

The Economy of **Communion**

a n e w c u l t u r e

ECONOMY OF COMMUNION

• A NEW CULTURE

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grazie CHIARA

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a new culture**

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A CLEAR (CHIARA) VOICE

Alberto Ferrucci

"In 2001 the city of Genoa gave Chiara an honorary citizenship right in the year of the G8 meeting, a moment when the distance among human beings appeared very big. Today 2008 seems to us again an emblematic year, in which the strength of the Economy can do nothing, if it is not united with other idealities like those advocated by the Founder of the Focolare Movement".

These words expressed by Claudio Burlando, the President of the Ligurian Region, resounded in the very crowded hall of the Major Council of the Ducal Palace, where the Genovese Authorities chose to remember the honor they gave Chiara 7 years before. In that same Hall Cardinal Bagnasco, after giving Maria Voce, the new president of the Focolare Movement, the warm greetings from the Italian Bishops, he formulated to her his personal wish, full of meaning: that the Work of Mary may always be a Chiara (Clear in Italian) Voice in the Church and in the World. He wished her a Clear Voice (Chiara Voce), capable to communicate to humanity the gifts of the Spirit, legacy of the Movement and the inspirations necessary to build the new humanism which the representatives of the various institutions wished for in a choral voice so as to discern a way to a common sustainable future. They were the gifts which, above all in her last years of her life, Chiara felt the urgency they could inundate all the realms of human endeavors, for which they were destined.

The Cardinal wish for a Chiara Voce (Clear Voice) reminded us of the greeting "Ciao Chiara" with which all of us young people were addressed by Igino Giordani, a great writer and politician co-founder of the Focolare, today in the process of beatification. He used to greet us in this way to impress in our souls that it would be our task to spread and share the gifts of the Charism and that we could do it only by living the Gospel with the same intensity and fullness of Chiara. Our Maria Voce is well aware of it. When the young people asked her what to do now, she answered: "there where you work, you must feel you are all presidents of the Work of Mary".

This same wish to be a Clear Voice (a Voce Chiara), we feel is also for us while we dialogue with the contemporary economic culture, strong with the concrete reality of our businesses. Each one of them in the various parts of the world where they work, big or small it may be, represents a point of contact on which the whole project rests. And it is a responsibility, a burden that becomes light when it is carried in communion with all who operate in it and also with those working in the new earth and new heavens. I mean our entrepreneurs up in heaven and Chiara, Jesus and Mary.

This is a dimension we can experience if we live the New Comandment of the Gospel.

To favor this dialogue we made commitments on several fronts: to improve our statements of account (page 12), to steer our choice of our projects so that they truly will rescue our brothers and sisters from poverty (pages 8 and 9) and they may spread a new anthropology (page 10), task entrusted also to the 20 new dissertations, that we are able to share with you in this issue of our magazine (pages 22-26).

To send this news brief all over the world to all those who are interested in it, our "small EoC Synod", of 140 representatives held last November (page 19) took on the commitment to send it personally, not in a printed form. Those people also pledged to translate it into several other languages and make it available in our web site www.edconline.org which recently was revived and enriched (page 11). We have also decided to hold EoC conventions in each Zone and to have one big International Convention in Brazil to celebrate the 20 years of the EoC in May 2011. At that point we will re-define the "Guidelines on how to conduct an EoC business" work began in the 2007 meeting (page 20).

On that occasion we also felt the precious need to have more continuity with other reality involved in other social projects, like that of the Meninos de Rua (page 14 and 15).

Then about what is new for the EoC businesses, Teresa Ganzon (page 16) share how from their desire to rescue the poor from exclusion from society her bank invented a new activity apt to offer new jobs especially to the young while Armando Torelli (page 18) confirms to us his decision to open a new branch in a Business Park thousands of miles far from its main headquarters with the following words: *"The economic crisis made the cost of money run up, it is not the right moment to make new investments. However I feel our operating withing the EoC must not follow the economic indicators of the present time. It is a time to be reborn, to be like children, to give everything andf to believe. This was confirmed by the 'Banco do Nordeste' who offered us an important line of credit... A beautiful sign from God"*.

Like after the death on a cross of their leader, the Emmaus disciples were disappointed, after Chiara's departure, we too may experience discomfort. However if we live "communion", we too will feel, like those disciples, our heat burn within us, and we will understand much better, within the plans of Providence which guides history, the meaning of the present financial, social and ecological disasters and we will aquire the abilituy to read the signs of the time and the way to the resurrection.



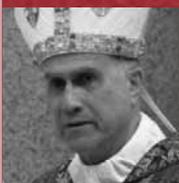
GREETINGS TO CHIARA

■ Rome, Saint Paul's Cathedral
Chiara Lubich's Funeral Services
March 18th 2008



Benedict XVI remembers Chiara Lubich in a letter to Cardinal Bertone

"...There are many reasons for thanking the Lord for the gift given to the Church of this woman of intrepid faith, humble messenger of hope and peace, founder of a vast spiritual family that embraces many fields of evangelization.... The thought of the Pope was her source of direction and guidance. Moreover, looking at the initiatives that she gave rise to, one could affirm that she had an almost prophetic capacity to intuit and anticipate the thought of the Pope in her actions. Her legacy now passes onto her spiritual family: the Virgin Mary, a constant model and reference point for Chiara, help ...contributing to make the Church. ... to always be more home and school of communion."



Card. Tarcisio Bertone

"The XX century is the century in which God gave life to countless heroic men and women... Chiara Lubich found her place in this constellation with a silent and humble style, ... gave life to people who would themselves be love... In Brazil, in order to meet the needs of the many who lived in poverty on the outskirts of cities, she launched the project for an "economy of communion in freedom," giving rise to a new economic theory and praxis based on fraternity, for a sustainable development in favor of all. May the Lord grant that many scholars and economic experts take on the economy of communion as a viable resource to shape a new shared world order!"

■ Recife, Brazil, Catholic University of Pernambuco
Commemoration of Chiara's Honorary Doctorate in Economy
May 29th 2008



Pedro Rubens Ferreira, SJ Chancellor of the Catholic University of Pernambuco
"Chiara Lubich 'promoted justice' with a live spirituality and with vigorous actions, having an influence on the economic order to correct the selfish drift imposed by capitalism and to re-invent solidarity, the richness of our ancestors and of the early and medieval societies. With a Jesuit expression she was a courageous 'contemplative in action' in a systematic research through the various field of knowledge, how to overcome poverty"



Roberto Cintra,
professor of the Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro
"The Light God gave Chiara is capable to respond to all the questions of the people of today and of always"

■ Genoa, Ducale Palace
Commemoration of the citizenship award
29 November 2008

Marta Vincenzi,
Mayor of Genoa
"the challenges of the present time cannot be resolved by politics or by the traditional economy, but by universal brotherhood sought and pursued with passion and radicalism... in order to put together all human beings and overcome diversities. Chiara, extraordinary woman, like other women from Genoa were, from Saint Catherine to Saint Virginia, to extraordinary figures of lay women... who made of Genoa a city in which voluntary activities are a strong factor... thanks to Chiara for her message"



Alessandro Repetto,
President of the Genoa Province
"Chiara's exalting message of simplicity, that has made human the Christian message to the point of making the concrete entity of the Roberto Tassano Social Cooperatives, a masterpiece realized by the Movement with the Economy of Communion. We still need Chiara so that human relationships will always be beautified by Love"



Maria Voce
"I'm happy and honored to be able to represent here the whole world-wide Focolare Movement at this ceremony to remember the encounter of 7 years ago between Chiara and the city of Genoa. It is not just a way to remember Chiara but it will be a matter of taking in her legacy which today lives and generates fruits more than ever. It is a legacy made up of an inexhaustible ability for positive actions also within the hardships and potentialities of today and of a profound mysticism, the experience of God-Love shared with many others. That day much was said by Chiara and about Chiara. From those words it appears clearly that there was a strong bond between her and this city. It seems clear that she succeeded, as many other great souls did, to enter into it and to discover its soul.... The gift that I would like to leave here for all of you, for this beloved city of Genoa, is the attempt to draw, looking at how Chiara acted, a strategy of how to encounter the city, any city"



MY ENCOUNTER WITH CHIARA

Stefano
Zamagni



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It was through a meeting of the Economy of Communion that I met Chiara almost 15 years ago. That meeting laid the foundation for a deep and fruitful friendship. Much has already been said and written about Chiara, her Charism, her thought and her work. Although I'm in a deeply emotional state, I would like to add a few lines to the already ample literature around this human figure, truly extraordinary. It is truly a privilege to speak, very briefly, about those characteristic traits of her personality, that were out of the ordinary and that struck me the most and stayed with me.

The first is her sensitivity that was like a declaration of trust in life. A person who is sensitive pays attention to and reveres others, is ready to see, is interested in new discoveries. Chiara chose to elevate sensitivity to an operational principle for the Movement she founded. An eloquent sign of this concept's importance to all the Focolarini is the very special attention they give to caring for everything that is beautiful as a way to regain truth and goodness.

You may recall the famous sentence by Hans von Balthasar: "in a world without beauty also goodness loses its attraction... In a world that believes it is incapable of affirming beauty, the arguments in favor of the truth also lose their strength". Chiara made this sentence her own and transformed it into good works. Precisely because Chiara was convinced that only beauty attracts love, she dedicated a great deal of energy to put us on our guard against one of the most insidious risks of our civilization – that beauty be reduced to nothing more than a consumer good from which we seek immediate enjoyment.

Chiara's love for beauty does not come from a vague esthetic sense; rather, it is an expression

of her deep realization that ugliness in our cities and in our living places tends to produce moral ugliness. This is how I have come to understand the space and attention devoted, within the Movement, to various artistic expressions, from music to theater, from painting to literature.

A second characteristic of Chiara's was her growing attention toward ways of thinking and toward culture in general. Chiara showed us what it really means to promote culture. Culture is like a tree; it is something that must grow. Thomas Elliot admonished us that we can't build a tree; we can plant it and then wait for it to mature in due time.

However we can take care of it and accelerate its growth. The birth of the new Sophia University is just the last of her unimaginable realizations. The fact is that Chiara had understood, since the beginning of her walk of faith, that it is knowledge which creates love. The love that comes from need is frail: the love that comes from knowledge is overabundant. In large portions of our contemporary conscience, God is neither affirmed or denied. Rather He is restricted to the past in the sense that any question about Him today generates no interest, neither cultural nor emotional. God could very well exist, but we don't care. It is against this sort of spiritual numbness the Chiara's words and actions have been especially effective, most of all at the level of dialogue about the economy.

