

Rocca di Papa, 20 June 2025

Dear everyone,

I am writing to you with great sorrow and profound emotion to inform you that today, at 5:22 p.m., God called to Himself our Emmaus, Maria Voce, the first president of the Focolare Movement after Chiara Lubich.

She concluded her holy journey in Rocca di Papa, in her home, surrounded by the care and love of the focolarine of her focolare and the prayers of us all. Today, in the early afternoon, Jesús and I were able to visit her for one last time. She was serene.

A great affection and immense esteem bind me to her because of her donation to God in the Work of Mary right to the end.

Since my election as President, her closeness, which was so discreet but ever present, always accompanied me, supporting me with her advice so full of Wisdom. She was present on the most varied occasions, celebrations, anniversaries, journeys; she assured me of her prayers, the offering of her life and often she would send me a gift, a flower or one of her poems.

She received the name "Emmaus" from Chiara, recalling the experience of the Risen Lord walking with us. This name characterised her whole life. Indeed, she affirmed: "How do we do the Work of God? With Jesus in the midst!"

Her inspiring faithfulness to Chiara's charism, her courage in facing numerous challenges, and her belief in unity, in communion, remain etched in our hearts.

Her human, spiritual and sapiential calibre has been acknowledged by the most varied religious and civil authorities: from Pope Benedict XVI and Pope Francis; from the leaders of the various Churches to representatives of other religions and cultures.

**Her funeral will be held on Monday, 23<sup>rd</sup> of June at 3.00 p.m. (Italian time) at the International Centre in Rocca di Papa.**

Let us remain united in the love that binds Heaven and earth!

*Margaret Karram*