

## "Closeness: A Call to Action for Universal Fraternity"

In her spiritual theme for 2024-25, Margaret Karram spoke about the first step in being close to others as recognizing the person beside us, relatives, strangers, or even adversaries and treating them with profound love and understanding. She drew from Christian teachings and insights from other religions, underscoring closeness as an expression of universal fraternity. For Christians, this mirrors the Good Samaritan's unconditional compassion. Closeness also aligns with spiritual principles across faiths, from the Jewish directive to "Love your neighbour as yourself" and to Islam's emphasis on love and mercy.

In preparing her talk, Margaret invited some of the Focolare's young people to express their understanding of closeness. They brought a fresh perspective, highlighting that closeness bridges generational gaps, fosters mutual respect and rekindles hope in challenging times. Their stories demonstrated that taking the first step, truly listening, and sharing in another's struggles creates meaningful connections.

Margaret concluded with an invitation to embrace a "dynamic closeness," which begins with seeing God in others and extends to global solidarity. In a world often marked by loneliness and disconnection, she called for actionable love that nurtures human dignity, inspired by Pope Francis's vision of a spirituality rooted in nearness and care.

Margaret's words inspire a renewed commitment to building a culture of unity and love, a mission that transcends boundaries and transforms lives. The full talk will shortly be available on Focolare's website.