The first section of Claritas 2015 is entitled “To the Source.” This section always features scholarly articles about the writings of Chiara Lubich, especially the unpublished text Paradise ’49 that presents her mystical writings from 1949 to 1951. These writings contain the inspirations and illuminations that are the foundation for Focolare spirituality. The editors are extremely proud to publish what has become one of the classic papers on this topic. It is by the noted Italian theologian Piero Coda and first appeared in Nuova Umanità XX (1998): 67–88. Coda wrote a companion article that addresses Christology and the New Creation in Christ. We will publish that article in the next issue of Claritas 2015. In the present issue we have the following:

- **Piero Coda (Sophia University Institute): “God and Creation: Trinity and Creation out of Nothing.”**

Coda addresses the question of God’s relationship with creation using the fundamental and specifically Christian theological stance that begins from creatio ex nihilo. Quoting unpublished passages from Paradise ’49, Coda shows how Chiara Lubich develops an original understanding of the event of creation in which God creates by giving being to nonbeing, by constantly creating historically and preserving in being what is created, and, at the same time, by making what is created evolve. This understanding relies on reading creation out of nothing in light of a radical understanding of divine love that, as a result of its own dynamic, is both One and Three. The vision implicitly contains a Trinitarian metaphysics that reinterprets the vestigia trinitatis in creation and gives a fresh understanding of creation’s vocation to share in the divine life.

The second section of the journal is entitled “In Focus.” It includes a set of articles that addresses a specific topic. We are pleased to publish in this issue an article by one of the most respected feminist writers in the Catholic tradition, Giulia Paola De Nicola. De Nicola uses a feminist lens to explore Chiara Lubich’s life, the unique structure of her Focolare Movement, and the male-female relationships found therein:

- **Giulia Paola De Nicola (University of Chieti): “Chiara Lubich and Gender Sociology.”** De Nicola addresses the influence of Chiara Lubich on relationships between men and women from the perspectives of sociology and the women’s movement. She highlights four structural aspects, including Chiara’s identity as a young woman founder,
diarchy, sisterhood, and the rule of a woman president. She also discusses six cultural aspects, including love at the center, the dignity of lay vocations, the conversion of masculinity, the conversion of femininity, going against the current, and wise ignorance. De Nicola argues that Lubich makes an important contribution by generating in her communities new relationships between men and women and new models of masculinity and femininity.

This section also features an insightful reply to Di Nicola’s article by Alejandra Marinovic:

- **Alejandra Marinovic (Universidad Adolfo Ibáñez):**
  “Chiara Lubich and the Transformation of Relationships: A Response to ‘Chiara Lubich and Gender Sociology.’”

Marinovic’s response is followed by a rejoinder by Di Nicola:

- **Giulia Paola Di Nicola** “A Rejoinder to Alejandra Marinovic.”

The third section of the journal is entitled “Articles.” The three excellent articles in this issue address religious lay movements in Christianity, Islam, and Buddhism; the sociology of authentic religious inspiration at the beginning of the Focolare Movement; and the problem of scientific research and value judgments:

- **Roberto Catalano (Focolare Center for Interreligious Dialogue):** “Gülen, Focolare, and Risshō Kōsei-kai Movements: Commonalities for Religious and Social Renewal.”

Catalano compares the characteristics of three movements of religious renewal that emerged in the second half of the twentieth century and that have been active in interreligious dialogue: the Buddhist movement Risshō Kōsei-kai, which originated in Japan; the Catholic Focolare Movement, which started in Italy; and the Gülen Movement, which was born in Turkey. He shows what elements these religious renewal phenomena hold in common that offer fertile ground for the development of interreligious dialogue: they are open to other religious traditions and to collaboration; they are lay movements founded by laypersons who base their views on their scriptures and traditions that emphasize transforming the human condition; they give special attention to the communitarian aspect of religion but balance it with the personal; and they all have charismatic founders.

- **Bernhard Callebaut (Sophia University Institute):**
  “A Sociological Reading of a New Cultural Scene: Jesus Forsaken in the 1940s.” Callebaut presents the general assumptions of the sociology of knowledge, namely, the relationship between ideas and social context that inform recent social constructionist theories of authorship and authorship competencies. How can we reflect about the process of differentiation of meanings and how they eventually provoke a creative re-interpretation and induce new meanings and competencies? The author uses a case-study format to examine the status of the idea of “Jesus Forsaken” in the early years of the Focolare Movement. He explores how the idea came about, how it became a new and unique discourse, how it related to other discursive traditions, how
it changed by discarding some elements of some traditions while keeping others and by dealing with social conditioning, and finally how it became a new, creative, and multilingual discourse in its own right.

• **Darrin W. Snyder Belousek** (Ohio Northern University and Bluffton University): “Science, Values and Power: Toward a Christian-Critical Perspective on Responsible Science.” Belousek critically examines a questionable presupposition of contemporary science: that science is an instrumental means to human ends and as such is a value-neutral project, such that the responsibility for the ethical evaluation of science concerns only the uses to which science is put by society and thus does not belong properly to the scientific profession. He explores what C. P. Snow called “the myth of ethical neutrality” along ethical, philosophical, and theological lines of analysis. Belousek concludes that there is a need for science to be accountable to values and thus for science to engage in dialogue with other disciplines, including ethics, philosophy, and theology.

The fourth and final section of this issue contains three book reviews:

• **Massimo Faggioli**, *Sorting out Catholicism: A Brief History of the New Ecclesial Movements*. Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2014; reviewed by Bernhard Callebaut (Sophia University Institute).


• **Elizabeth MacKinlay**, *Spiritual Growth and Care in the Fourth Age of Life*. Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2006; reviewed by Mark Vigrass (St. Joseph’s Auxiliary Hospital).

The editors of *Claritas* hope that our readers will appreciate the excellent articles in this first issue of 2015. 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 Claritas.” We hope that all who read *Claritas* will be inspired to contribute to our effort to build a more united and peaceful global culture.