

Hong Kong Mariapolis

EVERY year the number of Mariapolis (the Summer gathering of the Focolare Movement) taking place all over the world is increasing. Thousands of people of different backgrounds, races, professions, and ages meet together for a week. Every year they overcome the same difficulties: distance, expenses, time off from work, and so on.

Why do these people go through all this? What do they expect to find at the Mariapolis? They want to spend some days with people who share the same desire of building a new society. They don't want to discuss the "old" society, to judge or condemn it. They want *to be* the new society. They believe that the Gospel is the

blueprint for the "city built on the mountain."

During the Mariapolis they want to live the Gospel together—24 hours a day—as a training period for the rest of the year. It is not a parenthesis, an escape from everyday life. Each year the participants of the Mariapolis leave more decided than ever to transform their offices, their homes, their cities, and the world into a permanent Mariapolis.

300 people gathered for a weekend, July 14 and 15, at St. Clare School, Hong Kong for the Mariapolis, the fourth held here. They included families, young people, priests, nuns and people from different professions, coming from every part of Hong Kong and some

from as far as Macao, where a Mariapolis was held the previous weekend.

On Saturday afternoon, Bishop Peter Lei, paid a visit to the Mariapolis. He addressed the audience encouraging them to bring this life everywhere.

Bishop Lei's words were the programme for the days to come. All left with the desire of being small fires of love, of that love which comes from God, and of keeping the fire burning in the many different environments they went back to. If fires, even small ones, were kindled in a city at various points, soon—as long as the flames overcome everything they encountered—the whole place would be a flame.