



Fondazione  
**Don Carlo Gnocchi**  
Onlus



**Don Carlo Gnocchi**  
**Foundation**

# The founder

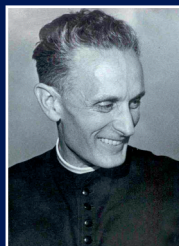
## Blessed Father Carlo Gnocchi (1902 - 1956)

Don Carlo Gnocchi, a priest from Milan, became known as **the father of the crippled**. Blessed on 25 October 2009, he's **one of the most fascinating and significant personalities of Italian history of the last century**.

Born in San Colombano al Lambro, near Milan, in 1902, when very young he lost his father and two older brothers. He grew up with his mother, to whom he remained profoundly attached. Ordained a **priest** in 1925, he was noted for his brilliance as an **oratory educator**, and was nominated the **spiritual assistant** of the Institute Gonzaga, one of the most prestigious schools of Milan.

On the outbreak of **war** he joined up as a voluntary priest and departed first for the front line between Greece and Albania and then for the tragic **campaign in Russia**, which he miraculously survived. In those dramatic days, assisting the wounded and dying soldiers and taking their last wishes, an idea came to him to create a **great charity**, which became a reality at the end of the war.

Don Gnocchi's dream of a charity took shape in 1945: appointed Director of the Institute of Disabled Persons of Arosio



(Como), he took in the first war orphans and crippled children. In 1949 the **Federation Pro Infanzia Mutilata** was created, which in 1952 became the **Pro Juventute Foundation**.

The emergency over for the small, disabled children of the war, the charitable complex of the Foundation was oriented towards a more serious problem for children in those years: **poliomyelitis**.

In 1955 don Carlo started his last and greatest challenge, a **pilot Centre** constituting the synthesis of his rehabilitation methodology.

On 11 September, in Milan, the foundation stone of the new structure was laid which don Gnocchi, struck by serious illness, was never able to see it completed.

The project for total re-education of the individual, which placed the human being at the centre of the therapeutic process, represents **the extraordinary modernity of the work of don Carlo**, more so if we consider that it was born in years in which rehabilitation discipline was taking its first steps.

**He died on 28 February 1956**. His last prophetic gesture was the gift of **cornea** to two blind children; at that time in Italy law did not regulate the **transplant of organs**.

**Don Carlo Gnocchi was beatified in Milan's Piazza Duomo on Sunday 25 October 2009, his birthday**. His remains lie in the sanctuary that bears his name, next to the **Santa Maria Nascente IRCCS Research Hospital**.

In these 60 years the Foundation has progressively expanded its field of intervention, considerably widening its activities.



# The Foundation

Founded by Don Carlo Gnocchi to provide care, rehabilitation and social integration for children who lost limbs in the war, the Foundation has gradually expanded the scope of its operations over the years.

Today, Don Gnocchi Foundation continues to provide care to:

- **children and young people with disabilities or congenital or acquired diseases;**
- **patients of every age who need motor-skill, cardio-respiratory or oncological rehabilitation;**
- **the injured, stroke victims, and those with multiple sclerosis, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, Parkinson's, Alzheimer's or other debilitating diseases;**
- **non-self-sufficient elderly, terminal cancer patients, the severely brain-damaged, and those in a persistent vegetative state.**

With the state recognition **IRCCS as a healthcare research institution**, today the

Don Gnocchi Foundation is an organisation of more than **5,500 employees and consultants**. It operates under accreditation from the **Italian National Health Service in 27 Centres** covering 9 administrative regions.

Its activities cover the **healthcare-rehabilitation field** (*inpatient, day-hospital, out-patient services and home care*), **social welfare** (*integrated daytime centres, nursing home, in-home care and palliative-care facilities*), and **social-therapeutic services** (*daytime centres for disabilities, homes for the disabled, daytime rehabilitation clinics, community living*).

It also conducts intense **scientific research** and **education** at a variety of levels. As a recognised **Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO)**, the Don Gnocchi Foundation is involved in solidarity efforts in developing countries.

In 2003 President of Italian Republic awarded the Don Gnocchi Foundation the **gold medal for service to public health**.

