

**While the whole world follows anxiously the unfolding of events in the troubled Middle East Region, the Focolare communities of the Middle East and North Africa meet Maria Voce, president of the Movement, in Jordan.**

Precisely at this moment when one hopes firmly that dialogue and negotiations will put an end to the ongoing conflict and violence in Syria, Maria Voce, the president of the Focolare Movement, accompanied by Giancarlo Faletti, the co-president, is in Jordan to meet delegations from various countries representing the Movement in the Middle East and North Africa. This meeting is being held in Jordan from August 29 to September 10.

Lay and religious, youth, adults and families, hailing not only from Jordan but also from Turkey, Cyprus, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Egypt, Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia and the Holy Land are gathered in Amman to participate in this meeting, which is also an opportunity not only to assess the Movement's present situation, but also to trace a future road-map for its presence in this part of the world afflicted with dramatic situations.

Chiara Lubich's visit to Amman in 1999 to participate in the General Assembly of the World Conference of Religions for Peace will be a reference point for this trip; even then, she met members of the Movement from various countries in this region.

After 14 years, through this meeting in Amman, the first president that succeeds the foundress of the Focolare Movement, reaffirms the importance of the Movement in this region, even at this very crucial moment when the imminent possibility of a new war keeps the world on tenterhooks because of its potential consequences.

This scenario is leading the members of the Focolare Movement to pose urgent and delicate questions, not only about the future of their countries, but also about relationships with people of other religions, relations among Christian Churches, many of whom have an ancient, rich and often painful history, about the future of families and communities at a time when many try to migrate to seek a better future.

These are pressing challenges, toward which the spirituality of unity, typical of the Focolare Movement, also tries to contribute through the efforts of those who adhere to it. And during these days in Amman, the life of communion experienced by the representatives of the different peoples of the region together with the President of the Focolare Movement, may represent a turning point, and prove to be a strong sign of closeness and solidarity by members of the Movement all over the world.

One of the items on Maria Voce's agenda is her participation in the Islamic-Christian meeting promoted by the Royal Institute for Inter-Faith Studies (RIIFS). A delegation composed of both Christian and Muslim members of the Movement will also take part in this meeting that will be held on the afternoon of September 4.

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