Finally, the patient yet tireless fight against the pseudo-culture of the catastrophe and of our whining and complaining is the other aspect of her message and of Chiara's legacy. Chiara had well understood that as bad a person can be, he or she is not capable of absolute evil. And therefore it is senseless to give into the desperate conclusions by Kafka accor-

ding to which "there is a point of arrival but no way to get there". For the Focolarini there is a way to get there and it is to bring into the agora, not only the themes of justice and freedom, but also the theme of brotherhood, and, further, to bring into economic sphere the theme of reciprocity as gratuitousness.

In truth, if politics' role is taking care of human beings, then its foundation has to be explored in the idea of "staying with". On the other hand, if the ultimate purpose of the economy is to prepare the conditions to make life happy, that is, human, then in order to understand the profound identity of the economic behavior, we need to adopt the perspective of the person who takes action. We cannot reach this deep understanding if we hold onto a neutral, third person perspective, as used in the doctrine of natural law, or if we remain like the impartial onlooker found in the many types of contractual forms. The political movement for unity and the economy of communion are mature fruits of Chiara's original vital and generous inspiration.

She was never satisfied with charity as *philia* although she did not disdain it. The great contribution Chiara offered to the culture of post modernity is that of giving back charity as *agape* to the public sphere, after modernity enclosed it within the sphere of the private realm.

I would like to end with an epigram that Goëte placed on the lips of the angels as they tore away Faust's soul from the demon's clutches: "Those who make the effort to continually advance are those we can save". Chiara made the effort to advance – always and constantly – and now she is among the blessed. Praise be to Her and to her witness of life, so that more lives like hers may be generated in those who follow her footsteps.

THE CHIARAFUL ECONOMY

Luigino
Bruni



The EoC is an economic project born from a Charism, from a gift for today's humanity. We mentioned it several times in this Newsletter, including this issue, when we said that every economic experience (and not only economic, born from a Charism, has some specific points of its own, which make it different from other experiences born instead from interests and the pursuit of profits. The guiding premise of a charismatic economy is specifically the principle of gratuitousness; we act, we work, we produce, but we do use or make an instrument of people, things and ourselves. We rather respect and love them as good in themselves.

Now let us ask ourselves: is there a specific aspect of the Charism of Unity from which the EoC is born, inside the great charismatic history of yesterday and today? What are its consequences in the civil and economic practice? The two fundamental premise (which are also a medal with two faces) of the Charism of Unity, are, as Chiara always reminded us, Unity and Jesus Forsaken.

Unity that we could also call "communion", is the longing that animates those who participate in this Charism, and that drives them to build unity and to heal disunity in all realms, in view of universal brotherhood, of a united world.

Jesus Forsaken in particular is the possibility to build unity and to heal the wounds of disunity. Jesus Forsaken (i.e.

Jesus viewed in the moment of His cry of abandonment on the cross) tells us something more specific: it is not mainly or only the choice to search for and love suffering in general, but that particular type of suffering born from broken relationships, from the lack of communion, from any abandonment.

From this also comes what is specific in the economic field. I will just outline a few characteristics.

First of all, if the Economy of Communion was born from the Charism of Unity, we can understand that it is not by chance, that the typical characteristic of the Charism of Unity related to goods is communion: the goods become occasions and places of communion, for the creation of fraternal relationships.

We can also understand therefore what is specific about the economy of Chiara or the Chiaraful economy, in relationship to an immense Charism like that of Saint Francis. The poor of Assisi points to poverty as an authentic way to free ourselves from merchandise to search for the only Good who is God.

Chiara (who loved the spirituality of Saint Francis so much and who was formed as a young woman in that Charism), proposes to us the same radicalism in relation to the goods, but asking us to put them in common with others, in view of the unity of all. This "in view of unity" is very important, because it stops us from being closed off, outcome

that communion can always produce and instead it opens us up to universal brotherhood. It follows that even in a (hypothetical) world without poor, the life style of our Charism of Unity would still be the communion of goods, because goods become really goods (good things) when they are put in common. The goods not shared are always way to unhappiness, even in an opulent world. How much unhappiness there is in our rich cities but without the celebration of communion!

The goods held tight, like a jealous possession, in reality impoverish the owner, because it deprives him or her of the ability to give and to reciprocate, which is the true human patrimony that leads us to happiness (like many studies by now abundantly highlight).

In addition, the Charism of Unity tells us that the various forms of poverty have very much to do with relationships and much less than we commonly think, with merchandise and money.

We fall into poverty (individuals as well as communities and peoples) when relationships get sick. For this reason when, with the profits we give, we try to help a poor person, the first help is the gratuitous offer of a new relationship. Without this relational "primacy", no help is effective from the perspective of communion.

From this vision of poverty is born also a typical way of interpreting, culturally and





theoretically, poverty. It always has to do with wrong or sick relationships.

The treatment of every form of indigence is always primarily a treatment of relationships: interpersonal relationships, but also to try to change power relationships, political ones, institutional ones or also within the natural environment.

Therefore, to give you an example, when entering in relationship with a family living in poverty, the point to start with is to understand what does not work between husband and wife, between children and parents, within the community.

In these cases, before giving any other material help, the real important intervention is to re-activate the communion of goods within the local community and only later we can launch initiatives of concrete help. This is, besides, a modality of social action in line with the “principle of subsidiary” of the Social Doctrine of the Church.

This is also the reason why the EoC interventions are turned to people inserted into live communities, otherwise we would not have those characteristics that allow the development of communion (which is the purpose of the project). This aspect represents at the same time the limit and the prophecy of the EoC.

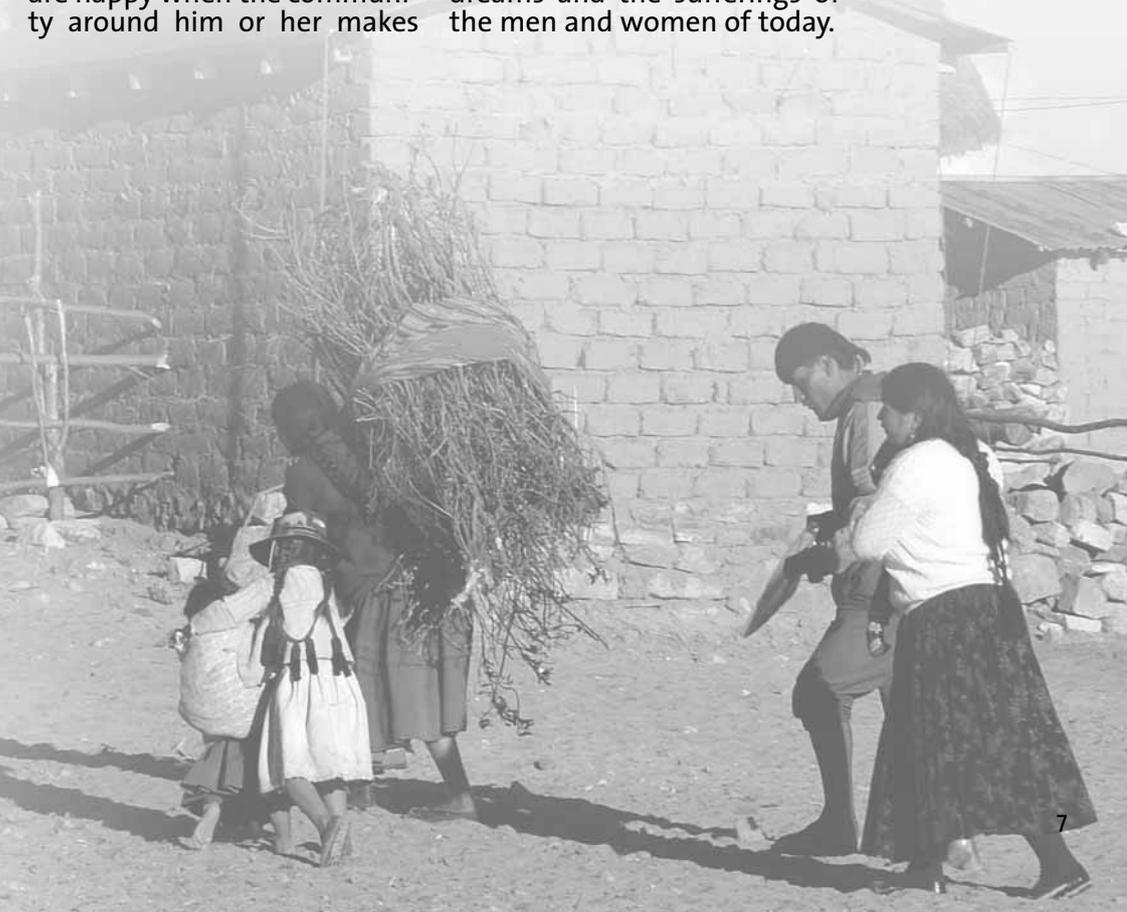
One last note

If it is true that richness which is not shared does not bring happiness, it is also true that

poverty is not sufficient, even when chosen freely, to live a good life. It is not enough to be poor, to be the poor of the Gospel that Jesus calls blessed! We need to experience, even now, (and not only in Paradise) that “Kingdom of Heaven”: the sentence of the beatitudes, “blessed are the poor” is not true, if it is not complete. It requires in fact “because theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven”. If from the experience of poverty you do not have the Kingdom of Heaven, poverty is suffering and death. The Kingdom of Heavens means communion, celebration, sharing. This is why the Gospel poor and the poor of the EoC, are happy when the community around him or her makes

them experience, with communion, the Kingdom of Heavens, and the poverty of the poor becomes richness for them and for the community. The Chiaraful Economy teaches us and makes us live, both in abundance and in poverty, the happiness born only from communion.

Today during this crisis season, the economy and the market need certainly new rules but most of all they have a vital need of communion, of happiness, of celebration and of gratuitousness: the EoC, the “Chiaraful” economy, producing these goods, gives an all special and quite relevant contribution of her own, to the dreams and the sufferings of the men and women of today.



THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE EoC PROFITS

Leo Andringa

To the indigents

For quite some time the Economy of Communion Central Commission, responsible to manage both the enterprises's EoC profits and the "extraordinary contributions", feels the strong need to make the utilization of the available funds more transparent. The "extraordinary help" was began in 1994 because of the need to integrate the revenues from the businesses, still insufficient to cover all the needs of our poor.

By doing this we want to increase the "communion" among everyone, keeping in mind that in our enterprises operate people of all convictions and most diverse cultures. We feel it is important therefore that we pass on the economic, cultural and human values of the EoC project.

It was for this reason that in 2008 the enterprises were asked to send half of the shared profits, the ones assigned to the poor, to Action for a United World (AMU), the NGO of the Focolare Movement, born to finance development projects in the world areas with most difficulties.

