Editorial

This year, we are publishing articles that were presented at two international academic conferences held in 2013 in celebration of the fifth anniversary of the passing of Chiara Lubich. The fifth anniversary is significant because it marks the beginning of the official cause for her beatification. Selected articles from the first conference, held at La Sapienza University in Rome, March 14–15, 2013, appeared in Claritas 3.1. The second conference, held at Fu Jen Catholic University in Taipei, Taiwan, April 12–13, 2013, was organized around theme “Patterns of Unity: An Interdisciplinary Dialogue on the Thought of Chiara Lubich (1920–2008).” This conference was the first such collaboration between the three Catholic universities in Taiwan: Fu Jen Catholic University, Providence University, and Wenzao Ursuline College.

This issue of Claritas gathers the four keynote addresses from the Fu Jen conference under the heading “In Focus.” Claritas is also invested in publishing scholarship from different ecclesial lay movements. To this end, this issue features two other articles that actually fit nicely together. Under “To the Source,” which presents articles on the writings of Chiara Lubich, we are publishing an article by Brian K. Reynolds on Chiara’s experience of Mary. We are also publishing an article by Ann W. Astell and Danielle M. Peters on the Schoenstatt Marian Shrine. This year is the 100th celebration of the founding of Schoenstatt and we are proud to publish this article written by two of the top Schoenstatt scholars as part of the important celebration. Finally, under “News and Views,” we note the Sixth International Seminar on Fraternity Studies that is being held as this issue of Claritas is being published. We expect to have a full report on the seminar in our next issue.

The editors of Claritas hope that our readers will appreciate the excellent articles in this issue. Please note that our journal is open access, with no subscription fees for our readers and no publication fees for our authors. We depend on the generosity of our readership. At our website, you will find a tab labeled “Support of the Journal.” We hope that all who come across our journal will be inspired to contribute to our effort to build a more united and peaceful global culture. Here is a preview of Claritas 3, no. 2 (2014):

To the Source: “The Virgin Mary, Creation, Incarnation, and Redemption: From the Church Fathers to Chiara Lubich” by Brian K. Reynolds (Fu Jen Catholic University)

This article discusses a series of texts on the Virgin Mary that are to be found among the writings by Chiara Lubich known as “Paradise ’49,” which describe the mystical illuminations that she,
together with some of her first companions, experienced between 1949 and 1951. The article begins by considering illuminations on Mary’s role as Theotokos, the Mother or Bearer of God, and then discusses the part she plays in the Redemption as the Desolata, or Desolate One. The article concludes with some remarks about Lubich’s vision of Mary in relation to the Trinity, humanity, and creation. Reynolds shows how Lubich partakes entirely in the tradition that begins with church fathers, such as Justin Martyr and Irenaeus, who write of the Virgin as the New Eve in the third century. Yet, Reynolds argues, Lubich’s insights add something new, particularly with regard to her understanding of the relationship between Jesus’s cry of forsakenness on the cross and Mary’s desolation as she participates in the agony of her Son. In this section, Reynolds shows that Lubich’s new understanding of these events has profound implications for a variety of doctrinal matters concerning Mary. Reynolds concludes by showing how Lubich’s experience of Mary’s desolation mirrors the kenosis that lies at the heart of the perichoretic relations of the Trinity, and offers a model of how one may live Trinitarian love on earth and participate as a co-creator in the renewal and transformation of creation.

This participation is apparent in scripture and theological tradition, and Coda argues that the modern theological method, for all its advances, must regain awareness of this participating, through Christ, in God’s self-knowledge. At the same time Coda presents the different gifts of the Spirit throughout history, namely, the charisms, and among these gives particular attention to Chiara Lubich’s charism of unity. Coda explains how this charism, via the experience of humans united in God, provides a participatory knowledge of God in which knowing and loving coincide. Coda then turns to the basis for this knowledge, namely, the forsakenness of Christ upon the cross, to show how the crucified intellect goes beyond its natural limitations to share in the intellect of Christ. Coda concludes with implications of this way of knowing for theological practice and suggests possibilities for a fresh approach that respects contemporary needs.

In Focus:

- “Chiara Lubich and the Theology of Jesus: The Trinity as Place, Method, and Object of Thinking,” by Piero Coda (Sophia University Institute)

This article begins by outlining the variety of forms theology takes to illustrate that the key to theological knowledge is knowing God through participation in Jesus’s knowledge of God.

