Editorial

This new issue of Claritas is inspired by three topics that Pope Francis addressed during his recent visit to Brazil. First, we noticed that he mentioned “fraternity” a number of times in his public statements. Then upon returning to Rome, Pope Francis proclaimed “Fraternity, the Foundation and Pathway to Peace” to be the theme of the 47th World Day of Peace on January 1, 2014. His proclamation states:

Fraternity is a dowry that every man and every woman brings with himself or herself as a human being, as a child of the one Father. In the face of the many tragedies that afflict the family of nations—poverty, hunger, underdevelopment, conflicts, migrations, pollution, inequalities, injustice, organized crime, fundamentalisms—fraternity is the foundation and the pathway to peace.

Fraternity is a concept that Chiara Lubich has addressed since the early days of the Focolare Movement. With the founding of the Movement for Unity in Politics in 1996, she developed her thought about fraternity, society, the political world, and unity and peace. In fact, due to a renewed interest and research on this topic in Europe and then in Latin America, Chiara’s writings have played a major role in new scholarship concerning the importance of fraternity in both continents. Today, conferences are being held in Latin America, academic chairs have been established, scholarship has grown in many countries, and publications have expanded on the notion of fraternity as a new paradigm for social, political, economic, and educational development.

This is especially true in Argentina, the home of Pope Francis. The most recent conference in this regard, “The Charism of Unity in Dialogue with Contemporary Culture,” was held on April 12, 2012 at the University of Buenos Aires. Four hundred university professors, researchers, and representatives of various cultural fields from Argentina, Chile, Paraguay, and Uruguay attended. Claritas received the keynote address by Maria Voce, President of the Focolare Movement, and three responses. So, we decided to publish in this issue a special “In Focus” section on fraternity. In addition to the proceedings from the 2012 conference in Buenos Aires, this section includes two articles by Antonio Maria Baggio, whose book, Fraternity: The Forgotten Principle, helped to bring this topic to the attention of scholars in Latin America.

Second, we noted with interest that in his homily on July 25, 2013 at the World Youth Day in Rio de Janeiro, Pope Francis presented the following reflection: “With him [Christ], our life is transformed and renewed, and we can see reality with new eyes, from Jesus’ standpoint, with his own eyes (cf. Lumen Fidei, 18).”
An international conference of the expanded Abba School at the Mariapolis Center at Castel Gandolfo, Italy, on March 15, 2013 focused on a seminal text from Chiara Lubich’s mystical writings: “Look at All the Flowers.” In this meditation, Chiara Lubich says that “to look at all the flowers is to have Jesus’ vision.” She presents a short yet deep and mystical reflection on her own experience of seeing reality with “Jesus’ vision.” She also presents the collective way to “discover” that vision through the spirituality of unity. So, we decided to devote the “To the Source” section of the issue to this meditation. It includes a new translation of the meditation itself, an editor’s introduction that gives the background on the meditation as well as selections from papers presented at the conference that delve into the meaning of the text, and three articles presented at the conference.

Third, we noticed that in Brazil Pope Francis spoke about the importance of interreligious dialogue in today’s world. This reminded us of an article published in the first issue of Claritas by Rabbi Dr. Abraham Skorka, “Jewish Identity and Jewish–Christian Dialogue: A View from Argentina” (Claritas: Journal of Dialogue and Culture, I [2012]:106–116). In footnote 17 of that article, he refers to a book he co-authored with Cardinal Jorge Bergoglio, now Pope Francis, in Spanish: Sobre el cielo y la tierra (Buenos Aires: Sudamericana, 2010). Of course just a few months after Cardinal Bergoglio became Pope Francis, this book was translated into English and published in the United States. So, we decided to include a book review of the English version to present an insight into Pope Francis’ emphasis on the value of interreligious dialogue.

To the Source: Chiara Lubich’s meditation “Look at all the Flowers” was written on November 6, 1949 during a period of illumination that began in the summer of 1949 and concluded in 1951. The editors’ introduction gives background on the historical period in which the text was written, looks at the text itself, and presents comments about it presented at the March 13, 2013 conference on the meditation held at Castel Gandolfo. The text of the meditation is a new translation by Callan Slipper. The three articles also presented at that conference, edited for publication, include:

- “Transferring Self to Other: Radicalizing Human Being,” by Jesús Morán, examines recent developments in the field of philosophical anthropology that are helpful to understanding the radical self-transcendence presented by Chiara Lubich in her meditation. In her notion of transferring self to other, transcendence of self as well as of the mutuality of self and other creates a radical transcendence that opens up a new way of knowing reality.
- “Towards a New Kind of Cognition,” by Callan Slipper, follows up on Moran’s suggestion of a new way of knowing—to know as Jesus knows—in the context of human development. Slipper shows the historical continuity with previous notions of cognition as well as the significantly new elements of knowing presented in Chiara’s meditation.
- “‘When the tree has blossomed fully . . .’ Reflections on the Church,” by Hubertus Blaumeiser and Brendan Leahy, proposes that “Look at All the Flowers” reveals how the Vatican II’s vision of church can be realized through mutual personal relationships that reflect the very life of the Trinity. It demonstrates how the Marian profile can be lived out individually, in local communities, and in the
church so as to generate living cells of the Mystical Body, renewing both church and society.