AMU studies, in conjunction with the EoC, the projects to finance by verifying their economic feasibility and their capacity to generate productive activities, so as to free the indigents from their condition. AMU is able to document for the enterprises how the money was distributed and the achieved results, encouraging the businesses to produce new profits to share.

By doing this we make the EoC project more transparent for the aspect of our public communications and we offer the Italian businesses the possibility to deduct their contributions from their taxes.

The EoC is committed to continue to further a development model, with the dignity of the person and communion, at the center. Those who give and those who receive belong to the same community, and the relationship is based on mutual love which leads us to help the person to get out of poverty. It is a long and difficult road and a



new challenge. Since 2007 we differentiated the use of the available funds. For the persons needing continuous help, the elderly and the chronically ill, we provided help through our communion of goods and the extraordinary help, while most of the funds of the EoC businesses was used for temporary support to people who lost their job, had to finish their studies, or for sudden illnesses or calamities.

At the same time we activated new forms of help, such as credit and micro-credit, with the requirement to return the funds, with equal dignity between those who receive and those who give.

With these new instruments the EoC commissions, in some parts of the world, were able to start, together with their poor, new productive activities.

Finally in October 2008, Francesco Tortorella, the expert collaborator of AMU, has come to be with the EoC, assuming the task to initiate the projects, to evaluate the various forms of temporary help and to take care of the operational aspects of the collaboration between the EoC and Amu.

To make this rapport even stronger and to follow from within the AMU's operations, Leo Andringa will also be a member of their board.

For the development of new men and women

Chiara knew from the start that we can't have a new economy without new people: for this reason the money assigned to education and people spiritual development is strategically the most

important for the development of the project and for its impact on the contemporary culture.

In the early years this part of the money was assigned to support our press, mostly in the areas of the world where the Movement was just beginning; to allow young people take part in our schools of spiritual and human formation; and for the building development of our small cities.

From now on, however, a large amount on the money of the shared profits earmarked for education will be assigned to support the new University Sophia (200 thousand Euros), especially to cover scholarships for young people from all over the world who may be without the necessary funds to cover the living expenses and the university fees.

This is a good investment, easily shared also by people of different cultures, since the idea that the strategies offered by politicians and economist are not sufficient and that we need a turning point toward a culture of sharing, of interdependence, of universal brotherhood, i.e. the culture of Sophia, is already widespread and widely accepted.

The rest of the profit sharing will be agreed upon between the EoC Central Commission and the central leaders of the Focolare Movement, and it will be for educational projects and conventions oriented toward the incarnation of the various aspects of our culture of communion.

Since it is impossible to move also this part of the money through AMU for the fact that, by our statute, it can't offer courses or seminars within Europe, we have asked the EoC enterprises to send, for the time being, the funds of their profits for this third part, to the juridical agency of the Focolare, the PAFOM.

With this arrangement the University Sophia will provide the public documentation of the use of funds through their budget and the Central Commission will have to document what is left.



PROJECTS TO CREATE NEW JOBS

Francesco Tortorella

Since the early times of the Focolare Movement in Trento, during the II World War, the Charism of Unity had made clear the imperative to act so that “no needy were among them”, as it was in the early times of Christianity.

In the eighties the Movement had faced systematically the world of economy and of work with all the social problems connected to it and what emerged was the need for an entity dedicated to the support and development of the social activities that were inspired by the Charism all over the world.

This is how AMU (Action for a United World) was started; today it is a agency recognized by the Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs for international cooperation. In the nineties AMU began to collaborate with the EoC in distributing funds for emergency situations, for the necessary help to elderly and ill people and beyond and to help to reach the poor's ransom from indigence through professional training and the creation of independent jobs.

These interventions were carried out by means of small productive projects financed with sunk capitals or through small unsecured loans or loans with a very low interest rate.

The commitment for the EoC and AMU is growing and demanding and we are working so that these projects will increase both in number and in quality.

Among the projects started in these last years we can remember:

- **Croatia:** a stocking factory in Krizevci.

Called “Stella (Star)and Fari (Beacons)” it was born in the Faro small city (Beacon) in order to generate new jobs for young people and women: it has now 12 employees. With the Eoc funds in 2007 for them we purchased a machine for making the fabric, creating a new job for a woman mother of two children.

Year	Project	Amount (euro)	Beneficiaries	Country
2006	1	12,121.76	20	Brazil
2007	11	24,443.10	75	Brazil, Bulgaria, Croatia, Macedonia, Serbia
2008	5	12,864.72	30	Bulgaria, Chile, Indonesia
2009	15	52,518.78	120	Argentina, Brazil, Croatia, Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Indonesia, Mexico



- **Serbia:** mushrooms cultivation in Becej.

It is a family run activity. Thanks to a small loan they equipped the rooms with heating, ventilation and irrigation and they purchased a van to make their deliveries by car rather than by bike.

- **Brazil:** bakery/gelateria in Benevides.

They fixed up the rooms and they purchased the necessary equipments to start production. This activity employs 4 persons full time and two part time. It is located within the grounds of the Mariapolis Gloria and it has become an important meeting place also for the people attending events in the small city.

Among the projects being developed in 2008:

- **Bulgaria:** fruit cultivation.

This activity is carried on by a young couple, parents of three children. The first year all went very well and they had already returned large part of the loan money. Last year however, because of the strong cold

which stopped the blooming of the cherry trees and then a drought which damaged the vine, they had to borrow more money to build support structures for the vine and for the purchase of fertilizers and fuel for the agricultural machinery.

- **Indonesia:** a “special supermarket” in Medan

In the northern part of the Island of Sumatra we financed a small supermarket where indispensable items are sold to indigent people who have access to special discounts, in some cases up to 50%. The prices to the public in general are lower than the market average which, allowing a small profit, makes the store economically efficient.

Thanks to the EoC contribution, the supermarket has a computerized system to check the prices and the warehouse. The management of the store activity has been entrusted to two young men, with a PHD in Economy, who work there full time, and 12 other young people who work part time.



THE EoC CULTURE AND SOPHIA

Giampietro Parolin

The joyous and solemn anthem sung by the choir of the students in the auditorium of Loppiano on the first of December 2008, has well sealed the historical moment we lived on that day. The birth of the University Institute Sophia is an event whose importance we can't even fathom. Chiara's dream became real. A university where the spirituality of unity becomes culture in a project whose master's title expresses the novelty: "Foundations and perspectives of a culture of unity".



Piero Coda

The Dean, Piero Coda, explained very well what Sophia wants to be: "a laboratory of spiritual education and research in which the profound bonds between life and thinking, between studying and experience, are reconnected. It is a University Institution looking at the future, attentive to the requests offered by our time so that the human beings of today and of tomorrow may become more and more world-human beings (people with a heart and mind open onto the whole world): uomo-mondo, as Chiara used to repeat".

Sophia is a location for dialogue in several dimensions. It is a dialogue of knowledge thanks to the interdisciplinary nature of the courses, which range from theology to management, from literature to ecology, just to mention a few of the 60 courses offered. A dialogue of persons and cultures witnessed by the internationality both of the professors and of the present students who come from 16 different countries of 4 continents. A dialogue with numerous and qualified civil, religious and academic institutions who at the



Maria Voce e il Collegio Docenti

inauguration encouraged and supported the new university. Sophia in Greek means divine wisdom but also human wisdom and knowledge.

As the French philosopher Hadot reminds us: true knowledge is in reality a knowing how to, and true knowing how to is to know how to do good.

This idea about knowledge brings us to highlighting the profound bond between Sophia and the EoC. A bond that lies in the common DNA and that is expressed in different facets, in different points of view. Sophia was born inheriting a precious patrimony of economic thinking, born around and on the thrust of the EoC project. On the other hand Sophia is potentially a formidable instrument for the shaping of those "new people" trained in and sodden with the "culture of giving" and of reciprocity, without which it is not possible to realise an Economy of Communion.

At the same time the EoC is a privileged laboratory of life and experience where we can test and see the theories, shared in the university halls, at work. Now,



even the physical closeness of the university campus to the Lionello Business Park will offer numerous opportunities of mutual growth for the students, the professors, the workers and the entrepreneurs.

We hope, however, that in some form the same may happen with all the EoC enterprises and with all those who have at heart a civil economy.

In this perspective we can fully perceive the meaning of the investment, also financial, that the EoC is taking upon itself for the new university: Sophia will in fact receive a substantial portion of the EoC profits earmarked for education.

In the past, too, the EoC supported the structures for spiritual education in the communion of the Focolare Movement (small cities, press, "Mariapolis centres"). With Sophia we are making a quality jump because there is the opportunity for a formation and education open to everyone and based on incarnate knowledge, that can become distinctive competencies in the economic world and for the enterprises.

Students at Sophia will be able to acquire tools to live the challenges of globalisation and the complexity of our time. But above all we can experience a "place of trust" as the Physicist Amaldi wished to everyone the day of the inauguration.

A trust even more necessary, given such demanding times.

THE NEW EoC WEB SITE

Antonella Ferrucci

Since last August 2008 the new EoC web site is on line at the Hurl: www.edc-online.org.

The site aspires to be a updated, captivating instrument for those who are interested in the Economy of Communion, offering news about upcoming events and new publications, giving a 360 degree overview of the project.

In addition the new site aims to be more and more of a "container" of topics relating to the EoC that can be read, printed, copied or sent to whomever we desire. There are articles, essays, talks at conventions, experiences of our businesses, accounts about how the funds are distributed



for example. There are also letters from our poor; it is hence an instrument of "announcement" of the EoC. The site is published in Italian but at the present time it is being translated into four additional languages: English, French, Portuguese, and Spanish. Other languages will be added in the future, like Slovak which we anticipate will be added on in a few months.

In comparison with the past the site has been enriched with new pages and it will continue to evolve according to the needs of the project. The site is open to a few different authors who can contribute directly. In fact the software supporting the new web pages (Joomla) allows a management of several people at



the same time from anywhere in the world. It is sufficient to have an internet connection and the qualification to be "authors".

All this makes the translations of various contents easier and it will be smoother to insert news and events from all over the world.

From this issue the international site will also be the main means to spread the EoC newsletter that will have mainly the electronic version on the Web.

To the devoted visitors of the site we suggest they register which will allow them to receive upcoming news from the site through newsletters and from now on they can enter interesting web links related to the EoC and much more!

Safe and pleasant navigation on www.edc-online.org!



HELP TO THE INDIGENTS IN 2008

Francesco Tortorella

Since its beginning in 1991, the EoC has always had a main objective: to contribute to realize a community without any needy people. This reality was present right away as a natural development from the spontaneous experience of the communion of goods that the Focolare Movement lived since the forties, first in Trento, and then slowly all over the world. For this reason the sharing of the profits of the EoC enterprises was lived from the early times in a spontaneous manner, in the spirit of a family, where, those who have more, simply put in common with those who have less.

