in homes, and in offices. . ."

Chiara accepted that plea and seemed to echo it when she stated: "There is a need for true followers of Jesus in the world. Disciples who will follow him voluntarily. An army of volunteers, for love is free (. . .). A society that bears witness to one only name: God".

The response was immediate: workers, doctors, nurses, politicians, educators, businessmen and employees – all wanting to be these "Volunteers of God". It is a typically lay calling, since the Volunteers feel "the special vocation to permeate the things of this earth with the spirit of God." This way of life is fascinating to many who are now engaged on this path of holiness, a way that the Movement is spreading in five continents.

In the late 60's, as she saw the social projects that were coming to life through the Volunteers, Chiara entrusted to them the New Humanity Movement, the Focolare's expression in civic life. Today there are 20,000 members of Volunteers of God in the World.

Focolare Social Mission Projects in Singapore and the Region



1999 - 2009 Social outreach activities to Batam were led by the late Francis Lee to help in church rebuilding & to organise Christmas parties for the less fortunate.

2005 - 2009 In response to the Aceh Tsunami the Focolare launched a boat-building and provision of fishing nets project

2006 - 2009 In response to the earthquake in Jogjakarta, a reconstruction project was launched

2017 Goat for Good G4G Project was launched to help poor farmers in Jogjakarta.

2018 Jointly organized with Crossings Café and H.O.M.E. to provide dinner and interactive games for migrant workers.

2020-2021 During Covid-19, with the aid of SGD 60,000 CHARIS Grant, Food Packs were distributed to 8,000 Aged, Disabled Poor in Vietnam

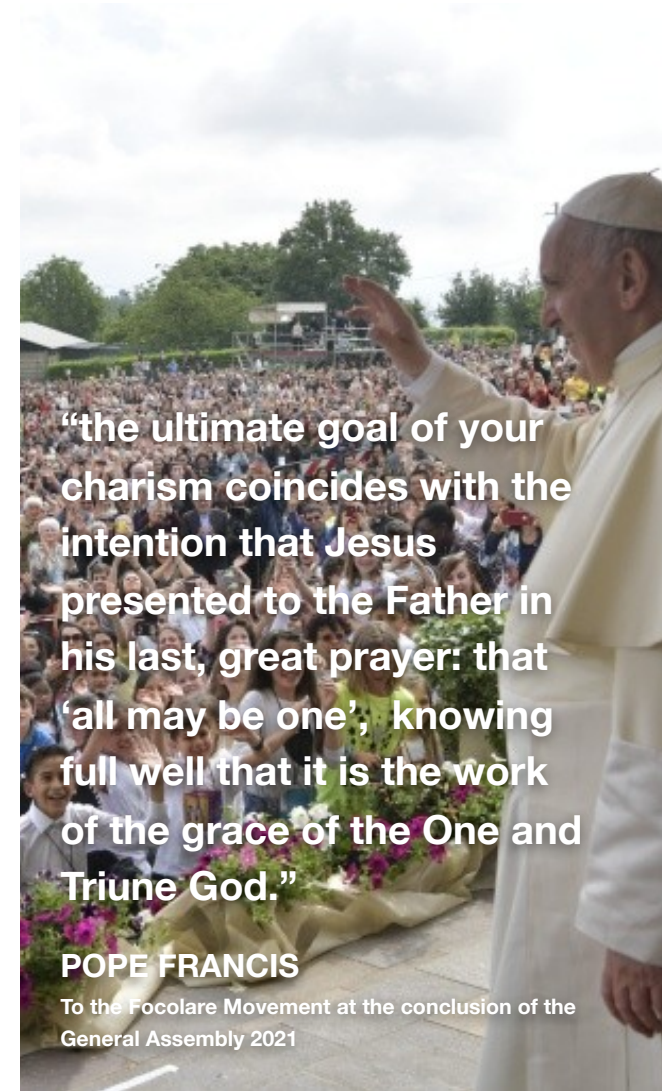
2020 When the Taal Volcano erupted volcanic ash, we helped to distribute 5,000 N95 masks donated by CHARIS

2021 During the Covid-19 lockdown in Pakistan funds were raised to help defray the salaries of the teachers who gave free education to children living in the slums.

2021 Focolare Volunteers and their children gathered and packed essentials by sea cargo for the flood victims in Tacloban, Philippines.



Charism of Unity



POPE FRANCIS

To the Focolare Movement at the conclusion of the General Assembly 2021

Our Global Mission

The Focolare Movement is a lay Catholic movement founded in 1943 in Trent, Italy by Chiara Lubich, who consecrated her life to God and subsequently inspired many young people to do the same.

Today the Movement is present in 194 nations, with more than 2 million adherents from different vocations - from children and young people to families, priests and the religious - and at every level of society - politicians, academics, businessmen, professionals and students.

The charism of the Focolare Movement, officially known in the Church as Opera di Maria (The Work of Mary) is unity. This unity, that which Jesus prayed for the night before He died (Jn 17:21) forms the core of the Movement's spirituality of communion.

The Movement's members commit themselves to put into practice the Gospel, illuminated by the spirituality of communion. They undergo formation in 'units', made up of two or more people who are in similar stages of life. For example, young people aged 17 to 30 make up the branch of the Gen 2, or New Generation. Meanwhile, working adults who want to bring the spirituality of communion into their various workplaces form the Volunteers branch. There are other branches for children, families, the priests and religious.

“Mutual and constant love, which makes unity possible and brings the presence of Jesus among all, is, for those who are part of the Work of Mary, the basis for their life under every aspect: it is the norm of norms, the premise to every other rule.” - Chiara Lubich, Founder of the Focolare

Focolare Singapore

In Singapore, the Focolare Movement has about 100 active members under the movement's sub-zone comprising Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia and Brunei. The sub-zone's centre is based in Jogjakarta. As Member Organisation of Caritas Humanitarian Aid & Relief Initiatives, Singapore (CHARIS), we are engaged in overseas humanitarian social mission projects. We are also actively involved in the diocese's interfaith activities such as DialogueSpace and in Catholic200SG activities.



As a community, we organise activities for the youth and families and hold our annual Mariapolis gatherings. We also have monthly 1st Saturday meetings based on the Word of Life, or a phrase from the Gospel, where we share our experiences on how we have put the Gospel into practice. Since Covid19 struck we have organised this online and began an online formation programme on the spirituality of unity since 2020.

Some of the bigger initiatives that we have organised over the years include reconstruction programmes in Bantul, Aceh, and Jogjakarata in Indonesia, following major natural disasters such as the 2006 earthquake and tsunami. underprivileged children and their families.

45 years in Singapore: Some key milestones

In 1976, Bishop Emeritus Jose Lai, then Focolarino priest from Macau, based in Church of St Joseph (Victoria Street), introduced the Word of Life to a few parishioners.

In 1984, Fr John Khoo, Parish priest of Church of St Anthony, took interest in the Focolare Movement and ignited this spirituality to the youth, resulting in John Chai becoming the first Singaporean Focolarino (Lay Consecrated) on **1st March 1991**.



In July 1991, a Focolarina named Martita from Argentina together with Singaporean Alicia Tong met with the late Archbishop Gregory Yong to set up the first Focolare Women Centre in Singapore at Saints Peter & Paul Church. In Jan 1992 the Focolare Men Centre was opened at Hougang.



In 2011, due to the maturity of the Focolare Community in Singapore and the growth of the Movement in Indonesia, the Focolare Sub-Zone Centre was relocated from Singapore to Jogjakarta.

In 2019 Glauco & Veronika Focolare Co-Responsibles of Focolare South East Asia Zone Visited Archbishop William Goh

