

UPF-Argentina Participates in Olive Tree Planting for Argentina's Bicentennial

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Tucumán, Argentina—UPF-Argentina participated in an olive tree planting ceremony commemorating the bicentennial of Argentina's independence. The event, which was held at the Colombres Museum[1] in the city of San Miguel de Tucumán, was part of the opening of the Argentina Independence Bicentennial Writers' Meeting, "Awareness for Life, Commitment for Peace." Argentina's national anthem was sung, speeches were given, interfaith prayers were offered and music was performed at the one-day program.

After the interfaith prayers, former Argentine legislator Mrs. Beatriz Ávila, who participated in the event with her husband, Mr. Germán Alfaro, mayor of San Miguel de Tucumán, spoke, and said, "The olive tree represents all the values this Bicentennial holds for all Tucuman people and Argentinians." She was among several representatives of government and civil society who affirmed their commitment to these values by throwing dirt on the plant. In addition, each guest contributed a message to the planting of this "Historical Bicentennial Olive Tree."

The olive tree sprout comes from a tree in Paraná—the capital city of Entre Ríos province—that traces back to the Jesuit times. The tree was donated to UPF-Argentina by Ambassadors for Peace Mr. Eduardo Borri and Ms. Jackeline Giusti of the Pacis Nuntii Movement on the occasion of the International Day of Peace 2015. Since then, the tree has been protected by the Chacras of Buenos Aires Foundation, which is led by Ambassador for Peace Mrs. Andrea Vega. The tree was brought to Tucumán by Mrs. Irma Droz, founder and director of América Madre, and Mrs. Alejandra Burzac Sáenz, president of the Argentine Society of Writers (SADE) in Tucumán, who was one of the organizers.

The inspiration for this event came from the view, as Mr. Miguel Werner, secretary general of UPF-Argentina, shared, that "the tree is a symbol of life that dates back to the mythical dawn of time: the Garden of Eden, the natural home of the great human family. The olive tree, the branch of which was carried by a white dove, is recognized as a symbol of peace [around the world.] The planting of the olive tree sprout from a tree that dates back to the Jesuit legacy in Paraná before the birth of our homeland seeks to unify these values, which are cherished yet threatened, [and also seeks] to raise awareness and commitment for Argentina in its bicentennial: with [its] neighbors and our planetary home."

Also, "this olive tree sprout questions us as a historical witness. It makes re-encounter who we are as Argentinians, native peoples and immigrants, [and as a country that is a] melting pot of ethnicities and cultures, with many beliefs and traditions—and as a guiding light for the world. It makes us leave behind the 200-year-old confrontations and battles, in order to develop our homeland, the result of which will be respect for the dignity and inalienable rights of each person. It brings awareness about the power of faith, hope and mercy, and the power of love that overcomes time and conflicts...[It represents a] guarantee of freedom, equality and universal peace."