If our spontaneity has contributed over the years to make the spirit of family and mutual trust grow among all the people involved in the EoC, as the number of the businesses and of the people involved increased, the need for transparency about the management of the help has grown at the same pace, as an additional contribution to communion and reciprocity. For this reason we have been working for a few years at the idea of a public report about the management of the EoC money disbursed to help our poor. The accounting for what we do became concrete in 2006 and 2007 with the publication of a synthesis of the way we distributed the funds, in this Newsletter.

Last year we took an additional step toward a more complete transparency presenting our *"Report about the distribution of the EoC funds for 2008"*. We printed it in 1000 copies and made it available on our EoC web site.

■ The 2008 Report

The 2008 report begins with a descriptive part where we present the EoC and our peculiar concept of poverty which characterizes it. The EoC in fact pla-

ces itself at the side of those experiences who view poverty not only as a wound to eliminate but also as a virtue to rediscover and an occasion to build fraternal relationships among persons and peoples. In this sense, the EoC does not aim so much at a "fight against poverty" but it rather generates relationships of communion also in economy. In those relationships, through which we carry out the free sharing of resources, time and experiences, we aim at defeating misery and have poverty acquire its most beautiful value, that of the free choice of a life lived in the gratuitous and mutual giving for and with the others.

The report goes on explaining how we utilize our financial resources in the different forms of direct and indirect help.

In our help for the indigents, we utilize one area of intervention, education: we offer to young people support to finish their studies, from the basic ones to University levels and to professional schools, so that they will have a better chance to have access to the job market and therefore a better future.

Our help to the indigents covers also assistance in emergency situations with contributions of support for basic needs such as food integration, medical assistance, improvements and maintenance of their homes.

We then offer the experiences of projects realised in the last few years in those same realms in various countries: Argentina, Brasil, Bulgaria, Chile, Croatia, Indonesia, Macedonia, The Democratic Republic of Congo, Santo Domingo, Serbia and Thailand.

Then, after a brief presentation of the collaboration between the EoC and AMU –the Association for a United World Onlus (non-profit organization of social utility), that takes care

of the management of the helping projects - the second part begins. Here we have the data about the help given in 2008, presented first in numbers for each country or world area, and then in a graphic form covering the beneficiaries of the help, the quantity of help distributed and the revenues of the project.

It was a complex piece of work which took a few months to complete because we had to do the elaboration of the statistics and the organization of the data. We collected all the data relative to those who benefited from the help (number, place, purpose, and type of help); those relative to the amounts utilized (amounts, destination, purpose and type of employment) and those relative to the revenues (amounts, place of origin, type of givers and contributions).

We also drew a program to obtain as many types of information as possible from the data in the form of graphics, a piece of work that will be useful in the coming years, since we want to further improve our sharing and our transparency in passing information on to you. According to the proposal made by Chiara in 1991, one part of the profits shared by the enterprises adhering to the EoC is used to start activities to help indigent people.

In these past years while we got the project going, however, this share of the profits has not been able yet to cover all the requests for help coming from all over the world. For this reason we integrated that amount of money with the personal spontaneous contributions given by the members of the Focolare Movement.

In the 2008 report we introduced both types of contributions: the financial one of the businesses' profits' sharing and the portion covered by personal contributions.





In elaborating the 2009 report we would like to increase our transparency, especially for the part related to the enterprises' profits sharing.

A sign of that reciprocity and full sharing that we want to be the main and most important feature of this experience, is to be able to know the fruits generated by the businesses from having put in common with much sacrifice and commitment part of the profits of their own activity.

We will therefore present in a distinct manner the development projects financed with the profits of the businesses – particularly those related to the creation of new jobs and education (basic, university and professional) and the actions of emergency help to the indigents financed by the personal contributions of the Focolare members.

Next year, as well, the heart of

the Report will continue to consist in experiences lived in many parts of the world, to be a witnesses of a new way of living cooperation and poverty, characterized by the centrality of the communion of relationships.

■ **The profits shared but not recorded**

Finally one last yet important consideration: the Report so far gives only news about the profits and financial contributions by the businesses, communicated to the Central EoC commission, that is the funds registered in the Zones all over the world by the EoC commissions and physically transferred to us.

The spirit of communion animating the businesses however drives them to offer a sharing much bigger than the amounts reported in our annual report.

We do not record for example what is used inside the business in favor of indigents or for cour-

ses of spiritual and human education aimed at generating new men and women.

Several enterprises host for long periods of time young people from other countries who wish to live the EoC experience and at the same time grow professionally and humanly. This is the case of Mundell and Associate in the USA who hosted several students from South America and of the Ancilla and Banco Kabajan enterprises in the Philippines who have been adopting this practice for years.

In addition, in many of our EoC businesses there is always the presence of differently able people who challenge the effectiveness of the market economy.

Their presence “attracts to the enterprises God’s benevolence” together with the admiration of suppliers and customers. In a purely accounting perspective, at least one part of their cost, should be considered as a shared profit with those who need that job, not only to live, but also to fulfil themselves as persons.

To have an idea of the profits that the businesses share inside the enterprise, is it enough to think of the Tassano Consortium within which 150 differently able persons work in two cooperatives, which are able to maintain the financial balance thanks to the other Coops of the Consortium, who give up part of their profits.

In 2007 the five Consortiums of Social Coops, adhering to the EoC, gave life to an association called “For Everyone” (refer to n.27 page 20) with the purpose of elaborating together and to better define a new type of enterprise. These enterprises, although they will maintain a strong social sensitiveness, are set up to generate profits, even if modest: they are the so called “Social Enterprises” already provided by the Italian legislation.

PEDAGOGY OF COMMUNION

The Forum of Solidar-One in Monte Carlo

Bernadette Esmenjaud

On the 30 of November the weather was terrible and the Flower Highway that makes us think of sun filled vacations at the sea, was instead immersed in snow and hail. Although no one was a tourist or a car racer, almost a thousand people arrived from Italy and from the South of France for the convention Solidar-One.

It was held at the Auditorium Ranieri of Monte Carlo. The idea was Carlo Pigino's who animated it with his friend Fabio Vitale and was supported by the members of the Focolare Communities in the South of France.

In its advertising Solidar-One declared: "Our Proposal for a World without misery does not rest on assistance but on reciprocity" and its goal was "a concrete action, a project of the Economy of Communion in favor of the emerging countries of Latin America, by collecting funds for the association <<Casa do Menor>> in order to give the young boys and girls of the favelas a chance to be deciding of their own destiny".

Before the Forum, we held the concert by the Gen Rosso International Music Group, and present to throw luster on the evening were also Jacques Biosson, State Secretary of the Principality of Monaco together with Wilfrid Deri, Responsible for International Cooperation. To deliver brief talks there were Fernando Viera de Moraes and Jean l'Hebron de Lussats, president of ECPACT-MC the first sponsor of the event, Jean Pierre Blanc, President of Caffé Malongo, a good example of equitable commerce, Mario Giro, one of the leaders for international activities of St. Egidio, Jean Luc Perron, director for the Agricultural Credit of a foundation with a capital of 50 million Euros for Micro-credit in several countries of the world, Alberto Ferrucci, President of New Humanity and Father Renato Chiera, founder of the Casa do Menor.

The Forum, moderated by Miche-



le Zanzucchi, Director of Città Nuova, was structured in talks by those present with an interval for a Video by Emmanuel Faber, Managing Director of Daone, who described the micro-credit projects born in a joint venture with Mohamed Yunus, the Nobel Prize for Peace, founder of the Grameen Bank. Yunus himself at the end of the forum sent a video recorded message.

At the conclusion of the Forum, after Alberto Ferrucci presented the Economy of Communion project, Fr. Renato Chiera shook the hall presenting the crude reality of the thousands of street children whom he welcomes in his homes in the peripheries of the large cities of Latin America, beginning with the most difficult neighborhoods of Rio de Janeiro, the Baixada Fluminense.

He said: "we understood that the main tragedy is not to be poor, it is to be children of no one, not to be loved by anyone; it is the lack of the presence of someone who loves you, who becomes your reference point, around whom you build a harmonic personality. The process of recovery begins only and if our young people run into a relationship with someone who makes them feel beloved children. The fundamental point is this: to have the presence of someone who makes me feel I'm a son or a daughter and calls me to lift myself up and to live.

Our boys and girls stay in our homes not because they find food, education or a profession, but only because and if they feel loved. If no one loves them they are vagabonds, they feel foreign

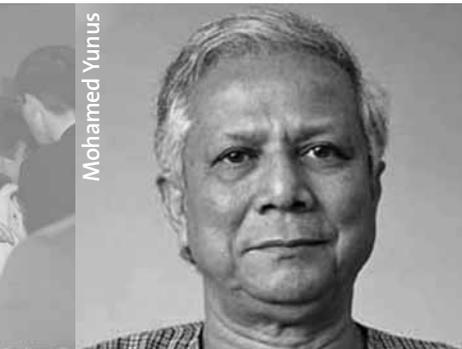
in any place, they do not have a home and they never feel at home anywhere and they wonder in the streets without direction and in all directions. They do not have any stimulus to live, to study, to work and they search unconsciously death in narcotraffic and drugs.

He or she who is not loved does not want to live and lets himself or herself die in many different forms, even here, in the 'first' world. These young people "deformed fetuses", when they are loved, they develop, they find security, a reference point, a home, they perceive themselves as having value and they are able to relate to the others as brothers or sisters and their lives become productive. These street young people sleep in a fetal position: they are looking for a uterus, for a uterus mom, a uterus dad, family, community, a uterus God."

Fr. Renato concluded saying: "We called this pedagogy of those not loved, a "pedagogy of communion" that goes beyond the pedagogy of the oppressed of Paolo Freire. It is a new psychological and pedagogical path that works. For this reason we have been going for 22 years to spread this new experience and culture of love to various parts of Brazil, to Rio, to Fortaleza, now to Santana do Ipanema and to Recife. We also went to Mozambique, we just visited it, because it calls us".

An applause without end broke out at the conclusion of his words, expressing the participation of the very many young people present, both those who came from Piedmont who had already





Mohamed Yunus



Renato Chiera



heard the experience and those from Toledo who arrived in two buses with their Vice Chancellor. A group from the prestigious Business School of Nizza was wondering how they could commit concretely in one of their Economy of Communion realizations, as a support for the works of Fr. Renato.

