

International Day of Families Observed in Italy

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May 23, 2015



Bergamo, Italy—A variety of religious, ethnic and cultural organizations joined with UPF-Italy to exalt the family in honor of International Day of Families.

The meeting was held on May 23, 2015, in the Auditorium San Sisto, a former Catholic church, with all its original frescoes, that has been transformed by the city of Bergamo into an auditorium. Last year's commemoration of International Day of Families also was held in the same place.

UPF-Italy National President Carlo Zonato welcomed the participants, explaining the value that UPF gives to the natural family and the importance of protecting it and helping it in such a difficult historical moment. He then introduced the choir Vocalincanto, which had traveled more than 50 kilometers to perform at the meeting.



The first speaker was Nicola Sisto of the association "La tua Bergamo," which tries to solve the most urgent problems of those who contact them, especially in the domain of work. He spoke of the importance that his association gives to the family, and he stressed that it is necessary for the government to support and protect the family.

Pastor Samuel of the Christ Victory Church of Seriate in the province of Bergamo, the next speaker, explained how tragic the current situation of the family is, subjected to so many attacks, and how today's mistaken concepts of freedom are accelerating its disintegration: The result of the recent Irish referendum on same-sex marriage is the latest example, he said. This result contradicts every religion's Scriptures concerning the family, he said.

Abdurrahmane, from the Islamic Community of Bergamo, described the Islamic concept of the family, which is founded on loyalty, love and respect between spouses, filial piety of children to their parents, and the fear of God in all its members. In Islam, marriage is a covenant that binds the couple with a divine law, he said; therefore a society is strong when its members, namely families, are strong.

The representative of the Association of Filipinos in Italy, Miss Evelyn Rivera, explained the concept of the family in the Philippines: a reference point for both the material things and for the affections. She spoke of the great pain experienced by Filipinos who have to leave their family, as she and many others have done in order to emigrate. In the Philippines grandparents are very important, she said; traditionally they are an integral part of the family, and without them it would not be possible, for example, for families to work abroad.



After her presentation, a Filipino singing group sang some traditional songs.

Priest and teacher Baktya Labhya, representing the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, was the next speaker. After a long song, sung and played in honor of Krishna, he introduced his family to the participants. He expressed his religion's view on the family: that it is a school of love where children learn from their parents but also parents learn from their children. How important is conscious fatherhood and motherhood, he said; how essential it is to desire children, because the more a child is desired, the more that the child's arrival in the household will bring harmony and not disharmony!



Today we live in the age of Kali Yuga, he said, an era in which evil and disintegration have dominance. This era will end, however—especially if people stop doing the immoral activities that poison the life of society.

Adosco Comito, the president of the Bergamo branch of the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification, one of UPF's sister organizations, reiterated the points that his group has in common with the other faiths represented at the meeting. He pointed out that all turn to the same God, even though we call Him by different names. In fact, we all belong to the same human family, and the differences in religions are minor compared to the concept that all religions emphasize the sanctity of the family.

UPF-Italy President Carlo Zonato closed the meeting by thanking everyone for their investment, including the choir Vocalincanto, which performed several musical compositions from various parts of the world.

At the conclusion of the meeting, everyone was invited to partake of the international buffet that had been prepared by the participants from many countries.