



Czechoslovak HARP Winter Workshop

Focusing on movement beginnings in Czechoslovakia

Dunajská Lužná, Slovakia, December 28 – January 1, 2019

By *Laurenc Klas*

At the end of the past year HARP members from Slovakia and Czech Republic gathered in our seminar center in Lužná to conclude the year together. In Slovakia, 2018 was a year of many anniversaries, the most memorable being the 50th anniversary of the Prague Spring, when the people of former Czechoslovakia strived for more freedom under the communist regime. While this public struggle was crushed by the invasion of Soviet troops, the year 1968 also remembers a remarkable event in the history of our movement, and that is the arrival of the first missionary behind the Iron Curtain.

To honor this occasion, Slovak HARP joined efforts with Czech HARP and held a joint winter workshop based on this theme. The motto of the workshop was about growing our roots more deeply, and the main goal was to make our Second Generation more aware about the foundation they are standing on. Altogether we had 28 participants, equally distributed between Czechs and Slovaks.

Every day had its own topic, the big picture of the workshop describing a continuity from our very roots to our own lives. The talks on the first day focused on True Parents, who they are

and their historic importance. The second day was not only from a calendric perspective the middle day, but also spiritually the core day of the workshop. Two of our elder members (and fathers of the workshop main directors), who joined in the early phase under communist oppression and were imprisoned because of their faith, gave a lively insight into the happenings fifty years ago. Through sharing about their experiences, participants could learn how the Divine Principle came to the communist parts of Europe, how the movement grew rapidly despite being threatened by the communist authorities, and how the government persecuted our members ending in a large number of members being imprisoned. Following these testimonies, the participants were reminded, that not only the first members during communist times underwent hardships, but all our parents sacrificed much to make it possible for us to be here. In a deep activity, the young HARP members were encouraged to reflect on how grateful they are towards their parents. They also received a homework, to get to know more about their parents' lives and feelings when they joined our movement. Finally, on the last full day the lectures focused on our identity as Second Generation and the foundation we are standing on thanks to True Parents and our parents.

Apart from the lectures the participants also had the chance to time travel in a fun activity. During the "Adventure" game teams had to collect different evidences to free a member who was being judged because of his faith. In a court case they had to work together to disprove the false allegations from the communist authorities. This time the story concluded with a happy end and the member was set free.

The schedule of the workshop also offered many other activities. A games evening was held as well as various team activities. There was also a brothers/sisters afternoon, where each group had the opportunity to go ice skating, and participants could choose between a number of Creative groups as well.

Each Creative Group prepared a performance for the Family evening, which was concluding the last day of the year. After some entertainment the last moments were spent reflecting about the past year and sharing some highlights of the year. Finally, surrounded by beautiful fireworks the new year was welcomed with a midnight prayer.

For every single one who contributed to make this workshop an amazing time: Thank you very much!