The EoC project for which the funds were collected, also by means of the small markets of solidarity which crowned the Auditorium with their multicolored stands – was the activity of work and entrepreneurship training started by Fr. Renato with an EoC entrepreneur from Brazil, Joao Bosco.

The Atelier Santa Flora produces purses and bags, and Joao and Dima Bosco, together with other EoC partners who want to live the Economy of Communion, gave them a new production laboratory in a rustic building at the complex in Mariapolis Ginetta. The managing company of the Business Park had renovated it for them.

Here, together with his operators, Joao teaches 24 young men and women to cut models, to sew, to refine, and complete the bags and purses. Those young people are, some, from the Case do Menor of Rio de Janeiro, Fortaleza, Santana do Ipanema and others from the groups of the “without land” from Branquinha-Alagoas. One part of the young people comes, after they are finished with their courses, from the school for children from the favelas of the Mariapolis Santa Maria of Recife. The goal of the formative education based on the method of learning by doing, and favoring creativity and innovation on the part of the young people, is to create five autonomous groups of production who, in their cities of origin, will be able to invent for themselves a future as micro-entrepreneurs.

For them, besides working, they are planning moments of human formative education for the aspects of health, security on the job, respect for the environment, human rights, ethics of work and

principles and practice of the Economy of Communion.

A program of formative education of “new people” therefore, to prepare them to be actors not only in their private family and affective lives, but also active members of the community, of the civil society, with the objective of the common good.

This is the novelty of this experiment: ex street-boys, adolescents and young people, without love and children of exclusion who are redeemed thanks to new vivifying relationships of communion. Young men and women who now collaborate to build and incarnate an economy of communion that will attack at their roots the causes of their many exclusions and tragedies.

And all this in Brazil, where the Economy of Communion was born and especially in Igarassu-Recife, where the spirituality of unity had been the first to arrive to Brazil with Ginetta Calliari. Prophetic signs and lights that make us hope.



A NEW WAY TO BE A BANK

Teresa Ganzon

The Economy of Communion in the Philippines was given the opportunity to open up to other experiences and other truths with which we share values regarding governance and to which we can propose our economic practices. The experience of Teresa Ganzon, a Philippine Banker and member of the International Commission of the Economy of communion.

On 2 February 2008 I was invited with my husband Francis to present in Paris our experiences with our rural bank, the Bangko Kabayan, to the UNESCO forum "Economy of Communion and organised Micro finance", in front of approximately 500 participants. This trip allowed us to hear the testimony of a group of French EoC entrepreneurs from two faith-based communities: Focolari and Emmanuel. It was new for us, since we had always associated the Economy of Communion to the Focolare Movement. To have become acquainted with this model has reinforced in us the possibility of expanding our economic proposals to those with whom we feel close to in the spirit of the Economy of Communion, even if they are coming from different communities of faith.

In June 2008, as a member of the "USAID MABS-RBAP" project on individual micro financing, I was assigned to participate in the "Global Summit for Women" in Hanoi and to explain micro finance as a new form of investment. Present were approximately 1000 various delegates from all over the world, including several ministers. I briefly introduced the experiences of the Bangko Kabayan, concentrating on our services and in particular on the programs for organised groups of micro-entrepreneurial women. As I pointed out at that time, the philosophy that allowed a traditional rural bank such as



ours to *move from an approach oriented towards guaranteed loans to an approach towards non guaranteed loans for the poor* is rooted in the Christian values of sharing typical of the Economy of Communion.

As a consequence of this new approach, we have adopted a strategy of wider participation, including a basic formative educational program for entrepreneurs. This has resulted in a growth of the enterprises of many of our customers. At the same time solidarity amongst them has grown. Now they are more independent, more able to manage their budgets, and are earning respect in their communities. Additionally, due to their ability to access banking services, their family incomes have increased.

Through the many relationships with special people whom I have met in those days, I now understand that I was not sufficiently aware of the importance of gender issues in the work place, despite the fact that I am a woman and a large percentage of the staff of the Bangko Kabayan are women. For example, we attempt now to ensure a flexible schedule for young mothers and help them to find medical services and educate the male workers on these kinds of issues, etc...

José Ignacio Mariscal and Laurent Mortreuil, president

and general secretary of the International Union of Christian Entrepreneurs (Uniapac), have expressed the desire to meet some entrepreneurs from the Economy of Communion, when they travel to Asia. They were interested to learn more about our proposals and to establish contacts within local organizations that share the values on which Uniapac is based: the centrality of each human in the enterprise, the universal destination of the goods, the subsidy, the solidarity, the preferential treatment of the poor, etc.

In June 2008 we organised in Manila a combined *EdC – Uniapac Forum*, in the course of which we had the opportunity to meet other entrepreneurs - we were some thirty in all. The exchange of experiences we had with them has enriched us in several practical aspects of our business life.

One example is that of our relationships with our employees. Wanting to put these relationships at the centre of our job, in our enterprise we try to make sure that every employee has a personal talk with their supervisor at least two times a year. We are not always certain that this happens because it is not a written rule.

We have found interesting the experience of an enterprise of José Mariscal, in which every employee is asked to complete a form containing all the relevant information of their history and their family so that their supervisor can always be current on their personal situation and their lives and can take these factors into account when dealing with them.

It really was an opportunity for us of the Philippines EoC to open up to other experiences and other realities with which we have values in common and to whom we can propose our economic style.

APPRECIATION FOR THE EoC AND ITS PROTAGONISTS

Antonella Ferrucci

The Argentinean Government confers an honor to Cristina Calvo

On the 25th of November 2008, on the occasion of the anniversary of the “Universal Declaration on the elimination of intolerance and discrimination because of personal convictions”, the Argentinean Ministry of Foreign Affairs, through the Ambassador Guillermo Olivieri, conferred honors to renown V.I.P.s, among whom Cristina Calvo a focolarina, member of the International EoC Commission, director of the Caritas for Latin America and of the Latin-American committee of the World Conference on religion and peace, *“for her commitment, both in the country as well as internationally, for her promotion of a pluralistic and inclusive society and for her work in building peace, dialogue and in the promotion of the inviolable rights of people”*.

Prize of the Agrofilm 2008 to the Video “Economy and communion meet”

Agrofilm 2008, an International Film Festival called “Bread and Peace for all the peoples” was held last October in Nitra, at the Center for Agricultural Research. The event was sponsored by the Ministry of Agriculture and the Environment of the Slovak Republic with the auspices of FAO.

Purpose of the Festival is to promote and spread new approaches and ideas in science, ecology and in the realm of problems and issues relating to rural areas and the life of the people living there, in the protection of natural resources and for the improvement of the quality of life.

One hundred and eleven films were presented, from all over the world. The Agrofilm 2008 jury selected 45 to see for the competition, and 39 as resources for information, conferring finally its diploma to “Economy



and Communion meet” produced for the International Association of the Economy of Communion by the English Company Charism production, with the intention to document the state of the art of the EoC project 16 years from its beginning, both from profile of the economic development and its cultural elaboration.

Doctor Mária Calfová, member of the Slovak committee of the Economy of Communion accepted the diploma conferral in the name of Charism and Production and of the Economy of Communion.



To “Civil Happiness”, the silver of the prize “Templeton Enterprise Award”

Last November on the 18th, at the New York University, Luigino Bruni was awarded the second prize of the “Templeton Enterprise Award” for his book “Civil Happiness: Economics and Human Flourishing in Historical

Perspective”. The book expands on the content of his other book “Economy, Happiness and the others” (Cittá Nuova, 2004). The author was the only non-American among the 6 who received an award (3 for the article category and 3 for the book category).

“I’m very happy about this recognition – said the author – especially because my book draws away from the pro-market positions of the jury. We were in the heart of Manhattan, at the NY University, in front of St. Patrick Cathedral.

My book’s cover was projected in a gigantic form on the screen on the stage where they held the ceremony.

There were 200 people, all dressed in evening attires, and we began with the American National Anthem sung by a soprano.

Sr. Templeton Junior, the current president and the board of the Foundation were also present. For me the beautiful thing about this award was that the book is dedicated to Chiara Lubich and it was translated in collaboration with Kitty Cocco Wolf, an American focolarina who reached heaven this Summer. I’m sure that both of them were spiritually present and rejoiced for this award. For this reason I want to dedicate this award to Chiara and Kitty”.



NEWS FROM LATIN AMERICA



Armando Tortelli



Stefania Lupetti



Ramon Cervino



Consiglio della Lumi

Alberto Ferrucci

Recife: Ginetta Industrial park

"Finally all permits arrived. My son Gabriel went with Marco to finalize all the last details for the starting of the activity in January": Armando Tortelli wrote. He, with Marcos Gugel from Recife, is opening in the Ginetta Industrial Park a Branch of the Prodieta Farmaceutica (the business that Armando manages with Roseli and three of their five children, in the Spartaco Industrial Park and in Curitiba, near San Paulo).

Armando went on to say: "it is a matter of giving everything. The economic crisis increased the cost of money and this is not the right time to make new investments. I feel however that our businesses within the EoC must not follow the world present indicators. It is the time to be reborn, to be childlike, to give everything and to believe. We had this confirmed by the "Banco do Nord Este" (Bank of the North-East), that, despite the financial turbulence, believed in our project and granted us an important line of credit at a lower rate interest than that of commercial Banks. A great sign from God".

The "EoC Nord Este" manages the Ginetta Industrial Park and its new President Alvaro Mesquita restored a rustic building there, to house the business of Dima and Joao Bosco which produces purses and bags, the Atelier Santa Flora. They also started a joint-venture with the association Meninos de Rua, based on a professional and entrepreneurial education for 24 young people from the different residences of the Case do Menor (Homes for minors) of Brazil (*refer to Art. on page 14*).

O'Higgins (Argentina): Solidaridad Business Park

A new business called Lumi was started in the Solidaridad Business Park. It produces chocolate covered

cookies, created to go with the coffee of the large chain of coffee stores Martinez from Buenos Aires.

Jorge German from Paraná and Jorge Perrin from O'Higgins derived the name of the new business from the "new name" given by Chiara to Luminosa, one of the first Argentinean Focolarine, who left for Heaven some years ago on the 7th of March, the day of the birth of the business. The last week of August 2008 twenty young people and seven entrepreneurs initiated together an experience that will be repeated twice in 2009; meeting with the EoC by means of a work camp to improve the infra structures of the Business Park.

San Paulo: Spartaco Industrial Park

The Prodieta Nutrição Clínica requested an area of 2000 square meters to install a new factory of diet products; the ECOAR launched a new product, Powder Soap; the Rotogine began its ISO certification and purchased the equipment for thermo shaping for mass production.

