

UPF – WFPW Conference in Monza: “Education to Peace - Vision and Paths”

Monza, Italy, 20. September 2014

The conference was held at the Urban Center in Monza on September 20, 2014 the Conference "Education to Peace - Vision and Paths", on the occasion of the "International Day of Peace" proclaimed by the United Nations; The meeting was followed, in the evening, by the now customary Interfaith Prayer Vigil for World Peace.



The conference held in Monza was in some respects unique. From the point of view of the structure because the large number of speakers who – as it rarely happens - complied with the timing of their speeches. From the point of view of the contents because of the concrete proposals and of the concrete achievements presented. From the point of view of the spirit because the meeting showed a rather remarkable convergence of opinions on the topics under discussion. Although the expression of different ideas, the keywords were truly "convergence", "respect", "acceptance", "interaction", "cooperation".

The Conference has been free of preconceived ideologies, verbal clashes, mutual intolerance, which sometimes also involve people with the best

intentions. This does not mean all the speakers flattened their speeches on a unique position. It means that they understood the importance of the common goal and the need to join forces to reach it, despite coming from different directions, which is exactly the goal of UPF.

The meeting, which was attended by a large audience, was opened by the President of UPF Monza, **Carlo Chierico**, who expressed an extraordinary desire and idea to the City Council members who were at the Conference: to make Monza the Capital of Peace; the Mayor of Monza, **Roberto Scanagatti**, in his welcome speech, took up the idea, confirming his intention to make Monza, if not the capital, at least the City of Peace.

It then began the first session, on “The value of



Interreligious Cooperation”. It was chaired by Dr **Adel Jabbar**, a sociologist, who coordinated the seven speakers of that panel. This session was one in which the international presence was stronger: two speakers had come from Israel on purpose, **Prof. Glaubach** and **Mr Ben Zvi**, Pastor **Ana Rosa Pereira**, of Brazilian origin, of the Baptist church in Milan, **Yousef Sbai**, the vice president of the Union of Islamic Communities of Italy, of Arab origin.

It was important in particular the speech of the two Israelis, who explained what the UPF is doing in Israel to help overcome the terrible conflict that plagues the region since decades. **Giuseppe Cali**, President of the Family Federation for World Peace, which has always been committed to inter-faith, expressed his appreciation for all the activities to bring into collaboration all the faiths of the world.

The second session, entitled **“The Role of Politics**, was chaired by **Rosario Montalbano**, spokesman for the Education of the City of Monza. The seven speakers that have followed - including the President of the Province of Monza-Brianza **Dario Allevi**, deputies, mayors, MEP **Cécile Kyenge** - illustrated the way in which governments face the problem of peace. The local and European policy are treating the problem of peace from the point of view of the management of immigration: they therefore spoke about some projects completed or in progress especially regarding the integration and acceptance of migrants in the country. Integration does not necessarily go through assimilation, but through the acceptance of the plurality of cultures and faiths.

After the lunch break, the **choir Vocalincanto** led by **Daniela Cattaneo**, offered a selection of works greatly appreciated.

The third session then started, which was dedicated to **“The Role of the Mass Media”** and chaired by

Mauro Sarasso, President of Insubria Media Point, an association for ethics in communication.

The speakers, seven journalists from local and national newspapers, addressed the possibility that the journalists to become promoters of peace. Such a question implied also how to address important issues like the ethic necessary to the journalist in today's society to meet the challenges that the difficulties and the comparison with the new media require.

In the fourth session **“The Word to the Associations for Peace”**, presided by Carlo Chierico, speeches were given by the representatives of eight organizations whose goals are, at their core, the promotion of peace. Among these, the Presidents of UPF Italy, **Carlo Zonato**, and **Elisabetta Nistri**, National President of the Women's Federation for World Peace. She spoke about the value of the family as cell of society, so that if we are able to create harmony in the family all the society will benefit. Therefore is very important to strengthen and protect the family.

The fifth and final session **“The Word to the Young People”**, was chaired by **Wesam El Hussein**, Ambassador of Peace. Representatives of seven youth groups presented their proposals and especially their testimonies on how one can aim at the realization of peace.

In the evening at 9 PM, outdoors. in front of the Town Hall, was held on the tenth **Interfaith Prayer Vigil**; the tenth anniversary in fact inspired the organization of the conference, which collected the fruit of all these years of work on the theme of peace and acceptance. An even more numerous than the previous year's attendance celebrated with words, songs and prayers the World Day of Peace.

