

## UPF, Upper Austria's Inter-religious and Intercultural Breakfast in Linz, Austria

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On March 16, inspired by the participation in two inter-religious breakfasts that we conducted last year at UPF, Upper Austria, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints invited us to organize an inter-religious breakfast together with them in their church in Linz, Upper Austria. The theme for this event was "Young Belief—the Young Believe" How do young people arrive from the religious traditions of their parents to their own beliefs?

They prepared a substantial breakfast buffet. And fifty people from five different denominations came. After a welcome by Mrs. Gerlinde Merl (Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints) Mrs. Pammer introduced the Universal Peace Federation and handed a peace ambassador document over to Mrs. Merl and Mr. Mehmed Becirbasic of the Bosnian Mosque in Steyr (host of the previous inter-religious breakfast).

After all guests had helped themselves from the buffet, six representatives of the different denominations gave a keynote speech on the topic "Young Belief—the Young Believe." Mr. Bogdan Pammer (Unification Church) emphasized that faith, hope and love not only unify mankind with God but also one generation with the next. We can believe, because our heavenly and our worldly parents believe in us; we can love, because our heavenly and our worldly parents love us. We can hope because we do have had parents and are or will be parents. God with all his omnipotence did not interfere when Eve and Adam broke the commandment. But after it had happened, God was immediately present. "Where are you Adam?" are God's simple words, which reach down to the bottom of the ocean and out to the boundaries of the cosmos.

Mrs. Anna Szabo (Catholic Church in Upper Austria, Inter-religious Dialogue) said that it occurs to her that parents often cannot hand down to their children the language to express their faith. Teachers and communities can help young people with finding meaning.

Mr. Ali Karadeniz (ALIF, Islamic Religious Community) asked for a moment of silence for the victims of the mass murder in New Zealand. He chose the religion of his parents because religion offers a framework for getting along well together. For him, it is important to be at peace with yourself, to treasure family values and to engage yourself with a larger group. Mr. Sabahudin Mujevic (Bosnian Mosque NUR, Linz) emphasized that Christians and Muslims are more than they are separated linked by values.



Mr. Mehmed Becirbasic (Bosnian Mosque, Steyr) was very touched by the topic "Young Beliefs—the Young Believe" and attested personally how he found his way back to the faith of his parents. His grandfather was an imam, but he himself forgot his faith after his flight to Austria. A door opener back to faith was the behavior of his father, who did not blame him because of his deviations, but still believed in him.

Mr. Dr. André Merl (bishop of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints) emphasized that we are all children of God and therefore brothers and sisters. The murders in New Zealand have nothing to do with faith, but with hate, the inability to love, fanaticism and the lack of having one's own identity. Founder Joseph Smith said, Believe in heaven and act! To believe means to act. You do not suddenly have faith; it is growing organically. Furthermore, we cannot shoulder the burden for children to find their own faith. There were two important messages in his speech: The Lord works from the inside out and the world works from the outside in. Someone who changes himself can also change the world!

The speeches led to a lively exchange with many touching testimonies by young and elderly people and representatives of different denominations. After two hours of deep religious exchange, I felt the spirit of God act among us. We were offered a tour through the premises of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Many guests accepted this offer. The kitchen, a playground for children, the big church interior, the room for baptisms and the genealogy center gave us an insight into their active community.