



Italian Fiery Soul

- *obituary of Franco Bettoli written by Jørgen Olsen, coordinator of Genvej til Udvikling, Denmark*
- *translated into English by member of Genvej til Udvikling, Kristian Katholm Olsen.*

On the 4th of April 2008 the former vice-president (1981-86) and president (1986-99) of the worldwide Emmaus-movement Franco Bettoli died (see photo on front page) - he was born on the 3rd of January 1943 in Faenza, Italy.



The cathedral of Faenza from which Franco Bettoli was laid to rest the 8th of April 2008
(photo: *Jørgen Olsen*)

Franco learned about Emmaus in 1967 when summer rag picking camps were arranged in great parts of the northern Italy. Franco became fascinated by it, left a well-paid job in a bank and when the summer was over he went to Chartres in France to try, how it was to live and work in a permanent Emmaus-community.

Franco remained in the movement – with basis in the Emmaus-community he founded in Laterina outside Arezzo south of Florence, together with his Danish wife, Margit. He executed an incredible working effort at home in Laterina as well as in Emmaus Italy and Emmaus International.



Among the several hundreds who said goodbye to Franco Bettoli were Beninese Patrick Atohoun, current member of the executive committee of Emmaus International and Italian Renzo Fior, president of Emmaus International 1999-2007
(photo: Jørgen Olsen)

In the 1960s and 1970s Emmaus was roughly marked by what founder and leader of Belgian Terre, William Wauters (1926-94) called “the blind charity”. You helped the distressed but did not have an especially goal-oriented relationship to the causes of the distress. Many of the European Emmaus organizations were only interested in the neighboring areas and those who sent money and volunteers out of Europe often looked at the people in the developing countries as passive victims.

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The majority of the Emmaus groups is today related to Emmaus member organizations and other associations in other continents either by cooperation group to group or by coordinated cooperation among other ways via the solidarity fund of the movement. The Europeans in Emmaus meet people and organizations in Africa, Asia and Latin America as equal partners who actively formulate their visions and act according to these.

The most important individual in this process of change who has been going on during the latest decades, was Franco Bettoli. We honor his memory by continuing in this track.



Behind the cross on Franco's grave you see Argentines Alberto de Urquiza and Rogelio Urquiza as well as France's Jean Rousseau elected as president of Emmaus International at the general assembly in Sarajevo in October 2007
(photo: Jørgen Olsen)