

Margaret Karram **President of the Focolare Movement**

Margaret Karram was elected President of the Focolare Movement by the General Assembly 2021. She is the third President after the founder Chiara Lubich and after Maria Voce who served for two terms.

She was born in Haifa, Israel in 1962 into a Palestinian Catholic family.

The Christian values and principles she learnt as a child embedded within her a great openness to others, beyond religion and culture. She attended the Catholic school of the Carmelite Sisters in Haifa, where, in addition to studying Arabic and Hebrew, she began to study English and Italian.

She has a wealth of knowledge and experience, but also of lived suffering that gave her a strong desire to act to change society and the world around her, even as an adolescent. At the age of fourteen she met the spirituality of the Focolare Movement, which she saw as God's answer to her desire. She understood the power of living the words of the Gospel, moment by moment and in every circumstance, realizing the power of a revolution generated by a love that is true, selfless and without measure.

Thus began her commitment to dialogue between Christians, Jews, Muslims, Israelis and Palestinians, which led her to the United States for a few years, where she graduated in Judaism from the American Jewish University in the United States.

Back home, she became co-responsible for the Focolare community in the Holy Land. She worked for 14 years at the Consulate General of Italy in Jerusalem. She also collaborated in various commissions and organisations for the promotion of dialogue between the three monotheistic religions, such as the Episcopal Commission for Interreligious Dialogue, the Assembly of the Catholic Ordinaries of the Holy Land and the ICCI (Interreligious Coordinating Council in Israel).

In 2013, she received the Mount Zion Award for Reconciliation, together with the scholar and researcher Yisca Harani, for their commitment to developing dialogue between different cultures and religions.

On the Feast of Pentecost 2014, she was invited to represent the Focolare Movement at the Invocation for Peace in the Vatican Gardens, together with Pope Francis, the then President of the State of Israel Shimon Peres and of the State of Palestine, Mahmoud Abbas.

In the same year, the General Assembly of the Focolare elected her as General Councillor. In the following six-year period (2014-2020) she was councillor for Italy and Albania and co-responsible for the Focolare for dialogue between Ecclesial Movements and new Catholic communities.

In 2016, she was awarded the St. Rita International Prize for promoting dialogue among Christians, Jews, Muslims, Israelis and Palestinians, starting from everyday life.