

UPF Czech Republic Peace Road Project 2024 in Visits The Slav Epic

Juraj Lajda
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On July 28, 2024, the Czech Republic Peace Road project 2024 attracted over one hundred participants, not only from the Czech Republic but also from Austria and Slovakia, who gathered in front of the Saint Florian chapel on a hill overlooking the town of Moravský Krumlov.



This year's Peace Road focused on bringing an awareness of the need to revive Christian values in Central Europe. The spot where the participants gathered was approximately where Christianity came to the territory of today's Czech Republic and Slovakia more than one thousand years ago.

Christianity offers a path to overcome some of the worst features of human nature such as hatred, arrogance and a lust for power, and points the way to reconcile and unite people and nations on the basis

of humility, unity, love, and service to others.



In his opening speech **Dr. Juraj Lajda**, president of the Czech UPF, remarked that for the previous three years the Peace Road had been organised as a joint project with Austria and Germany on the common border of the three countries, to demonstrate goodwill and unity. But the focus of this year's project was the roots of Christianity. "This is a very special place where in the 9th century Christianity came to the territory of today's Czech Republic and Slovakia," said Lajda.

One of the goals of the Peace Road is to send a signal of support for the peaceful reunification of Korea. Values such as love, service and respect can play a decisive role.

Mrs. Suzana Strkulová, Executive President of the Czech Republic FFWPU, stressed the importance of unity and cooperation and noted that we stand at a crucial moment in history where the call for peace is louder than ever.

Peace is not a distant dream but a tangible goal and an active pursuit that demands our commitment and courage. Together, we can build bridges, foster understanding, and cultivate a world where peace prevails.

Mr. Miloš Klas, President of the Slovak UPF, pointed out that the traditional saying *divide and conquer* (divide et impera) should be replaced by *unite and love*. The Czechs and Slovaks shared a common statehood for 75 years, followed by 33 years of division until this day. However, now again there is talk of unity. The Slavic people long for peace and freedom.

Mr. Peter Haider, President of the Austrian UPF spoke about the relationship between East and West. After the fall of communism, he felt he should do something to foster unity among our nations and visited many Slavic nations. He could feel the deep soul of the Orthodox church and the need to connect and develop the many points in common. He stressed that the fact that people from three nations have come together is of great importance.

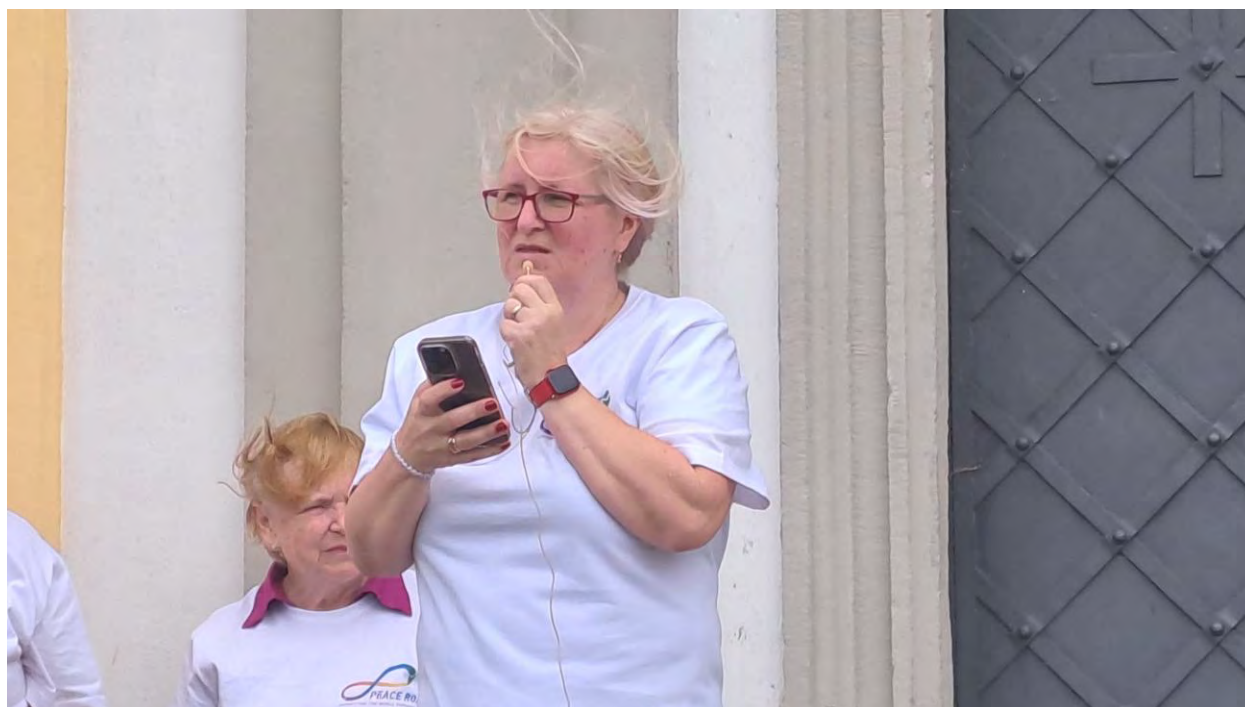
The presence of a young missionary **Yeon Hui Park** from Korea enriched the meeting. She expressed the desire of Korean people for unification of the Korean peninsula and her gratitude that this three nation Peace Road is trying to contribute to this unity.

"I am deeply moved to see so many people participating in the Peace Road for global peace and the reunification of North and South Korea", she said.



The closing remarks were those of **Dr. Dieter Schmidt**, UPF President for Central Europe, and read in his absence by Dr. Miloš Procházka. Dr. Schmidt emphasized the importance of the Peace Road and the work of Rev. Sun Myung Moon and his wife Hak Ja Han for the unification of Korea and the world. Europe, known as the cradle of Christian values, has long been a beacon of hope for those seeking to overcome hatred, arrogance, and the desire for power. These values teach us to rise above our differences and work towards creating a society that is rooted in compassion and respect.

A musical performance and singing accompanied the programme which then continued in the city of Moravský Krumlov with a visit to a famous gallery which houses the Slav Epic, the monumental work of painter Alfons Mucha. This work contains twenty large paintings depicting historical struggles, legends, and key events in Slavic and Christian history. The whole work is compact and captures well the spirit of the history of the Slavic nations.



Only a few months ago, the co-founder of UPF, Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon had visited this gallery to pay tribute to these immense works of art and the history of the Slavic people which they represent.

"It was a great Peace Road bringing nations together" – the words of one participant expressed the sentiments of many who had enjoyed and appreciated the entire event.