

UPF Italy: Women Tell Their Stories

Carlo Chierico
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Monza, Italy—High-achieving women told of their personal journeys at a conference about the role of women in society, held in the northern Italian city of Monza on March 28, 2015.

"Women in Progress: Paths and Testimonies" was held at Monza's Urban Center by UPF-Italy, its sister organization Women's Federation for World Peace and the Casa delle Culture (House of Culture). The conference was part of the "Women: Feminine and Plural" initiative promoted by the city of Monza.



The many authoritative women speakers gave the large audience many ideas that were deeply appreciated. The speakers included politicians, journalists, representatives of associations, sportswomen and others.

The conference was moderated by Carlo Chierico, president of the Monza chapter of UPF, and journalist Carlotta Morgana of the newspaper *Il Giorno*. Ms. Morgana opened the meeting with a report on her recent trip to Amsterdam in memory of Anne Frank, while Carlo Chierico recalled the 500th anniversary of the birth of St. Teresa of Avila, an extraordinary woman and an example for all, not only for believers.

Other testimonies, often interrupted by applause from the audience, were offered by Monza City Councilor Laura Morasso; Member of Parliament Hon. Elena Centemero; Vice President of the Lombardy Region Board Sara Valmaggi; Mayor of Muggiò Maria Fiorito; Agrate Brianza City Councilor Giovanna Amodio; Wesam El Husseiny and Diana Mercado Paez, two young people who are involved in volunteering; Monza Skating Club President Marika Kullmann; Claudia Balestreri, captain of the first team of Sanda Volley; Valerio D'Ippolito of the Libera Association; Barbara Apicella, journalist with *Il*

Cittadino; Anna Vicentini, speaker of the Benvenuto International Club; and Annamaria Mussato, vice chair of the Women's Federation for World Peace, Bergamo Chapter.



Monza Deputy Mayor Cherubina Bertola, in her welcoming address, highlighted the commitment of the city of Monza to support equal opportunity and explained the support of initiatives, such as this one organized by UPF, for shared knowledge and integration. Carlo Chierico emphasized the work of UPF International Founders Dr. and Mrs. Sun Myung Moon and their commitment to world peace.

A video of Nobel Laureate Aung San Suu Kyi's recent trip to Italy was shown. Then the audience were invited to sign a petition to enable the Burmese leader, who for many years has been active in the defense of human rights and ethnic minorities in her country, to run for the presidency of Burma.

There was an artistic interlude, with a deep but very pleasant content, with a significant time dedicated to the poet Alda Merini by the experienced art teacher Ettore Fiorina, and songs and music from the folk tradition performed by Lorena Cantarelli, Nicoletta Abbate and Maria Rosaria Marra.

The success of this conference, now in its third edition, means that other meetings like this will follow. In the coming days the summary of all the papers will be published online.