Bruni begins by presenting a picture of today’s global economic changes and the issues that must be addressed. He discusses the widening inequality and income gap, as well as the correlation between inequality and quality of life, which is higher than between income (GDP) and quality of life. Inequality, he argues, is becoming a major obstacle to socioeconomic development. Therefore, companies need to expand their range of action to include social and community activities as opportunities for enhancing economic success and the well-being
of those in the company and community. Bruni then turns to the Economy of Communion, giving its background and its approaches to healing poverty through relational community changes and concrete productive inclusion. The result is workers who are partners and consequently happier and more effective citizens. He stresses the need to build businesses where the poor “produce” goods so that they do not only “consume” assistance. Bruni concludes with reflections on the nature and purpose of communion formed within business and community life.

- “The Mystical Theology of Chiara Lubich: A Foundation for Interreligious Dialogue in East Asia,” by Donald W. Mitchell (Purdue University Emeritus; Sophia University Institute)

This article begins with the assumption that Chiara Lubich received a charism—a spiritual gift—that is embodied in her spirituality of unity. Mitchell argues that the Trinitarian source of this gift was revealed in the mystical experience she refers to as “Paradise ’49,” a period of illumination in Chiara’s life that began in 1949 and extended to 1951. The first part of this paper reflects on the charism of Chiara’s spirituality of unity as lived out in interreligious dialogue. The second part reflects on what has been published about Chiara’s mystical illuminations, which Mitchell believes can serve as new sources for dialogue with the East Asian traditions of Buddhism and Confucianism. Mitchell specifically discusses Chiara’s views in relation to the general East Asian Buddhist views of Emptiness and Nirvana, the Huayan views of mutual penetration and indwelling, and the Neo-Confucian views of Taiji. In the third and final section, Mitchell presents his views on how such a dialogue could contribute to a more global Catholic philosophy.


Teachers, students, and all other stakeholders in education share a common purpose that is realized through two specific objectives—to teach individuals and to build community. This article explores the question: “How can education be reimagined in light of these objectives, given the many constraints that make change difficult?” Masters reviews his research, which revealed an approach whereby teachers, students, administrators, professors, and parents can construe the many challenges of education not as problems to be solved but as opportunities to live within the inherent tensions and to transform the reality around them. He explores the nature of a spirituality of communion and its function in education. In so doing, he discusses how education might be approached from this perspective and presents narrative examples of individuals who have reimagined education through a spirituality of communion. Masters concludes with reflections from Chiara Lubich concerning rules of formation for dialogue that suggest how those who differ might establish genuine relationships. These principles also suggest how others might extend the research done in North America to other cultural contexts.
Articles: “Schoenstatt’s Shrine for the Pilgrim People of God,”
by Ann W. Astell (University of Notre Dame) and Danielle M. Peters (University of Notre Dame)

The authors reflect on the anthropological notion of pilgrimage of the People of God and the place of ecclesial movements therein. While many movements are associated with a pilgrimage to a particular shrine, the very birth of the Schoenstatt Movement coincides with, and depends upon, the Schoenstatt Shrine. Founded in Germany by Joseph Kentenich (1885–1968), the international Apostolic Movement of Schoenstatt is animated by a threefold spirituality corresponding to the three graces received through pilgrimage to Schoenstatt’s shrine. This article argues that the structural principles of formation inherent in every pilgrimage have found a unique pedagogical application in the Schoenstatt Shrine, where pilgrims encounter Our Lady—the Mother Thrice Admirable, Queen, and Victress of Schoenstatt—as Educatrix and archetype of each pilgrim. Fittingly, all centennial celebrations in Schoenstatt, Germany, in Rome, and at more than two hundred Schoenstatt shrines throughout the world take on the character of a pilgrimage to thank God for the stream of life and grace that originated from this shrine and that continues to flow as a blessing for the church and world of the third millennium.

News and Views: “The Sixth International Seminar on Fraternity Studies”

This news item presents the sixth in a series of seminars by the University Network for the Study of Fraternity (RUEF) about which Claritas has published in previous issues (one article in Vol. 1.2, and six articles in Vol. 2.2). The sixth seminar is being held at the University of Santo Tomas in Bogotà, Colombia in conjunction with St. Bonaventure University in Medellin, and the Open and Distance National University.