



# European Mariapolis 2019

Tonadico, Dolomites (Italy)

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## Big challenges – huge gains

The challenge of putting on the first ever European Mariapolis to be held in the Dolomites, Italy, from 14th July to 11th August 2019, has been described by an organiser as a huge and challenging undertaking but “we truly believe the gain will be a testimony for the unity of all Europe”. Villiam Karas from Slovakia, was speaking at the conclusion of a weekend which brought together thirty members of the international co-ordinating committee at Tonadico, Fiera di Primiero in Italy.

A total of two thousand five hundred people will attend the event, each participant spending a week at the Primiero valley.

On 18th May 2019 the community of the Primiero valley and civil and religious authorities warmly welcomed the organisers of the Mariapolis to the town hall, the Palazzo Scopoli. Mayor Daniele Depaoli said community facilities would be at the disposal of the Focolare Movement, which has such a strong link with this region. In fact the first Mariapolis grew from a gathering in the region in the years following World War 2.

At the weekend the co-ordinating committee faced the huge challenges that such an event poses – from the translation infrastructure of six languages each week, to logistics issues like transport between the different venues associated with the meeting which are spread in a thirty kilometre radius. “These will undoubtedly be opportunities to put into practise the spirit of the Mariapolis, of mutual help, concern and service!” said Pilar Marin from Spain.

In a recent interview, Focolare President, Maria Voce presented the European Mariapolis as an alternative to the phenomenon of rising nationalism in Europe. The Mariapolis, she said, will express “a unity in which diversity is not only accepted but valued as an enrichment for all. In this diversity each person tries to bring out the best in the other (...) their particular characteristics. And if we all do this, no one will feel the need to defend their identity because in unity it is recognized, valued and enriched.”

### ***Essentials***

- *2,500 people will take part in the European Mariapolis entitled Aim High.*
- *Participants come from 35 countries – from Portugal to Russia, from Iceland to Malta.*
- *From 14th July to 11th August 2019, four weeklong events, will each be tailored to a number of European languages.*





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- *The event is taking place in the Dolomites, Italy, where the first 'Mariapolis' was held seventy years ago. At the time, Focolare founder, Chiara Lubich withdrew to the valley to rest with some of her first companions, soon to be followed by many people.*
- *A Mariapolis (City of Mary), is a gathering where the citizens of a temporary 'town' try to build a new type of human society based on the relationships in a family - fraternity and mutual respect, as they holiday together.*
- *The Mariapolis is open to people of all faiths and ethnicities.*

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