

Flowers of Interfaith Harmony

The Activities of Peace Makers in the Middle East

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By Barbara Grabner

To support the World Interfaith Harmony Week the Slovak UPF chapter decided to hold an event titled **“The Activities of Peace Makers in the Middle East”**. We wanted to highlight the contributions of the Middle East Peace Initiative from the beginnings until today. The response of the invited persons was right away favorable when we announced the event which took place in a conference hall in Bratislava (9.2.2016). Interfaith is still in its fledgling state in this country with its conservative Catholic population. Many religious associations cannot register because they do not meet the standard of a membership of 20,000. Fears of Islam are flaring so that the population favors a selective policy of accepting only Christian refugees from Syria.

To warm-up the atmosphere we showed an introductory video with the song **“Gift of Love”** by Sami Yusuf. Then followed the portrait of UPF founder Rev. Moon with his fitting words: **“Heaven has allowed the growth of religious realms in relation to certain ages and regional cultures as the providence has unfolded in history. Within these religious realms mankind has worked with unceasing effort to realize a world of peace. In an environment where people serve one another a basis for peace emerges. Flames of revival blaze when people**



sacrifice themselves for the benefit of others and flowers bloom and spread **their fragrance when love is shared.**” Then UPF secretary general Milos Klas showed a PowerPoint presentation of MEPI which included the latest conferences on Syria.

Thereafter followed an emotional video message of Pope Francis supporting interfaith activities. By now the audience was prepared to listen to the various religious representative. Especially impact made the speech of Lama Peter Banas who stressed that the enemy is within us and that peace is coming naturally with the change of

our attitudes towards others. The speech of the Hare Krishna leader Raghunatha provoked questions and reflections too. One guest later commented that it needed this UPF meeting to make him find out about their faith; in no other location he would have listened to them. All first time guests received the autobiography of the UPF founder.

One lady had donated dozens of potted hyacinths for the participants to remember this evening of Interfaith Harmony which was appreciated by everyone.

