

## **We Encourage One Another: Reflections on 30 Years of Service to RFM**

Jean Zaru began her volunteer service as Clerk of Ramallah Friends Meeting in 1987. Prior to responding to this leading she was president of the YWCA Jerusalem and vice-president of the World YWCA, as well as a teacher of religion & ethics at the Ramallah Friends School. Jean was also a member of the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches and served on the interfaith dialogue group of the Middle East Council of Churches, in addition to raising three children in the Meeting.

A hallmark of Jean's public ministry has been its inclusivity. She holds together both Friends and the wider interfaith community; the local and the global; the earth and all its inhabitants. Her theology of non-violence, articulated as a woman living under prolonged oppression, has been ground-breaking. Her vision of a rights-based, structural transformation of society has inspired countless.



Jean's Reflections on this occasion:

*"My focus during this time has been on the transformation of structures. We must challenge systems which diminish our humanity, while honoring each and every person. Even after experiencing these long years of occupation, I do not wish for a transfer of power from one to the other; rather, power should be channeled as a force for equality and love.*

*"Militarism is the cause of so much of the turmoil the world experiences today. Indeed, militarism is the evil we are all facing. What we truly need is a wider and deeper exchange with one another and between communities.*

*"We desperately need to encourage one another through building community. We need love; we need beauty; and we need encouragement. How else can we carry on?"*

*"Community breaks down fears, crosses boundaries and walls. Growing communities of life is the path to instinctively loving our neighbor. It truly can become reflexive, a way of life, a way of living. In true community, we encourage and embolden one another.*

*"Friends, let us be inclusive in our spirituality. Never to use difference to isolate ourselves or others. Let us be steadfast in the breaking of bread together and in transforming life."*

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The Meeting members are profoundly grateful to Jean and give thanks that she will continue her ministry in Ramallah, undergirding the vibrancy of the Meeting's other ministries while Saleem assumes the responsibilities of clerk.

Has Jean or the Ramallah Friends Meeting touched your life? You are invited to write a tribute on the blog post of this article [here](#) and, if you feel so led, to make a [donation](#).