

Editorial

Only when five years have passed since a person's death can his or her cause for beatification officially begin. In 2013, the fifth anniversary of the passing of Chiara Lubich, two international academic conferences marked this auspicious occasion. The first was in Rome, Italy, and the second in Taipei, Taiwan. *Claritas* has already published some of the papers presented at these conferences and will continue to do so through this issue and the next.

The first conference, held on March 14–15, 2013, began at Rome's La Sapienza University and continued at the Focolare's Mariapolis Center in Castel Gandolfo. The second day focused on a seminal text from Chiara Lubich's mystical writings, "Look at all the Flowers." This meditation states that "to look at all the flowers is to have Jesus' vision" of the world, and Chiara presents both her experience of seeing reality from Jesus' perspective and

Claritas: Journal of Dialogue and Culture, Vol. 3, No. 1 (March 2014)
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how her "collective spirituality" can enable others to discover this vision. The October 2013 issue of *Claritas* featured this text, along with three articles about it that were originally presented at Castel Gandolfo.

The first day of the conference, at La Sapienza, focused on how Chiara Lubich's charism of unity impacted history and contributed to a "New Humanism." The "In Focus" section of our October 2013 issue featured Antonio M. Baggio's "Love of All Loves: Politics and Fraternity in the Charismatic Vision of Chiara Lubich," which considered the influence of Chiara's charism on politics. This issue includes four articles that consider how Chiara's charism has affected various fields of human life: Piero Coda on history, Sergio Rondinara on science, Luigino Bruni on economics, and Adriana Cosseddu on law.

Our October 2014 issue will feature selected articles from the second international conference, "Patterns of Unity: An Interdisciplinary Dialogue on the Thought of Chiara Lubich (1920–2008)," completing our publication of articles from the two 2013 international conferences celebrating Chiara Lubich's global influence. Held on April 12–13, 2013, at Fu Jen Catholic University in Taipei, "Patterns of Unity" was the first collaboration among all three Catholic universities in Taiwan—Fu Jen Catholic University, Providence University, and Wenzao Ursuline College—on an international conference.

The editors of *Claritas* hope that our readers will appreciate the excellent articles and reviews listed below. 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 a more united and peaceful global culture. Here is a preview of *Claritas* 3, no. 1 (2014):

In Focus: The four articles in this section come from the 2013 international conference held at La Sapienza University:

- **“A Charism in History as a View from the Center”** by Piero Coda. Coda explores the historical significance of the charism of Chiara Lubich. He argues that her charism provides a convergent guide that safeguards all cultures for the mutual enrichment of humankind. Our current bewildered, wounded, and fluid condition, Coda claims, resembles the world into which Chiara’s charism brought light, namely, the darkness of World War II. Coda discusses how the charism has its center in the hidden wound on Christ’s soul, which is evident in his cry, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” The charism gives today’s world a center not to look *at*, but to look *from* at the world itself in order to help all persons refind themselves in mutual relatedness—each a gift for the others. This offers a universal foundation for building a more united and peaceful world.
- **“What Kind of Economy in the Era of Commons?”** by Luigino Bruni. Bruni discusses the Economy of Communion (EoC) as the main legacy of Chiara Lubich’s charism to both the economy and the field of economics. He argues that the EoC is particularly relevant to the present economic situation, which he defines as “the era of commons,” commons being shared goods that are crucial for the peace and well-being of people. He goes on to show how the Economy of Communion can offer important guidance in the domains of poverty, relational goods, and reciprocity.
- **“The ‘Sources’ of the Law: Drawing Together Norm and Life”** by Adriana Cosseddu. Using Chiara Lubich’s conceptualization of individuals as one “human family,” Cosseddu explores a fundamental tension in legal theory, that is between the freedom of persons for whom law is written, on the one hand, and the norms necessary for regulating life in common, on the other. The interpretive key Cosseddu offers for bridging this tension is “relationality,” by which the other is construed not as an object to be acted upon but as a fully personal subject who coexists with me and for me. Cosseddu positions the concept of restorative justice as a space for dialogue and reciprocity and suggests that the purpose of law is not to maintain boundaries but to bridge the voids in human experience.
- **“The ‘Book of Nature’: Connecting Science and Wisdom”** by Sergio Rondinara. Rondinara explores the reality of nature, both in its totality and in its essence, from different perspectives. In so doing, he discusses how Chiara Lubich envisions nature in relation to God and humankind. First, he examines the God-nature relation as Chiara understood it, as both immanent and transcendent. Then, he turns to Chiara’s notion of nature as an ongoing “event” in history leading to the recapitulation of all things in God. Chiara sees this theo-logical interpretation of