Belem: Francois Neveux Business Park

The business Feito por Nós (made for us) has a new web site www.feitopornos.com.br to present its thirty products obtained from Amazonian fruits, with favors unknown in many parts of the world. The Floriculture began the production of flowering orchids and of lettuce by means of hydroponics and offers courses on flower growing. Belem hosted the World Social Forum on January 29th and 30th 2009. The Political Movement for Unity and the ANPEC (National Association of the EoC) with local entrepreneurs interested in the EoC, took part in round tables to present the EoC.

Porto Alegre: Schools for Entrepreneurs

On November 28th 2008 we began a new school with one hundred and twenty people and 15 other cities connected via Internet, thanks to a new software that also provides the opportunity to take part with questions and comments. After the spiritual theme, an entrepreneur spoke of the concrete application followed by a few experiences and questions from the various cities. The Internet connection went on for one hour and ten minutes, followed by half an hour of sharing of experiences in groups. To extend the reach of this school the EoC Association will connect one city in half the states but to reach all of Brazil they will need to purchase new software.

The New Council of the ANPEC

On the 6th and 7th of last December the new council of the EoC National Association, ratified Armando Tortelli as president. The council also adopted a statute that expands the membership to include a representative of the Study Center Philadelphia and representatives from all the Brazilian zones. The Study Center is preparing the publication of the semi-annual scientific magazine on the EoC which is highly anticipated by the Academic Community. The magazine benefits from the participation of Maurizio Serafin and Claudia Herrero who are considered great assets. Recently a new book edited by the Study Center was adopted by a managing engineering professor who, in the prestigious Administration Course of the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul, added it to its course as a new alternative of management. Another professor who did not meet anyone of the EoC also cited the EoC as a new alternative.



THE EoC “MINI-SYNOD”

**Benedetto
Gui**

The Economy of Communion is at a turning point. After 17 years the early enthusiasm is no longer enough. We need a more mature participation, not to discourage us because of unsuccessful events and delays, but to help us persevere in establishing the foundation of an economy marked by fraternity and, at the same time, that is sustainable and vital, as Chiara's prophecy gave us a glimpse of.

This idea seems to be the best interpretative key for giving you a report on the annual meeting of those responsible for the EoC held in Castelgandolfo from the 23rd to the 26th of October 2008. Someone spoke of a “mini-synod” to characterize the purpose of the dialogue that took place and the re-launching of the EoC occurred there. In the capacity of “synodal fathers and mothers” the members of the European local commissions with a significant presence of people from other continents, all together we were about 150 people.

To speak of dialogue is very appropriate.

The working program revolved around the discussion of the rough-draft for the EoC regulations and an updated version of the “Guidelines on how to run an EoC business,” that we are planning to vote on at the 20th anniversary of the EoC that will be celebrated in Brazil in 2011 (a rough draft of the Guidelines which were further elaborated at the November Meeting of 2007, can be found right after this).

What emerged was, besides the diversity of ideas, the richness of the experience lived so far, which will always remain the most precious and vital thing to communicate and share.

There was dialogue also about the new census of the EoC enterprises that everyone saw as a new opportunity to have a relationship between the zonal commissions and the entrepreneurs. Some of the entrepreneurs had wished to revive their contact with the commissions but with time it had

become more sporadic; others felt the thrust to renew their assumed commitment, and yet others reached the conclusion they could not any more remain as EoC businesses because the other partners are not in agreement with the EoC principles, but in many cases they decided to stay within the EoC as individual persons.

The census is not based on sending forms to fill out; it just requires members to find the time and the proper moment for some in depth talks, often in the presence of at least two commission members. Only one commission was able to complete the count. The number obtained so far is 39 businesses that, in the course of time, had remained members and to some extent participated; of these 26 plan to continue because they have the necessary conditions to do it in a coherent manner.

One aspect that came into light almost everywhere during the contacts with the enterprises, is the silent distribution of profits that many do, keeping, for example, workers not fully productive on their work force, people who would otherwise have a hard time finding another job or supporting financially various initiatives of solidarity. This is why the request came from several sources to make visible all items in the project's budget's statistics through some form of “social budget.”

Another meaningful note is that many entrepreneurs intend to follow personally the Ideal life traced by Chiara Lubich, but they never expressed the intention to adhere to the EoC proposal, although they are familiar with it.

Is it a proposal that is considered too demanding, or in some cases poorly interpreted, or even maybe poorly presented? A commitment that one of the Italian commission gave itself is to keep in continuous contact with these entrepreneurs, sharing and valuing whatever they are already doing in the line of the EoC.

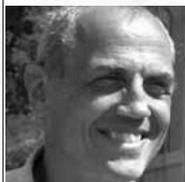
More than one attendee highlighted the opportunity and at the

same time the fruitfulness of always opening up the project to new subjects. These subjects might include groups and associations of entrepreneurs belonging to various churches or spiritual movements, particularly in France and in Germany (especially after the two ecumenical gatherings in Stuttgart).

The local commissions took upon themselves for the immediate future, among other tasks, two that are good to mention. The first is to continue the schools of spiritual education and formation for the EoC that seem to be just right to maintain and cultivate the identity of the projects and to assure the continuity of contacts among those who participate. For such purposes it seemed useful to meet regularly and with fixed dates as they do in Argentina.

The second commitment is the starting up or the development of the Productive or Industrial Parks, for these offer a unique opportunity to make the EoC visible from the outside and also provide the conditions that are particularly favorable to reach a true realization of the EoC project in its more demanding aspects, like the sharing of profits and the trying out new forms of organization and governance.

In the final session the sharing that took place spontaneously by many of the participants showed, together with the joy and gratitude for the fraternity lived in those days, the depth of their adherence to the Ideal of an economy of communion and the seriousness of their determination to realise it. The main positive note of the gathering was, as someone observed, the great fact that the EoC can count on people like these (and many others spread all over the world), capable of believing and going on with their commitment without waiting for directions or for anyone else, nor stopping in the face of the inevitable difficulties. The “Mini-Synod” of the EoC.



THE NEW GUIDELINES TO CONDUCT AN ECONOMY OF COMMUNION BUSINESS

We present here an updated proposal of the guidelines that the businesses adhering to the EoC have committed to follow since 1997. The guidelines have been elaborated so that each aspect of the business life may be faithful to the inspiration from which the project was born, and, at the same time, may make visible the effects of the logic of communion in the structures of economic life. In this version, fruit of the revision work initiated during the EoC International Convention of November 2007, have been re-touched above all in the first two sections, to make clearer the identity of the project and the following organizational principles.

■ Guidelines to conduct an Economy of Communion business

The Economy of Communion Project (EoC) intends to promote a vision of economic action committed to the integral promotion of people and society, by means of actions and behaviours inspired by brotherhood. While aiming for the satisfaction of the needs of ourselves and others by natural means, such economic action is oriented to the steadfast respect and full value of all people involved in the life of the business whether they are workers, customers, suppliers or financiers. With the same respect and value of those involved, the project looks to the relationship with civil society and its various institutions in the same manner, as well as to the natural environment.

The EoC works to stimulate the passage of economy and the entire society from a culture of having to a culture of giving and universal brotherhood.

We are promoting a free adhesion to these values on the part of the economic world thus implying the commitment of a constant thrust in the business's daily functions, according the practices described in the present guidelines.

■ Entrepreneurs, workers and business

The businesses that take part in the EoC define their mission by adopting communion as the fundamental value of their own organisation. They utilise techniques and organizational solutions that promote efficiency, participation in decision making and the spirit of teamwork.

Beginning with those of major responsibility both functions and positions within the organisation are clearly defined and carried out with a spirit of service.

The management style is one of

participation and oriented to the pursuit of specific, achievable and measurable objectives.

These objectives are evaluated in a transparent manner paying attention to the quality of the relationships of everyone involved with agreement on corrective actions for the improvement of the entire business.

The person is at the centre of the enterprise. The leaders of the business make a constant effort to value the talents of each worker, favoring their creativity, their assumption of responsibility, the growth of their professional competence, their ability to get along with everyone and their participation in defining and accomplishing the business's goals. When possible, explicit forms of help are provided to those finding themselves in difficulty.

The investment decisions are assumed by the business with the full understanding that they are made with the guarantee of the balance of the economic and financial systems. Special attention is given to initiatives that favour the development of new markets and new jobs.

The enterprise is managed in a way that promotes the attainment of profits. The entrepreneurs and their partners who are part of the EoC, commit to share their profits: first for the growth of the business, second, to help indigent people to get out of their situation, beginning with those sharing the same values, and for the spreading of the culture of giving, considering all three of equal importance. In the case in which only one of the partners is member of the EoC, the commitment to share according to the purposes of the EoC project, applies only to the part he owns in the business.

■ The relationship with customers, suppliers, financiers, civil society and those near by

Lending special attention to the explicit and implicit needs of

their customers, the enterprise commits to offering useful goods and good quality services at equitable prices. All those who work in the business strive to build and reinforce good and open relationships with customers, supplier and the community in which they operate by working very professionally.

The enterprise relates in a loyal way to the competition presenting the effective value of its own products and abstaining from speaking negatively about the products of others. It is aware that all this allows the enterprise to be enriched by an immaterial capital constituted by relationships of esteem and trust with suppliers and customers and public administrations.

■ Ethics

Work is viewed as a means not only for professional but also human growth.

The enterprise is committed to respect all laws and contributes to improve laws that are considered harmful for the common good. It maintains a correct behavior toward the officers of IRS (for the USA) and all fiscal authorities, of all unions' control officers and institutional agencies.

In defining the nature and quality of its products, the enterprise is not only committed to respect its contract obligations but also to evaluate the effects the products themselves may have on the well-being of people for whom they are produced and of the environment.

■ Life and production quality

One of the main goals of an EoC business is to become a true community.

For such important goal the enterprise organises periodical meetings to verify the quality of interpersonal relationships and to contribute to resolve difficult situations, well aware

that such commitment can generate positive effects on all the people working in the business, stimulating innovation and an increase of maturity and productivity.

The health and well-being of each member of the enterprise are the objects of special care but those affected by particular needs are especially considered. The work conditions reflect the type of activities carried on: the respect of safety norms, the necessary ventilation, tolerable level of noise and adequate lighting etc. are always assured. An excessive work schedule is avoided so that no one is overburdened and sufficient vacation time is also provided for.

■ Harmony in the work environment

A system of organizational management and structure is adopted by the EoC enterprises such that they promote both working in groups and personal growth and spirit of initiative. The goal is to create a work environment characterized by a friendly and relaxed relational climate and based on respect, trust and mutual esteem. Those who are responsible in the enterprise act so that the working areas are always clean, in order, and as pleasant as possible so that their harmony will put all employees, owners, customers and suppliers at ease. In addition the enterprise will do all it can to spread this style.