## NUMBERS

2	IRCCS Research Hospitals
23	Multi-purpose Rehabilitation Units
10	Hospital Rehabilitation Units
4	Severe acquired brain damages Units
8	Nursing homes
2	Alzheimer's special care Units
3	Hospices for terminal cancer patients
2	Health care facilities
27	Local Rehabilitation Clinics
3	Integrated daytime Centres for the elderly
7	Daytime Centres for the disabled
3	Homes for the disabled
3	Social healthcare-and welfare-guardian initiatives
1	Rest homes for the elderly and ailing
3.800	Available accredited inpatient and day-hospital beds
More than 9.000	People use Don Gnocchi facilities every day

# Activities

## Healthcare and Rehabilitation Activity

The Don Gnocchi Foundation provides **healthcare services** through its centres on an inpatient, day-hospital, outpatient or house-call basis. Most of our healthcare initiatives are for various kinds of rehabilitation, treating post-acute patients during recovery or patients with chronic conditions.

The fields involved are **neurology, cardiology, pulmonology, orthopaedics, and geriatrics-oncology**, with an additional small number of inpatient post-acute hospitalisations.

The Foundation's welfare model is based on principles of medical evidence to assure **care quality and care continuity**. Our assistance includes intense integration with advanced scientific research, both basic and applied.



The rehabilitation model calls for a multidisciplinary approach that involves various specialists, who base their work on a personalised plan that aims to assure **the best quality of life for the patient, fostering readjustment to family and social life**. All our Centres carry out extended rehabilitation designed primarily to treat complex disabilities.

In order to assure the continuity of assistance, alongside hospital services, our Centres have, over the years, developed a broad **network of integrated services**. These include multi-specialist clinics, diagnostics (clinical laboratory analysis, imaging diagnostics, and bioengineering

laboratories), and rehabilitation services. All our Centres offer a broad series of extended rehabilitation aimed mostly at treating complex disabilities. These are conducted during the stages following hospital rehabilitation or when the level of disability caused by the debilitating disease permits.

## Social Welfare Activity

For more than twenty years, assistance to the **elderly who are no longer self-sufficient** has been a hallmark of the Don Gnocchi Foundation. Our facilities operate on a model that employs a concept of service designed to enhance alternatives to moving to assisted-living facilities (nursing homes). Such alternatives include **integrated daytime centres, home care, and hospitalisation for relief of suffering**.

Resources and skills have been extended into local areas as part of an innovative model for organising initiatives to provide services in the community.

Their assistance protects both the fragile elderly (either ill or alone) and patients with disabilities in disadvantaged social or healthcare circumstances and their families.

Our social welfare initiatives benefit from the support of our activities in scientific research and in technical or professional training. For example, the fight against Alzheimer's disease and senile dementia can be aided by **specialised assistance through day hospitals, clinics, Alzheimer's gardens, support groups, and psychological assistance for family**



**members.**

As it has grown, the Foundation's social welfare activity has expanded to include **terminal cancer patients**, with the opening of a **palliative care hospice**, as well as home hospice services. Hospice care is also offered to **patients in a persistent vegetative state**, to those with severe acquired brain damage, whether acute or long-term, and to those with progressive neurodegenerative diseases including multiple sclerosis and mild cognitive impairment.

## Social-educational Initiatives

In keeping with the original mission laid out by Father Carlo Gnocchi, the Foundation is continuing, with renewed efforts, to provide a vast array of social-educational services dedicated to those with dis-



abilities. Long experience in this field and a commitment to building a dense network of services at a level suitable to the evolving Italian social healthcare context **make the Don Gnocchi Foundation a benchmark for the entire nation**.

The Foundation's unparalleled approach to the needs of those with special abilities has been designed with the aim of building a system of services and initiatives that can meet the needs of individuals integrally, comprehensively, and flexibly through a single organisation.

The main objective, harmonized to relevant legislation, is to encourage overall attention to the whole project of a person's

life, promoting full membership in society in all the main facets of community life.

Social-educational activities for those with disabilities, in our Centres are organised into **special education nursery and elementary schools, daytime centres, nursing homes, suffering-relief shelters, and community-living facilities**.

Programmes designed for differently abled users include: skill development, self-sufficiency, training, workplace integration, social readjustment, home and family environment, leisure-time management, and projects on *what comes next*.

## Training Activity

The Foundation attaches great importance to formative dimension.

In **vocational training**, the Foundation offers courses, with partial support from the European Union, to those with physical, cognitive, and sensory disabilities, along with constantly monitored job placement. Other courses train professionals working in the field of disabilities and prepare school staff to support children with special needs.

In **continuing education**, many events are aimed at health personnel, relief, educational, technical and administrative staff working in the Foundation and to external participants. A substantial portion of which are accredited as continuing medical education (CME) by the national or regional authorities.

In **higher education**, the Don Gnocchi Foundation hosts university degree programmes under an agreement with the Facoltà di Medicina e Chirurgia of the Università degli Studi di Milano (Nursing, Professional Education, Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Clinical Neurophysiology Technology, Child Neuropsychiatric Rehabilitation, Speech Therapy).