nature as being not in conflict with other interpretations from philosophy and science but in dialogue with them. Rondinara concludes with today's environmental crisis, where this approach is vital. He presents Chiara's call for a change in our relation to nature based on a dialogical reading of the "Book of Nature."

Articles: This issue features two main articles, one on Pope John Paul II and another on Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn:

- **“Culture in the Magisterium of Pope John Paul II: Evangelization through Dialogue and the Renewal of Society”** by R. Jared Staudt. Staudt argues that John Paul understood the fundamental role of culture in the march of history and so created the Pontifical Council for Culture. Staudt discusses a series of annual lectures John Paul gave to this Council in which he laid out a vision for culture as the priority of the New Evangelization. The author presents several arguments for prioritizing culture: (1) faith is incomplete if not lived out in a culture, and a culture opposed to the faith creates obstacles to living out that faith; (2) culture provides a medium for dialogue between believers and nonbelievers; (3) the goal of engaging culture in the New Evangelization is the building of a civilization of love; and (4) this transformation of culture will begin when holiness and culture are brought together. This vision, Staudt argues, is fundamentally rooted in the call of Vatican II to reawaken the laity to their particular mission in working for the good of the world.

- **“Philosophical and Theological Historiography in Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn’s *The Red Wheel*”** by Brendan Purcell. This article provides an overview of Solzhenitsyn's historical novel, *The Red Wheel*, in the context of a philosophy and theology of history. To provide philosophical categories for a first reading, Purcell draws upon philosopher of history Eric Voegelin's understanding of Homer and Greek tragedy, along with his reading of Nazism. Purcell then turns to the Italian theologian Piero Coda's reading of Sergei Bulgakov for theological clarifications of the Russian tragedy in the light of the forsakenness of the Crucified Christ.

News and Views: This issue features two articles on the art of education that we believe contribute new ideas to the field.

- **“The Narrative Imagination: Theological Insights on Teaching”** by James Parsons and William Frick. Parsons and Frick present the “Narrative Imagination,” which they define as the act of teachers seeing within students a story not yet fulfilled. The teaching task, they suggest, lies in teachers engaging students' stories in ways that acknowledge the teachers' status without overpowering their students. The authors ask a central question: Recognizing that our work and lives are intermingled with the lives of our students, how might we engage students in ways that aid their learning and “inspirit” their futures? To answer this question, they explore how a narrative understanding of personhood acknowledges growth and

possibility, builds community, and helps teachers see their students as living possibilities.

- **“Theoretical Foundations for Studying the Cube of Love: Chiara Lubich’s Spirituality of Communion, Abraham Heschel’s ‘Transitive’ Perspective of Human Nature, and Robert Selman’s Theory of Social Awareness”** by Ronald Ramer, Steven Rogg, and Thomas Masters. The authors note how the Cube of Love used in today’s classrooms facilitates the living out of Trinitarian relationships inherent in a spirituality of communion. Drawing on Abraham Heschel’s writings regarding the “transitive” nature of human experience and on Robert Selman’s exploration of the stages of growth in social awareness, they suggest that the Cube’s effectiveness may lie in its coherence with authentic human relationships and with the insights of developmental psychology.

Book Reviews:

- Joseph Sievers and Miriam Girardi, *Walking Together: Jews and Christians in Dialogue in Rome, Jerusalem, and Buenos Aires* (Rome: Città Nuova, 2013), reviewed by John Pawliowski.
- David Ranson, *Between the “Mysticism of Politics” and the “Politics of Mysticism”: Interpreting New Pathways of Holiness within the Roman Catholic Tradition* (Adelaide, S.A.: ATF Theology Press, 2014), reviewed by Brendan Purcell.