■ Education at all levels

The enterprise will favour the establishment of an atmosphere of mutual support, respect and trust where everyone will feel free to share talents, ideas, competence to the advantage of the professional growth of colleagues and for the progress of the business.

The management will adopt

personnel selection and professional development planning criteria to facilitate the creation of such an atmosphere.

To allow everyone to reach both personal and business based goals the enterprise will offer the opportunities for continuous education and updates. If concretely possible the enterprise will facilitate a formative education to the culture of communion of the personnel and of young people interested in the EoC project.

■ Communications

The EoC entrepreneurs work constantly to create an open and sincere communication climate which will favour the exchange of ideas among all levels of business responsibility. They are open to everyone especially to people who, appreciating the social importance of the EoC business, make themselves available to contribute to its development and to those who, being interested in the culture of giving, are eager to deepen their knowledge of the various aspects of the concrete experience.

For this purpose they employ the opportune instruments to periodically check the accounts (Social Budget) that may tangibly show the social value generated by the business's activity in the interest of the various subjects involved.

The EoC enterprises, also with the intent to develop mutually useful and productive economic relationships, use the most modern means of communication to stay connected among themselves at the local and the international level.

The EoC entrepreneurs, aware of the cultural and political importance that the success of the common project can have, will always keep alive among them a spirit of mutual support and solidarity both locally and internationally.

20 NEW DISSERTATIONS

Antonella Ferrucci

Being part of the EoC brings many concrete consequences at an organizational level of a business. It is interesting to notice that it also changes the sensitivity for interpersonal relationships and for environment issues as well as issues with the point of view of constructing a more just society, where no one is excluded. The 20 new dissertations you will find below analyze many of these issues and compare them with other realities already sensitive to the same issues, such as the Social Responsibility of Businesses or the Workplace Democracy. These new categories were ignored until a short time ago by economic science. They are now analyzed and evaluated also by new tools such as the

Rainbow Score. What comes to the front is the human and relational capital. The vision of communion is translated into innovations of the governance at the managerial, control and

coordination levels. Citing finally the student Stefano Norcia: "The fuel for the EoC project is the strategic orientation, so rooted in everyone, that it points to the correct course to pursue".

World Archives for EoC Theses

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The theses available from the authors can be consulted on the Web site www.ecodicom.net. As of today the site lists 264 theses, written in 26 countries and in 13 different languages; of all these 204 can be viewed. The site can be viewed in 5 languages on www.edc-online.org, selecting "news and events" in order to be updated on all events regarding the EoC and all other sections to obtain bibliography, statistical data, articles and much more.



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Language:
Italian

Theses: **Work as a Means of Epochal Passage from the Homo Faber to the Homo Donator**

Theses Chair: Prof. Vittorio Dini

The focus of the study is on the rapport between ethics and work from the perspective of anthropology and philosophy. The experience of the Economy of Communion ties together ethics, economy and solidarity. Within the EoC "is in force" a Trinitarian vision of life and economy, guided by a rationality that can be defined by communion. In the work market a new figure of a human being called *homo donator* is emerging, co-creator of the universe whose economic action is enriched by the relationship with others, humanizing the economy. It presents a point of encounter between the Christian vision of the Papal encyclicals and that of Max Weber, according to whom, work, if it is oriented by ethical principles, contributes to the completeness of life and becomes a spiritual resource.



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Master Degree in Managerial Engineering
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February 11th 2005
Language:
Portuguese

Theses: **Economy of Communion: Facing Exclusion**

Theses Chair: Prof.ssa Márcia Cristina Esteves Agostinho

The theses's objective is the planning and organization of the productive systems that can be viewed in the enterprises practicing the Economy of Communion. At the conclusion of the study it is stated that when profit is not seen as the only goal of a corporation, it is possible to identify alternative possibilities of economically sustainable work, capable to maintain within it also people normally excluded from society.



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Doctorate in Environmental Organizational Management
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May 20th 2007
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Portuguese

Theses: **The Environmental Dimension of Productive Organizations: an Analysis of the Rationality of the Economy of Communion**

Theses Chair: Prof. Fernando S. P. Sant'Anna

When we take into account the environmental considerations in our instrumental rationality, governing the productive processes makes such rationality "substantial". Seven Brazilian enterprises of the EoC have been analyzed, among the businesses with potentially meaningful environmental impact. The theses found positive results underlining the importance of a management based on criteria of substantial rationality and highlighting how the special attention given to the environment comes from the spiritual and moral values at the base of the project.

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November 30th 2006

Language:
Portuguese

Theses: **The Organizational Culture in the Light of the Economy of Communion**

Theses Chair: Prof.ssa Auriléia Prado Cicerelli D'Alvia

The organizational culture of a business is generated by the values, rules and acquired traditions which influence also the acting and thinking of the business's partners. To analyze the contribution that being part of the EoC exerts on it, the study chose to examine two Brazilian enterprises who already opted for the Sustainable Development and Social Responsibility: the Natura Cosméticos SA, a large enterprise producing cosmetics, perfumes and cleaning supplies, and the Femaq, Fundação, Machines and Engenharia Ltda, a middle-sized enterprise that produces metal smelting and casting, which is part of the EoC. From the analyses of the differences between their organizational cultures the student found that being part of the EoC brings a keener attention to these items: on a correct environmental development, on transparency and ethics in relationship with internal and external partners. This shows what role the EoC businesses can have for a more just society.



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June 3rd 2007

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English

Theses: **Key Connections for a Way of Communion: Linking the Economy of Communion Project to Corporate Social Responsibility and Workplace Democracy**

Theses Chair: Dr. John Dugas

Seven weeks were spent interviewing 52 business owners and employees in 22 businesses. An examination of the extent to which these businesses embodied the CSR paradigm involved an evaluation of their levels of commitment in 'external' and 'environmental' and 'internal responsibility'. The analysis revealed a 'high level' commitment to the external and environmental areas of the CSR paradigm. EoC businesses embody many aspects of Workplace Democracy but vary in terms of their level of democracy regarding authoritative decision-making within the firm, as well as in the area of employee motivation and knowledge of involvement. The very nature of the EoC initiative and its mission of profit redistribution make it difficult to classify EoC businesses as fitting into a paradigm of Workplace Democracy. Therefore the EoC, in addition to serving as an excellent model of CSR, can be argued to serve as a model for business management as EoC business owners have ensured the implementation of several policies stemming from the EoC ethos that are characteristic of democratic firms. The thesis proposes that an understanding of the ways in which the EoC exemplifies the characteristics of a socially responsible and/or democratic enterprise may provide a means by which to effectively engage employees and the public on a wider level.



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July 19th 2007

Language:
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Theses: **Ethics, Philanthropy and Economy of Communion for the Competitiveness of the Third Millennium**

Theses Chair: Prof. Pier Luigi Sacco

This thesis was a trip in three parts into the world of the non-profit and of the enterprise's responsibility. This revealed unknown realities to the author. The first stop was following the dream, the study, the birth and the evolution of a foundation for scientific research in the medical field: enthusiasm and tenacity turned into the realization of a laboratory where scientists, entrepreneurs, professionals, managers and common people, all in synergy, will do something for humanity. The second stage was an unusual fashion show realized by a group of artisans of the fabric factories of Florence, together with a women's prison. The third experience was the discovery of the Economy of Communion which, from the viewpoint of universal brotherhood and the construction of the unity of the human family, proposes an example of progress characterized by ethics and eco-solidarity: a seriously working and dynamic reality that has inaugurated its first European Business Park in Incisa Valdarno (near Florence, Italy).



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July 30th 2007

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Theses: **EoC: the Proposal of a New Economic Model for the Capitalistic Society of the City of Açailândia The Experience of R.M. Clothing Industry LTDA** **Theses Chair: Professor Alberto Sergio Maia Da Silva**

Theses Chair: Prof. Alberto Sergio Maia Da Silva

The student plans to introduce to the city of Açailândia (Brazil) the EoC project as a new economic model capable of transforming the categories of enterprises, analyzing through questionnaires, interviews and bibliographical research and ascertaining that it is not a utopist project. The businesses involved and the poor helped demonstrate that the project is valid and that it represents a social value. The EoC is a concrete experience capable to show that communion in freedom can work. The process is long and gradual. The entrepreneurs of Açailândia say that they are in great part interested to know the EoC project: Açailândia is a "fertile terrain".





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July 31st 2007

Language:
French

Theses: **The Economy of Communion, Salvation for the Market Economy? A Comparison among the Social Economy of Solidarity, the Social Responsibility of the Enterprises, the Toyota Way and the EoC**

Theses Chair: Prof.ssa Marie-Anne Dujarier

The research took place in two stages, one within the French soap factory Rampal and the other within the Rural Bank Bangko Kabayan in the Philippines, both EoC enterprises, reaching the conclusion that, in regard to the other management proposals, the EoC contributes several novelties:

- it gives sense to our work
- it fights against the disparity of wealth in the world by sharing their profits
- placing the accent on everyone's "good will", it improves the climate of businesses even in a profit system
- it instituted a powerful structure to reinforce and guaranty its development.



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September 21st 2007

Language:
Portuguese

Theses: **The Bureaucratic Organization Model: the Study of the Enterprises at the Spartaco Industrial Park because of their Approach to the Economy of Communion**

Theses Chair:: Prof.ssa Dr. Cristiane Vercesi

The model of the "bureaucratic organization", at the present time dominant in organizations, is not efficient for the effects it produces in the lives of the workers. Through questionnaires given to the businesses at the Spartaco Industrial Park the theses wanted to verify if those businesses who want to place "human beings" at the center of their productive activity, utilize or not such a model. It was ascertained that all the enterprises recognize the need for the use of a moderate grade of bureaucratization for reaching their own economic objectives, more in the industrial enterprises than in those of services. But, since they pay more attention to their partners this bureaucratic organization is perceived in a less negative way.



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November 26th 2007

Language:
Italian

Theses: **Economy of Communion, Managerial, Organizational and Economic Profiles**

Theses Chair: Prof. Federico Alvino

Purpose of the theses was to analyze the EoC businesses from an economic-business perspective. The innovative elements regarding the mission, the management and transparency were illustrated, evaluating in the case of the ECIE srl the economic, ethic and value-based performance according to seven dimensions proposed by the method Rainbow Score. The conclusion is that the message of the EoC enterprises does not stop at the sharing of the profits and fighting poverty, common in the other experiences, but it is the realization of a way of production capable of reinforcing the interpersonal bonds. The ECIE Srl proved to be a concrete testimonial of how it is possible to remain competitive while placing at the center of all activities the kindness toward all people, whether they are employees or competitors or suppliers.