It also offers internships for undergraduate courses, master and graduate schools, post-graduate courses and master specialization.

# Scientific Research

The Don Gnocchi Foundation has been carrying out research for decades both at its IRCCS research hospital facilities in Milan and Florence and at other Don Gnocchi Centres. Our Centres, through ties to universities or research organisations both in Italy or abroad, specialised in the **fields of biomedicine, biotechnology, and clinical experimentation in a quest for new methods and new technologies to recover ability deficits and reduce conditions of impairment.** The Foundation takes a fully **translational approach** to its scientific, clinical, and technological research, termed *from bench to bedside*.

Specifically, continuous collaboration among the various branches of the Foundation enables basic research to refine diagnoses and to better define the pathogenesis of diseases under consideration, as well as to better manage patients by using the results of such analyses, and step in with bioengineering devices that enhance patients' quality of life.

One of the Foundation's research strengths lies in its enormous, historical, epidemiological heritage, fed daily by some 10,000 recipients of assistance. Another strength is in its capacity to enrol patients from a population that fully stretches across nine Italian administrative regions. A further strength owes much to the variety of services supplied that include both diagnostic and therapeutic phases of treatment, be it in hospital, as outpatients or at home.

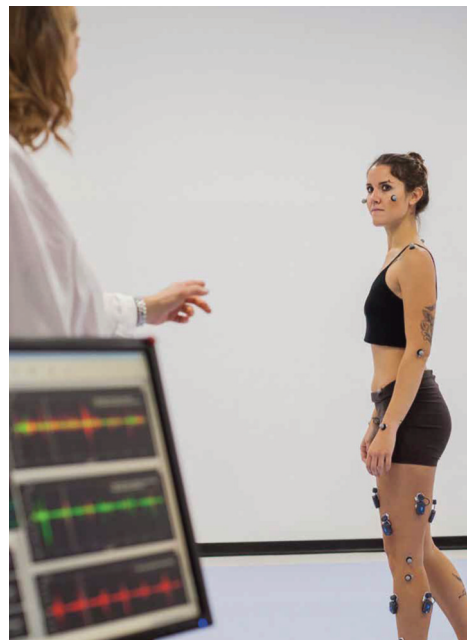
Research, laden with applied implications, constantly loops with our clinical and assistance activities.

This multidisciplinary approach has enabled the IRCCS research hospital in Milan to carry out advanced projects in **bioengineering** (some tested by NASA or in expeditions to the Mount Everest natural laboratory), as well as in **neurology, orthopaedics, and cardio-respiratory treatment.**

One of our many services devoted to research is known as **DAT (Domotics, Assistive Technology, and Occupational Therapy)**, which has a dwelling equipped with the most sophisticated domotics available for people with disabilities.

Another is **SIVA**, the evaluation service for data on assistive technology ([www.siva.it](http://www.siva.it)) and primary Italian network for orientation and consultation on choice of assistive technology or medical device. SIVA's expertise extends beyond national borders and has made the Don Gnocchi Foundation a leader in **Europe's Eastin network** ([www.eastin.eu](http://www.eastin.eu)), which represents the integration of seven major national portals throughout Europe.

The Foundation's scientific output, as shown by the **impact factor** widely used bibliometric index, places it among **Italy's most important scientific institutions** in the field of rehabilitation.



# International Solidarity

In March 2001, the General Directorate for Development Cooperation of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs granted the Don Gnocchi Foundation with an official **Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO)** certification for short - and medium - term projects in developing countries and for local training of their citizens.

That recognition contributed to the growth of the Don Gnocchi Foundation's capacity to assist and serve people in dire need, even beyond Italy's borders, through outreach programmes using its own and donated resources. Our special area of effort is in initiatives that set up and consolidate rehabilitation, not only in the clinical sense or in terms of physical recovery, but also socially and professionally.

In recent years, Centers for children with disabilities have been built in **Bosnia and Herzegovina** and **Ecuador**. The Foundation also supports rehabilitation facilities in **Myanmar, Cambodia, and Ukraine**. Additionally, it is involved in projects promoting humanity, inclusion, and providing disability training in **Bolivia**. There are ongoing initiatives for similar projects in various developing countries around the world.



## HELP US

Since it was founded, Don Carlo Gnocchi Foundation has expanded its activities considerably both in Italy and abroad. This has been made possible thanks to the help of volunteers who have dedicated their time to us, and to private individuals, companies and organizations who have contributed to our projects.

You can support the Don Carlo Gnocchi Foundation making a donation. Please write to us for any information:

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