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Margaret Karram: let's put reconciliation and prayer back at the centre

Faced with the escalation of violence in the Holy Land, in Colombia, in Myanmar and in various African countries, the President of the Focolare appeals to the communities of the Movement in the world to put dialogue and prayer at the centre of life and action. These are paths everyone can follow towards true peace.

We cannot help but hear the cry of pain that is coming in these days from many parts of the world, because peace is once again gravely threatened.

I refer to the protests that have resulted in violence in various cities of **Colombia**, which have been going on for many days, to the people of **Myanmar** who have been suffering for months and who still see no glimmer of peace and freedom. I am thinking of various African countries and regions that for several reasons are troubled by violence that seems to have no end.

And what about the situation that has exploded once again in Jerusalem, in Haifa, in the Gaza Strip and in many other cities in the **Holy Land** in the last few days?

It is a situation that affects me personally; the news of bombings, of the number deaths that increases every day, reawakens immense suffering in my heart, also because this is the land where I was born and raised.

I tell all of you who are experiencing these situations of violence at first hand, often risking your lives, that I **am with you more than ever!** I offer up and pray every day so that the bombing and violence between different groups will cease, that lives will be saved and peace return to being the supreme good for every person, for every people and government.

This land with all its deep wounds, but also great riches that are the fruit of the multiplicity of peoples who live there, has imprinted in my soul the certainty that only dialogue, sometimes lived in a heroic way, builds true peace in every part of the world where it is lacking. What I feel in the depths of my heart today is to invite everyone to **rediscover that we are all brothers and sisters, children of the same Father, without letting ourselves be overtaken by hatred or the temptation to see only our own side.**

Let's commit ourselves together to bring reconciliation and dialogue back to the centre of our thinking and life, of the life of our communities, of our peoples: a dialogue that takes place with everyone, excluding no one, and which implements just policies that welcome and respect diversity.

However, there can be situations that are so desperate and extreme that it seems impossible to find a solution. But we have experienced so often that love always finds ways to reach the heart of the other. In this regard, a writing by Chiara Lubich that I would like to share with you has always given me hope and courage:

But if more people were able to accept suffering out of love, the suffering that love requires, it could become the most powerful weapon to give humanity its highest dignity: that of feeling not so much that it is a set of peoples living side by side and often in conflict with each other, but only one people, one family”¹.

Let's keep hope alive! With mutual love renewed among all, let us intensify our prayer for those who suffer, for the dead, for those who are not sure they will see tomorrow. But above all, let us ask God to grant us the greatest good for all humanity: the gift of a just and lasting peace.

Margaret Karram
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¹Cf. Chiara Lubich, *Essential Writings*, New City Press. 2007, p. 150