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December 19th 2007

Language:
Portuguese

Theses: **The EoC Approach as a Strategy for the Local Development**

Theses Chair: Prof. José Raimundo de Oliveira Vergolino

The student evaluated the probabilities for success in the realization of territorial programs by the EoC enterprises. Utilizing the data collected from the EoC businesses of the metropolitan area of Recife, a study was conducted to see their contribution to development and the conclusion was that this type of businesses is the right kind to set the basis for a program of territorial development and it can also open up new alternatives for the institutions responsible for it.



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January 18th 2008

Language:
Italian

Theses: **From the CSR to the Economy of Communion The Case of the Lionello Business Park**

Theses Chair: Prof.ssa Mariolina Longo

The purpose of this work was to verify if the EoC can be considered an "evolution" from the Corporate Social Responsibility and to describe what consequences are involved for the enterprise's management. It describes the birth of the Industrial and Business Parks and clarifies the peculiar aspects of the EoC with examples like the Lionello Business Park and a consulting network. The result is the EoC can be viewed as an evolution of CSR and its application brings remarkable advantages not only at a socio-environment level but also at the level of the enterprise.

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December 21st 2007

Language:
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Theses: **The Sharing of Profits in the Economy of Communion Enterprises: the Case Study of the Business of Entrepreneurial Consulting VSM**

Theses Chair: Prof. José Luíz Nunes Fernandes

The purpose of the theses was to evaluate the EoC history and principles and to verify its practical implications in the life of an EoC business. Through questionnaires for the employees and a talk with the entrepreneur, a study was conducted on the business that had been part of the EoC for two years, to evaluate the perception of the people interviewed about their participation in the project. To make the evaluation possible also from a financial viewpoint, the business made also available their accounting data. From this we can state that the business - although it adopts the practice of sharing its profits considered by many impractical - is financially healthy and applies faithfully another EoC principle, to continue to grow so as to be able to continue to share.



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University of Trento

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Language:
Italian

Theses: **Forms of Actions in Support of Marginal Economies: an Historical-Economic Reading**

Theses Chair: Prof. Andrea Leonardi

The student tried to rediscover the significance and importance of cooperation, analyzing the Cooperative Credit, Micro Credit and the EoC Project. The Cooperative Credit grants loans only on the basis of relationships of trust, making the sense of responsibility grow in the members and promoting moderation and saving among those who are well off. Micro Credit recognizes in the "untouchable by credit" the presence of talents, needs, values, and only one ability for return. It sets in motion a true revolution from below that allows the poorest to improve their life's conditions.

Also the EoC project places every person at the center. In the respect and freedom of everyone, the business adopts behaviors turned to communion and values relationships inside and outside the enterprise. The sharing of profits demands a profound cultural change. The three models have in common placing human beings at the center of every action of support and by the conviction that their economic action of mutual help can keep together the values of solidarity with those of freedom and efficiency. They have in common also the will to strengthen trust in themselves and in others.



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March 17th 2008

Language:
Portuguese

Theses: **Power and Decisions in the Economy of Communion Businesses: a Case Study**

Theses Chair: Prof. Sérgio Proença Leitão

A research was conducted to study the decisional dynamics of the enterprises connected to the Economy of Communion Project. It was carried out through contacts with various entrepreneurs during an EoC National Brazilian Convention and a case study of the Prodiel Farmacêutica.

Differentiated characteristics were found, deriving from an inversion of values which the principles of the project demand, in regard to the dualism of capital/work, typical of the capitalistic system.

The conclusions were that the most significant contribution of the EoC project is the building of interactions closer to human needs which, not by chance, give them also the development possibilities and competitive participation in the market.



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Language:
Italian

Theses: **Le aziende di Economia di Comunità: un aziendalismo possibile**

Theses Chair: Prof. Giorgio Fiorentini

The theses examines the principles of the EoC experience applied to business management. After an analysis of the project, its founding principles and the logic characterizing them, the theses is divided into an analysis of the governing mechanisms of the EoC enterprises, the relationships among the various subjects interested in the business and the control systems and external accounting of the EoC enterprises. Applying the method of the Rainbow Score to the case study of the Tassano Consortium the theses quantified and made explicit the economic value of the relationships.

The enterprises' experiences demonstrate the economic feasibility of the EoC project, whose future spreading will be conditioned by the difficulty in applying gratuitousness inside a business, which assumes solid religious and ethic-moral principles.





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PhD in Sociology
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July 8th 2008

Language:
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Theses: **The Homo Donator in the EoC –
a New Way of Economic Action**

Theses Chair: Prof.ssa Antonietta Di Vito

The specificity of the culture of giving of the Focolare Movement, to understand the principles informing the EoC, was analyzed within the scope of the EoC: the business behaviors, the reciprocity experiences, the sharing and gratuitousness of this new people who makes much less noise than the "great" of this earth, and yet proposes solutions and offers dignity and hope.

The ancient dream of humanity is living in a just society that makes us happy. The culture of giving that moves thousands of people all over the world, tends to realize a new humanism renewed by brotherhood, root for all of authentic equality and freedom, today is necessary for the survival of human communities.



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Catholic University of the
Sacred Heart – seat of Roma
July 22nd 2008

Language:
Italian

Theses: **The Importance of the Human and Relational Capital:
a Survey of the Italian Businesses of the Economy
of Communion**

Theses Chair: Prof.ssa Alessandra Smerilli

The structural and managerial policies of the EoC enterprises come from a new idea of the enterprise as a moral subject, where all partners reflect their values inside of it. As a case study, the businesses of the EoC Lionello Bonfanti Business Park were considered, evaluating through questionnaires with the Rainbow Score method, both the economic and ethical-value based results.

The conclusion is that the *vision of communion* is translated into innovations of governance, control and coordination and that the "fuel" of the EoC Project is the strategic basic orientation of each partner, at this point so rooted in each one that it points to the correct course to pursue.



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September 25th 2008

Language:
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Theses: **Economy of Communion:
a Relational Economic Way of Behaving**

Theses Chair: Prof.ssa Antonella Picchio

Starting from writings about the history of economic thought and comparing them with the writings of EoC authors, the theses explored the ethical foundations and the concrete experiences of the EoC Project, highlighting its affinity with the approach of Human Development and evaluating its sustainability and extendibility.

The study showed how the EoC can respond to the needs for sense meaning, more and more present in economy, and how it constitutes a concrete experience of civil economy, on the footsteps of the humanistic traditions.



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October 27th 2008

Language:
Italian

Theses: **From the Welfare State to the Civil Welfare:
a New Agorá for Europe**

Theses Chair: Prof.ssa Daniela Preda

The work's goal is to underline the necessity that Europe will pass from a paternalistic welfare to an enabling welfare where each person is respected in his or her dignity and placed in conditions that enable each to do her or his part. The Welfare State, a victory of civilization in Europe, does not hold up anymore because it reduced the citizens' sense of responsibility and paradoxically induced a loss of democracy.

We need a new model of "civil welfare" based on a climate of trust, typical of the civil economy, accepting the diversity of everyone's motivations instead of considering only the motivation of self-interest. This last one is unable to explain the presence of social types like the EoC project, for which, in their range of values, the *passion for the other* is the priority.

READERS' MAIL

Alberto Ferrucci

■ Fruits of a dissertation

I'm 25 years old and I have a degree in Accounting. I had always doubted that I could dedicate myself to work for my desire for a more just and fraternal society, studying the discipline I chose.

Once I finished all the exams, I wanted to write my dissertation on "EoC – new paradigm in result management" and since no one of my professors knew the EoC project I convinced my future dissertation chair to participate in the EoC convention at the Focolare small city of Santa Maria. In that occasion there was also going to be the inauguration of the Industrial Park Ginetta. During the two days of the meeting my professor listened to those who spoke and interviewed businessmen and each moment was welcomed by her as an unexpected gift.

When I discussed my dissertation in front of my professors and academicians of the accounting department, in the presence of my family, I felt strongly the profound unity of the other Gen, also present. When we went for a pizza afterward my chair was saying how happy she was to have met this new life style that she had always been searching for.

Alter a few months she asked me to help her in the presentation of the EoC to the new students of the accounting department of the University of Tirandentes. I was very surprised of her description of Chiara's EoC principles, while she was projecting the EoC logo and her thanking me publicly for having introduced her to it. I was feeling that there was the beginning of the "inundation", in the field of accounting.

The University of Tirandentes then, invited me to present my dissertation to more than 300 people, among whom the Chancellor, professors, academicians, in the occasion of the "Accountants Day". That time I



was feeling I had become an instrument of the Holy Spirit to bring the gifts of the Charism to all those people.

At the end everyone thanked me and my dissertation chair promised she would introduce the EoC to everyone without distinction every time it was possible. To see a person like her welcoming with such depth the EoC message was for me the most beautiful moment.

Rodrigo Dias de Oliveira
Aracaju, Nord Est of Brazil

■ From the Convention on Work

I had always thought that when I did not receive what I had given in a relationship, that "I had not done my part well" and that the problem all depended exclusively on me. I had also heard that those who "lose" their ideas or those who do not "respond to provocations" is a weak person.

Alter I heard Luigino Bruni's theme "to Work Out of Love" this conviction of mine was turned upside down and I felt lifted up. In one passage Luigino says that work is really work when it is done as a gift to the others, when our work activity is at the service of others. He also said that when my work is done "well" it can be a gift also for the person I may never meet or with whom I do not have a direct contact. Therefore the purpose of my work does not have to be

evaluated by a "positive return" but by the quality of my relationship with those who are near me and with whom I work daily.

Marisa Pareti

Roberto Tassano Consortium

From this Meeting I understood that to work in a EoC enterprise is not to work for a specific business but, together with the others, to spread a new culture of "work as a gift". It is a "vocation" in the sense that those who are part of the business, besides doing their specific job, they are called to place at the center of the work dynamics the person, not depending on their business role. They are called to give value to "qualitative relationships", an "invisible" and not very important datum but in reality very basic.

Even tiredness, misunderstandings, (inevitable)discouragements, viewed in this manner are no longer obstacles to deepen relationships and to make it possible to "work in fraternity", that in fact they become the occasion for their accomplishment.

After the meeting we reinforced the idea that there is only one way to realize all this: to see all things in communion. This is why we felt the need to meet periodically so that we could live together our daily lives and to remember for whom and for what we are working.

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The Atelier Santa Flora produces bags and purses at the Ginetta Business Park. Here Joao and Dima Bosco, together with their workers, teach 24 young people to cut the models, to sew, refine, and finish the product. The young people come in part from the Casa do Menor of Rio de Janeiro, Fortaleza, Santana do Ipanema and from the groups "without land" from Branquinha-Alagoas.