

European Marriage Blessing Event

Neumuehle, Bad Camber, Germany, 20. February 2016



By Hildegard Piepenburg

1 5,000 couples from 65 nations received the marriage Blessing from True Parents on the third anniversary of Foundation Day, and amongst them were six couples who participated in the central event with 3,000 couples in Gapyeong, Korea via live stream in the night from Friday to Saturday.



The four second generation couples Spain, Italy and Venezuela. In the case of the two first generation couples from Slovakia and Hungary, the absent partner was represented by a photograph. While the couples had their own program of lectures and talks, the Neumuehle was filling up so that by Saturday afternoon there were about 100 invited guests - families and friends of the couples - ready for the big Blessing ceremony in the festively decorated hall.

Chairs with white covers and large pink ribbons, white curtains and a stage draped in white, flower arrangements and matching decorations on the ceiling and walls - the usually somber seminar room had been transformed like Cinderella before the ball with the prince. Soft music played in the background, while the wedding guests waited in anticipation for the entrance of the bridal couples. There was a slight delay, because, after all, the brides' dresses and hairdos had to be perfect for the big moment.

And then they made their entrance, couple by couple as names and countries of origin were announced, accompanied by the enthusiastic applause of the standing guests. Karl-

Christian and Kathy Hausmann entered as the officiators of the ceremony and Martin Alexy and Yebony Hanna from the European Second Generation Department (ESGD) were the masters of ceremony.



Karl-Christian greeted the couples and asserted that this was the happiest day because they had found a mate with whom they were now embarking on a



life-long journey that would lead right into the lap of God. He recalled True Father's statement that true love can only be God-centered love and encouraged the couples to place God in the centre of all their relationships.



Three Holy Songs, led by three singers and sung by the whole congregation, prepared the atmosphere for the Holy Blessing ceremony. The couples were first sprinkled with Holy Water, to symbolize clarity and purity. Then the officiators read out the wedding vows, to which the couples resounded with a loud 'yes!' They pledged, "as virtuous men and women who will complete the original ideal of Heavenly Parent's creation to become eternal husband and wife, to inherit the tradition established by the True Parents of Heaven, Earth and Humankind, and to realize Cheon-Il Guk as ideal families".

The Blessing ceremony was followed by an exchange of rings to seal an eternal

bond as man and wife. The officiators' official proclamation of the Holy Marriage Blessing declared them to be couples blessed before Heavenly Parents, True Parents and all mankind.

Karl-Christian's congratulatory address was both serious and informal. God needs us to fulfill his dream, and we need God to fulfill our dream. The kingdom of heaven does not come automatically by the wearing of wedding rings. Unity is only possible when we accept that God made man for the sake of woman and woman for the sake of man. The differences between the sexes are essential, because they were made as the object partners of love for each other. Sometimes it is also useful to read books such as 'Why Men Don't Listen and Women Can't Read Maps', as did the whole Hausmann family once on holiday, which they found very amusing and informative. And also older couples from the Family Federation and inspiration from daily Hoon Dok Hae with the words of True Parents provide important support.

Beethoven's 'Ode to Joy', played by Erika Kamura on the grand piano, reflected the joyful atmosphere after the Blessing, which ended with the cutting of a wonderful 4-layered wedding cake. Now it was time for photographs and conversation over coffee, tea and cake while the big hall was being transformed



for a festive banquet.

The evening began with a toast to the couples with alcohol-free champagne. After a tasty salad entrée, the exquisite Korean buffet was opened, prepared by Setsuko Wöllmer and her industrious kitchen staff. The splendid culinary experience was rounded off with desserts and coffee.

Erika played pieces on the piano from Haydn and Chopin and as the evening slowly drew to a close and the many contented guests made their way home, it was clear that the first Blessing ceremony in Europe had been a resounding success.

Special thanks go to those responsible in the ESGD as well as the Family Department with Ana Schmidt, Sarah Zimmermann and Margaret Staudinger who put this event together and have set an excellent standard for many future Blessings. Also, a big thanks to Franz and Anne Sölva from the Neumuehle, and the many volunteers.