**In Focus: Fraternity:** The first part of this section includes two articles by Antonio M. Baggio, one of the major scholars of the concept of fraternity in Europe, who was also influential in bringing this category of social and political thought to Latin America. The second part includes articles from the most recent conference on this topic in Latin America, “The Charism of Unity in Dialogue with Contemporary Culture,” held on April 12, 2012 at the University of Buenos Aires. The conference was hosted by the Economic Science Faculty and four hundred faculty members and researchers attended from Argentina, Chile, Paraguay, and Uruguay. The articles here were edited by Osvaldo Barreneche (Universidad Nacional de La Plata) and were translated by Alejandro Frere (Ciudad Nueva Publishing House, Buenos Aires). These six articles include:

- “The Forgotten Principle: Fraternity in Its Public Dimension,” by Antonio M. Baggio, presents historical background on the notion of fraternity, as well as events in Europe and in Latin America during the past decade or so that have led to a new scholarship on this “forgotten principle.” This scholarship began in Europe, spread to Latin America, and then moved back to Europe with new insights and publications in the fields of philosophy, political science, sociology, psychology, economics, education, and theology. The author cites publications in both Europe and Latin America that have been important contributions to this scholarship.

- “Love of All Loves: Politics and Fraternity in the Charismatic Vision of Chiara Lubich,” by Antonio M. Baggio, presents Chiara’s fundamental contribution to the rediscovery of fraternity, particularly during her last years of public engagement. Baggio explores the original meaning that Chiara gave to fraternity rooted within the Trinitarian reality, and particularly in Jesus forsaken. He argues that there is a “logic” of fraternity that rises from the Trinitarian “logic.” He also shows that over her lifetime, Chiara’s concept of fraternity evolved from being only in the religious background of the Christian faith. Her thought on fraternity grew in the context of the Movement for Unity in Politics so that she proposed fraternity to all people in its universal human dimension outside of any religious affiliation.

- “The Charism of Unity in Dialogue with Contemporary Culture and the Paradigm of Fraternity,” by Maria Voce, was the keynote speech at the Buenos Aires conference. After touching briefly on the difficult cultural situations in Europe today, she turns her attention to Latin America and the positive social, economic, and political changes that have recently taken place there, as well as the challenges that still remain. She presents Chiara Lubich’s proposed interreligious and intercultural “360 degree dialogue” based on fraternity. Voce explains what fraternity meant to Chiara Lubich in her own experience, in the Focolare spirituality of unity, and how it can be a paradigm for cultural development that overcomes the challenges facing Latin America—as well as the global community—today.
• “Fraternity and Educational Reform in Latin America,” by Cristián Cox, proposes that a key role of education is to establish fundamental relationships of fraternity, generating the “social capital” that bonds citizens together. Against this perspective, he examines the cultural values transmitted in the educational systems of six Latin American countries. He finds that under dictators, the privileged value was “the nation.” In reaction to that time, it is now “human rights.” He proposes “fraternity,” as presented in the Focolare charism of unity, as a fundamental value in national curricula by which greater social cohesion can be generated among students and therefore society as a whole.

• “The Church, Dialogue, and Fraternity: Doing Theology from the Place of the Poor,” by Rafael Velasco, S.J., begins with a discussion of the difficult relationship between the Catholic Church and modernity, and the changes that came due to Vatican II. He then uses the episode of Paul announcing his faith at the Areopagus in Athens as an image of the church’s position in the university today. Then, looking at the current situation in Latin America, he argues that theology needs to be written from the place of the poor. Fraternity needs to be understood as a means of expanding people’s sense of brotherhood/sisterhood to include dialogue with persons of other religions and cultures so as together to change society to care for the poor and needy.

• “Fraternity: For Citizens of Our Cities and Our World,” by Marta Oyhanarte, looks at globalization and the social challenges it has produced. She argues that Latin America has been less affected by global crises due to certain political, economic, social, and developmental strengths. However, many of these achievements are at stake due to social inequality, corruption, and weak institutions. She argues that fraternity provides a center of thought and action from which these challenges can be addressed, helping to fulfill of the “dream” of positive and healthy local and global citizenship.

Book Review: Jorge Mario Bergoglio and Abraham Skorka, *On Heaven and Earth: Pope Francis on Faith, Family, and the Church in the Twenty-First Century* (New York: Image, 2013), is reviewed by Paul Flaman. The review gives readers a glimpse into the views of Cardinal Jorge Bergoglio, who is now Pope Francis, and Rabbi Abraham Skorka on a number of timely issues, especially the importance of interreligious dialogue today.

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