

UPF-Canada Webinar Series Continues Its Exploration of the Topic of Migration

Robert Duffy
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Montreal, Canada -- UPF-Canada held a webinar on November 30, 2020, on the topic "Migration as a Spiritual Journey." This event continued our general theme on immigration by exploring how migratory journeys impact identity continuity at the individual and family levels, as well as how migration might contribute to the advancement of an inclusive international culture.

Moderated by Mrs. Isabelle Laurin (Coordinator, UPF-Quebec), the program began with welcoming remarks by Robert Duffy (Secretary General, UPF Canada), followed by the moving testimony of Bachir Keyloun and Fabienne Chamy, a highly educated and accomplished Syrian refugee couple who had to restart their lives from the bottom as new immigrants to Canada.



The panel consisted of four distinguished speakers: Rev. Samuel King-Kabu (Pastor, St. Ansgar's Lutheran Church, Montreal); Dr. Martin Bellerose (Associate Professor, Faculty of Theology and Religious Sciences, Laval University); Dr. Marie Fall (Professor and Researcher, Université du Québec à Chicoutimi); and Dr. Franco Famularo (President, UPF-Canada; Chair, Board of Directors, Unification Theological Seminary).

Three of the four panelists have migratory experience, either directly or in their immediate families. The fourth, Dr. Bellerose, is a specialist in migration theology. The discussions were very stimulating and informative.

The migratory journey of the Bashir family shed light on the lived experience of immigrants, especially their description of their internal journey, through which they demonstrated great humility and courage.

As an immigrant from Ghana more than 30 years ago, Pastor King-Kabu's reflections reminded us that in an internal sense all of us are passing through this life as migrants. Referring to biblical migration, he

suggested that migration practically defines not only religious history, but the history of humanity as a whole.

Professor Bellerose referred to divergent causes of migration: exodus or exile. We are called to appreciate and recognize, he said, the religious or spiritual dimension that infuses the historical phenomenon of migration.



Although the approach of Professor Marie Fall was different in that it involved her voluntary migration to seek higher education and a new life in Canada, her presentation emphasized that her own experience has been very positive, and she stressed the openness of our contemporary society towards living together and the enrichment that immigrants bring to a new country.

Finally, Dr. Famularo shared with us his family's journey as migrants to Canada and how their experience as immigrants marked his youth and thinking. Referring to the internal resources on which one draws in adapting to a new homeland, he spoke of the path of new immigrants, mentioning their challenges, struggles and successes.

There was a strong sense of enthusiasm in the discussion, as this topic touches something near and dear to many of us whose ancestors came to this land relatively recently.

