

Press release – June 26, 2018

## **Genfest: Barriers and rejections are not the final word**

*The main topic for the world meeting of Focolare Youth will be personal, social and political borders. This event which will take place in Manila, the Philippines from 6-8 July 2018 will be broadcast through live streaming.*

### **Defending borders, enforcing rejection, alliances between states to protect national identities and economies, restrictions to control migratory flows.** What is behind these **key-words**?

“Very often building some sort of fence or having an attitude of safe keeping stems from fear” – explains Maria Voce, president of the Focolari. “Yet, this does not seem to be the definite solution for young people. Instead they believe that **borders are horizons, points of departure, an enriching diversity**”.

This is why the **Focolari Youth** have opted for the important theme of borders - hence the title “Beyond all borders” - for **their next world event that will be held in Manila from 6 to 8 July**. They want to invite for a brave change of outlook on peoples, cultures and economies. They claim that a radical change is needed in such times of exasperation of particularisms and social closures.

Born in 1973 from an idea of Chiara Lubich, founder of the Focolari, the Genfest arrives at its eleventh edition; **for the first time it will be held outside Europe. It will take place in the capital city of the Philippines from 6 to 8 July and 6,000 young people**, aged 18 to 30 years, are expected to attend. Thousands of others will participate in the other **23 local editions** that are being prepared.

“**We chose Asia** because six out every ten young people in the world live there” - says Kiara Lauren, a Filipina, who is one of the **Youth for a United World**, promoters of the event. “Despite its socio-economic problems and differences, this continent speaks to the world about hope and desire for change. We do not recognize ourselves in this international geo-political context that quite often sacrifices whole peoples for the sake of some élite. We would like individuals and our nations to look beyond their personal, cultural, religious and political boundaries, to meet others and let themselves be contaminated by diversity. The **Genfest will be a unique laboratory in the world**: those who will take part in it will find the necessary instruments to change themselves and their environment. As Pope Francis augured during his recent visit to Loppiano, they will be able to change “I” into “we”.

### **The programme: sharing and working**

A lot of space will be given to **experiences**: the joint effort of young Americans and Mexicans on the border between their two countries; gestures of help and reconciliation in situations of conflict in Africa and the Middle East; supporting and welcoming people that live in refugee camps; commitment to a new way of doing politics, dialogue between different religions, etc.

On July 7, in the afternoon, the Genfest is proposing the activity: **Hands for Humanity**. Those present will be able to participate in any one of 12 activities of solidarity and urban redevelopment that will be organized in different parts of Manila. Through these activities one can find out that small gestures can bring change and also have the opportunity to collect imitable ideas that can be exported to one's own country.

### **Explo and Forum: learn and experience peace**

Then, there is the Explo, an acronym composed by the words "Exposition" and Exploration": this is an interactive exhibition that leads the visitor through an immersive sensorial experience of the history of humanity, from the perspective of universal fraternity: "So it is not the history we know" - says Erika Ivacson, a Hungarian artist, curator of the exhibition - "made of wars, conquests, armistices. Instead, we will relate what has made humanity progress from the point of view of peace, of friendship between individuals, peoples and cultures. The last stage will be entirely dedicated to the question: and what can I do? ".

There will be **110 forums and workshops** on key issues about the construction of open and supportive societies: from urban cleaning techniques and care of the territory, to social enterprise forms, to the management of personal and political conflicts, to the use of social media for peace, and much more.

### **Follow the Genfest**

It will be possible to follow the **live streaming**, broadcast in English with translations in French, Italian, Portuguese and Spanish through the Youth for a United World website: <http://www.y4uw.org/live>

**Timetable live streaming** (Manila time, UTC/GMT +8 ore):

6 July: 16-18:30 e 20-21:45

7 July: 17:45-18:45 e 20-21:45

8 July: 10:30-13

**Social media** regarding the event:

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/genfest/](http://www.facebook.com/genfest/) o @genfest

Twitter: [https://twitter.com/genfest\\_en](https://twitter.com/genfest_en) o @genfest\_en

Instagram: [www.instagram.com/genfest.official/](http://www.instagram.com/genfest.official/)

Youtube: genfest-official or <https://www.youtube.com/c/GenfestOfficial>

### **Attachments:**

[Genfest Programme](#)

[Youth for a United World](#)

[Genfest at Manila](#)

[What is the Genfest](#)

### **Press Office**

**Stefania Tanesini**

Cell. +63 9664661016

Whatsapp +39 338 5658244

[stefania.tanesini@focolare.org](mailto:stefania.tanesini@focolare.org)