

European Blessed Family Department Annual Meeting in Altavilla, Switzerland

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When I first learned about the event, I knew it was something that I needed to do but wasn't quite sure how it would practically work out with my family. Then, when my husband offered me the chance to go, there were no more questions left so I registered and booked my flight. I'm so glad that I did.

The first gift I received from Heaven was the chance to go.

The second gift was when I discovered the range of mountains on the horizon. As I realised I was going to be surrounded by mountains, my heart just jumped for joy, I was receiving a very personal and special treat from God.

The third gift was the opportunity to meet and get to know some amazing people who have taken ownership of Our Heritage as Blessed Families; many of them mature Second Generation parents with their growing families, showing real passion and commitment.

The venue, Altavilla, is high up in the Alps with amazing views of the city of Alba and Mont Blanc further in the distance.

The programme started with Hoon Dok Hae at 7 AM on Friday, where we read "Our Standard" – True Father's speech from 1981. The speech set the right tone for two and a half amazing days packed with meetings, sharing, learning from each other and bonding.

The event was hosted by the EUBFD team and led by our wonderful 2nd Generation sister, Orlande Schenk. There were BFD representatives from many European countries, as well as brothers and sisters who are interested in working with the Blessed Family Department in the future. Orlande especially wanted to meet young people with such interest and indeed many of them came.

After the introduction by Orlande, we had a Personal Development Seminar led by Rafael Guignard, an elder 2nd Generation brother from France. He has developed a personal development framework, inspired by "Peace Starts With Me" which is all about harmony, where all areas of life work together rather than coming into conflict with each other. It is aligned with True Parents' teaching and lifestyle, and distinguishes 12 life categories we all need to master. In addition, he prepared a self-assessment sheet for all participants to fill in – in our own time.

The second day was all about the Blessing. We went through the conditions to receive the Blessing and the application process in great detail. Orlande is preparing a handbook on the "Ten Steps on the Path to Matching and Blessing for Parents and Candidates", which will be available soon. One important new development I need to mention is that there is now a way for inter-generational Blessing.

On Sunday, the final day, we looked at a few of the Educational and Healing Tools we have for Blessed Families. We learned about Safe Conversations, founded by Harville Hendrix PhD. and Helen LaKelly Hunt PhD. Safe Conversations is about learning how to give the love that heals. The first thing in Safe Conversations is to sign the Zero-Negativity Pledge.

Finally, we were introduced to the Emotion Code and Body Code developed by Dr. Bradley Nelson. We were invited to a demonstration of how the Emotion Code works and heard several testimonies of its success with members, including many 2nd Generation brothers and sisters.

In conclusion, the BFD meeting was an amazing opportunity to empower all of us who are enthusiastic about and committed to the "Culture of Heart". Thank you to all who made it possible.