

World Interfaith Harmony Week Observed in Germany

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Stuttgart, Germany -- Interfaith prayers and a ceremony with light and water were the highlights of the 2017 World Interfaith Harmony Week celebration.

The event was organized jointly by the local chapter of UPF and the House of Religion in Stuttgart. It took place on February 5 in the hall of UPF, which had been lovingly decorated for the occasion.

Hubert Arnoldi, a representative of the House of Religion in Stuttgart, greeted the audience and expressed that they should not hide their light under a bushel but should bundle it together and radiate it with united strength. In this way darkness will be illuminated with heartfelt prayers and the power of goodness will have more room to work actively together with the God of all religions. An intensive prayer can bring the ideal to flourish in various ways, he said.

World Interfaith Harmony Week was first proposed to the United Nations by King Abdullah II of Jordan on September 23, 2010. "Humanity everywhere is bound together not only by mutual interests but by shared commandments to love God and one's neighbor; to love the good in one's neighbor," the king said.

To set the atmosphere for the meeting, guitarist Daniel Henrich performed, moving the participants' hearts before the peace prayers and ceremonies.

UPF representative Karl-Christian Hausmann gave an address in which he stressed that interreligious cooperation is essential for the sake of humankind's further development.

A light and water ceremony was next on the program. Light, among other things, represents truth that is available to all equally; light and fire are transformative and have the highest vibration. Water represents the ocean of truth, into which all rivers empty. Water cleanses; it is flowing love and represents growth and devotion.

In this spirit Mr. Arnoldi opened the ceremony in which representatives of different religions offered their heartfelt prayers to each other in harmony, unity, and complementarity. These are the groups, and their representatives, that participated in this ceremony:

Mihr Foundation, Sufi Islam: Dr. Eda Yesil
Christianity: Margit Henrich
Church of Scientology: Dieter Stukenbrock
Shinto and Buddhism: Yoshiko Arnoldi Ito
First Church of Christ Scientist: Volker Steinle
Christianity: Margarete Reinacher Belomo
Hinduism: Hubert Arnoldi
House of Religion in Stuttgart: Dr. Manfred Schick

After praying, each participant lit a floating candle and set it in a basin of water.



Mr. Arnoldi thanked the audience for their wonderful support for this World Interfaith Harmony Week event: "I was very inspired and moved by all the heartwarming contributions, which we could offer with a united power. I would like to take the opportunity to express my highest praise."

Further activities connected with World Interfaith Harmony Week: the Interreligious Roundtable will evaluate a "learn by playing" game and will screen and evaluate it as a potential pilot project for religious education of the young and young in heart. (More about this later.)

This special event was brought to a close by another guitar solo by Daniel Henrich and a "family photo," and we lingered over coffee and cake for a long time, speaking heart to heart.