

UPF-Italy's one-day conference: Cooperation for Peace, Dignity for Everyone

Giuseppe Cali
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Rome, Italy -- "Cooperation for Peace, Dignity for Everyone" was the title of a one-day conference organized by UPF-Italy.

The program, which was held on October 1, 2016, in the UPF Peace Embassy in Colle Mattia, had two parts. In the morning there was a session entitled "Economic Models and Human Dignity." After lunch there was a second session, "Peace and Cooperation among Religions."

Around 65 participants attended the program, including a Jesuit priest, heads of NGOs, university professors, religious leaders and other professionals.

Among them was a member of the Italian Parliament, Hon. Eleonora Bechis. From September 7 to 9 she had attended the UPF International Leadership Conference in London at which the European chapter of the International Association of Parliamentarians for Peace was launched. Hon. Bechis also attended a conference in the Italian Parliament on September 13 that was held by the Italian chapters of UPF and the Women's Federation for World Peace (WFWP), an affiliated organization.



The morning session of the October 1 conference was opened by UPF-Italy Honorary President Giuseppe Cali, who presented the UPF vision and introduced the topic "Economy and Value System." He was

followed by Dr. Maria Grazia De Angelis, president of AISLO (Italian Association for Work Studies), a prominent organization for managers and businesspeople, who spoke on the shortcomings of the present economic system and introduced a few elements of a possible new economic model.

Professor Evaldo Cavallaro, a psychologist, economist and political scientist, introduced a model of economic success in developing countries. Concluding the morning session, Professor Stefano Bartolini, a famous professor at Siena University, exposed the core reasons for the current crisis in the Western world and suggested new solutions for economic and social development.

As the last part of the morning session, UPF explained the international Peace Road initiative and especially the need for the United Nations to open a fifth office on the Korean Peninsula. The explanation was very well received and everybody expressed the desire to support this initiative. The participants took a picture with the "Peace Road" banner, to participate in this important effort for peace in Korea and in the world.



The afternoon session was moderated by Raffaella Di Marzio, an expert on the psychology of religions and member of the board of the organization Human Rights without Frontiers. Elisabetta Nistri Calì, the president of WFWP-Italy, opened the session by introducing women's perspective on peace. Carlo Zonato, the president of UPF-Italy, introduced the UPF vision, especially focusing on interfaith cooperation.

Dr. Dora Bognandi, president of the Federation of Protestant Women and active nationally on the religious dialogue, explained the role of women in the building of a peace environment in the religious realm. Bernadette Fraioli, coordinator of the Incontri project for refugees, spoke about the religious confrontation arising due to the strong wave of immigration in Italy and possible solutions she is experiencing daily, working actively in this field.

Don Luigi, a Jesuit priest, spoke on the necessity for people today to discover the spirituality in the faith of other people and cultures. "The true religion nowadays is interreligious," he said. "No religion can anymore claim its superiority in front of the others, but we should learn and teach to the new generations how to embrace each other with brotherly love." It was particularly meaningful to hear that from a Catholic priest, showing that a wave of renewal and openness is spreading in the Catholic Church, thanks also to the new Pope Francis. Don Luigi actually is working very hard to support spiritually all refugees who come from many cultures and religions.

The conference included a ceremony in which Ambassador for Peace certificates were awarded to Dr. Maria Grazia De Angelis, president of AISLO (Italian Association for Work Studies), and to Dr. Massimiliano Luciani, president of OGI Technologies for Education -- Italy.