

(English translation)

Naples (Press Club), 4 May 1996

True Christians in every Political Party

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Journalist: Elections have recently been held in Italy, and everyone seems to be speaking of politics again, even those who usually are not interested in these topics.

From your experience and in the light of the charism of the Movement, what might be the commitment of Christians and Catholics in this very special moment in the field of politics?

Chiara: We've been speaking about this during these days. We spoke with some of our people here in Naples, about 24 of them who work in politics, including two Members of Parliament, and we've come to this conclusion: the Focolare Movement is an ecclesial Movement, and as such, we cannot side with one party or another, neither with the *right* nor with the *left*. We must love everybody. However, precisely because we do not take a stand, the individuals who belong to the Movement have entered all the parties, practically all the parties in Italy.

So what we must do, as you say, with the charism of unity, is this: these people must first of all feel that they are Christians and then, that they belong to the different political parties. (AN [*Allianza Nazionale*, National Alliance] party, to the PPI [*Partito Popolare Italiano*, Italian Popular Party], to the PDS [*Partito Democratic del Sinistro*, Democratic Party of the Left].) If they feel that they are first of all Christians, and therefore, also members of the Focolare Movement, which is a way of living Christianity, they will serve our country well.

So everyone agreed, and we will spread this idea throughout Italy, but it began right here in Naples. We agreed to keep in contact - all those of the Movement who are involved in the different parties - to meet regularly and to seek to have only one attitude - logically with all the variants of each one's personality - especially towards safeguarding values, because we have the impression that on both sides, these values might not be guaranteed. Therefore, as Christians, we must save them, because true values are Christian ones. They are our roots, they come from the Gospel. They were assumed by all the States - this is why Christianity has been a leaven in the whole world - but they are our values: justice, freedom, ecology, life, unity - we must save all these and many other values.

So these people of the Movement who belong to the different parties agreed to meet with one another, to forget that they belong to that particular party, to be friendly with one another, to build communion with one another, and to study these various topics, seeking to have just one line of thought, if possible, with all the variants there might be, and also to try to reach an understanding with other Christians, so that we can really have a solid foundation based on Christianity, on true values, in Parliament and in the political world as a whole.

Journalist: It won't be a structured political movement....

Chiara: No, it can't be, because it's a Christian Movement... it can't be. It can't be because it must be for everybody. We can't create a political party!

No, it's one of many initiatives: this is an initiative in the field of politics; in medicine, there is another; in education, another; in art, still another.