

UPF Upper Austria holds interreligious breakfast on *Love-Life-Lineage*

Maria Pammer
March 23, 2024



UPF Upper Austria held an interreligious breakfast on the topic of "Love-Life-Lineage" in Linz on 23 March, 2024.

In her welcoming remarks, **Maria Pammer, UPF Upper Austria**, stated that *love-life-lineage* is a big issue for religious people. Jesus said, "You belong to your father the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desires." (John 8:44). How can we be taken back into the lineage of the Heavenly Father, our Heavenly Parents? This topic is not only important on a spiritual level; the confusion caused by philosophers such as Foucault and Derrida calling into question the polarity of man and woman, and therefore love, life, and lineage, must also be addressed.



Hans Ledermüller, Upper Austrian community leader of the FFWP, opened with a prayer, then the participants enjoyed refreshments to uplifting piano music played by **Clemens Haslhofer**.

Then followed the keynote speech delivered by **Heinz Kreck, a Catholic theologian**, in which he addressed the topic of love-life-lineage, quoting from the Bible, the Koran, Buddhist texts and Father Moon. He emphasised the importance of good parental example in childhood development.

Representatives of the various religious communities then spoke on the topic from personal experiences and the teachings of their own spiritual background.

Karl-Heinz Feihl, head of the New Apostolic Church in Steyr emphasised that women have been more involved in their community's spiritual ministry for the past two years and that the closer we come to the centre, to God, the smaller the distance between human beings becomes.

Gerlinde Merl, from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, played us the first song from her church's children's songbook:

"I am a child of God, who sent me into the world and made me happy here with an earthly home and parents: Lead, guide and accompany me, that I may find the way; teach me to do everything that will one day bring me to Him. ..."

This text refers to lineage, our earthly life and our Heavenly Parents to whom we will return.



Brigitte Bindreiter, representative of the Buddhist community in Upper Austria, emphasised that everything in the cosmos is one, even when each person is individually shaped by their parents.

Mehmed Becirbasic from the Bosnian mosque in Steyr gave a very personal account of his experiences in Austria as a child after fleeing from a small village in Bosnia, and his current life in Austria in a three-generation household. He spoke very movingly about the loving care given by his mother to his terminally ill father until his death. Mr Becirbasic thus experienced the nature of true love and is determined to develop such a love for his wife.



Bishop Christine Mayr-Lumetzberger explained that as a pastor she is confronted with many different difficult situations in people's lives. Her main task is to listen and empathise.

Rev. Arthur Nzekwu from the Celestial Church of Christ in Vienna expressed that his early experiences in Africa and his many years in Europe, have led him to think deeply about the difference between true love and selfish love. He appreciates the opportunity of inter-religious exchange such as is offered here.

Peter Haider, President of UPF-Austria, reported on the WIHW (World Interfaith Harmony Week) events at the UN, which he has been organising for ten years. He also emphasised that the diversity of religions and nations in our larger cities is an enrichment for all.

Hans Brunnbauer, IMAP (International media Association for Peace) Austria, emphasised the importance of an active approach to the media.



Maria Pammer reported on the last working group of the Upper Austrian Religious Advisory Council, an initiative of the regional government. Its task was to develop a flyer displaying initiatives to support peaceful coexistence, offered by religious communities to the municipalities and mayors. She not only encouraged those present to get more involved in the Religious Advisory Council but suggested that we, as religious people, network to spread more widely in society the values discussed today. This suggestion was met by enthusiasm by all, and a determination made that the religious communities would in the future better cooperate with and support each other.