

UPF-Argentina celebrated International Day of Peace at the National Library

Carlos Varga
September 21, 2016



Buenos Aires, Argentina—UPF-Argentina celebrated the International Day of Peace with a program at the National Library, where awards for the 8th International Poetry Contest, “Peace as the Protection of Creation,” were given, which had 310 participants from 31 countries. The event took place on September 21, 2016.

Ambassadors for Peace María Teresa Narváez and Christian Oreb, coordinator of the civil society network, Red Cooperar, gave the welcoming remarks. They also recognized the many organizations that supported the event (1); among the sponsors were the United Nations Information Centres (UNIC) of Argentina and Uruguay and the Ministry of Culture of Buenos Aires city. Ambassador for Peace and journalist Horacio Daboul read the UN Secretary-General’s message for this year’s Day, whose theme is: “The Sustainable Development Goals: Building Blocks for Peace.”

One of the highlights of the event was the interfaith session, which featured a performance of the “United Nations for Peace: Interfaith and Intercultural Anthem,” by a chorus comprised of members of different faith traditions. The celebration culminated with a reading of the two poems that won first prize in the contest, and closed with the chorus of the Collegiate Association for the Research of Principle (CARP)-Argentina singing, “Un hogar para todos (One Home for Everyone).”

Culture of the Creator

Every year since it started holding International Day of Peace celebrations in 2009, UPF-Argentina has invited religious leaders to pray and share messages at the events, recognizing that “there is no peace among nations if there is no peace among religions.” Last year, music groups from different faiths offered a song. This year, the chapter brought representatives from and singers of different faiths to sing one song together.

Members of the Christian (Catholic and Evangelical), Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, Unificationist, and New Apostolic faiths comprised the interfaith chorus. They sang “United Nations for Peace: Interfaith and Intercultural Anthem” – a song whose lyrics are by Wilson Carminatti – and were accompanied by someone playing the piano and someone playing the guitar.

Music transcends all boundaries and can bring us closer to the ideal of one universal family. This message was conveyed through the anthem and was emphasized in the message Mr. Carlos Varga, director of UPF-Argentina, gave. He talked about the “Culture of the Creator,” and said His love is expressed through the Creation and each one of His sons and daughters.

Peace in Our Heart

The International Day of Peace was established in 1981 by the UN as a day devoted to “strengthening the ideals of peace, both within and among all nations and peoples.” To support this, UPF-Argentina holds an international poetry contest every year focused on peace. “Peace as the Protection of Creation” was the theme of this year’s contest, which had 310 participants from 31 countries, spanning five continents.

The nations with the most entries after Argentina were Spain (31 participants), Mexico (17), Colombia (15), Uruguay (13), Chile (10), Peru (8), Venezuela (7), Brazil (5), and Cuba (5). Poems were also received from Algeria, Armenia, Australia, Bolivia, Canada, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, France, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Honduras, Israel, Italy, Nicaragua, Palestine, Romania, Switzerland, USA, and Uzbekistan.

The first awards were given to the authors of the poems that were selected for their lyric and testimonial value, even though they did not comply with the requested topic. These poems were “Oración de un niño sirio,” by Adrián Narváez (Rivadavia, Argentina); “Regreso a Tombuctú,” by Alberto Arecchi (Pavía, Italy); “El sueño de Nezahualcóyotl,” by Emilio Barraza Durán (Viña del Mar, Chile); and “Colombia herida,” by Jorge Fernando Montenegro Ballesteros (Bogotá, Colombia). Mentions, Special Mentions, and Honorable Mentions were then recognized.

Two Spanish women were among the five people who received Special Mentions: Amparo Bonet Alcón (Valencia, Spain) and Teresa Rubira Lorén (Alicante, Spain). Mrs. Alcón was represented by Dr. Esteban Costanzo, vice chancellor of the Ecclesiastical Court of Appeals in Argentina, who received her prize on her behalf, and Mrs. Lorén, who also could not attend the event, sent a message. Verónica Baeza Yates, from Santiago, Chile, shared the inspiration behind her poem, “La paz en tu mesa,” and gave a beautiful present to UPF-Argentina.

The Honorable Mentions included one international winner, María Soledad Salazar Valenzuela (Santiago, Chile), who was given her award by Bolivian writer Rossemarie Caballero. Federico Miguel Nieto traveled from Jujuy, a province in northwest Argentina, and Carlos Alberto Boaglio traveled from Córdoba, in central Argentina, to attend the awards ceremony. Mr. Boaglio acknowledged the mayor of Vicuña Mackenna, a town in Córdoba, for supporting his participation in the ceremony. Mrs. Raquel Graciela Fernández (Villa Domínico, Buenos Aires), who has won multiple awards for her poems, could not attend the event. (A full list of the winners can be viewed [here](#).)

Sólo entonces... (Only then...)

The jury chose two people for the First Prize to represent the importance of peaceful coexistence in our world.

The winners were Cecilia María Labanca (Martín Coronado, Buenos Aires), whose poem was entitled, “Entonces... Sólo entonces...” and Irma Droz (Santa María de Punilla, Córdoba), whose poem was entitled, “La casa grande.” Both read their poems to the audience (2).

Building Peace

In this edition of the contest, plastic artists were invited to submit a drawing, painting or design to be considered for the cover or as an illustration for the interior of the publication that will comprise all the winning and selected poems. “Building Peace” (“Construyendo paz”), an oil painting on canvas by Carina Cecilia Ianni (Centenario, Neuquén province), was the winning piece of artwork for the cover. Four pieces of artwork were selected as illustrations for the interior of the anthology.

The award certificates and gifts for the authors of the winning and selected poems were given by members of UPF-Argentina and the chapter’s Peace Council, as well as members of the jury: Mr. Vargas and his wife, Laura Correa; UPF-Argentina Peace Council members Alba Rosa Contardo, Orfa Pérez and Alba Luz Tangarife; jury members writer and plastic artist Mabel Fontau, member of Hispanic Cultural and Literary Institute (ILCH) and Gente de Letras; writer and plastic artist Martha Edith Candiotti, curator and member of the Argentine Society of Writers (SADE) and vice president of the Almafuerte Literary Group; poet Donato Perrone, coordinator of Café Tortoni’s Lyrical Space and a representative of the Poets Livres group of Santa Catarina, Brazil; and Miguel Werner, secretary general of UPF-Argentina.

The winners not only received an award certificate, but also 10 copies of the anthology, “Peace as the Protection of the Creation” which were donated by the jury, and a copy of the autobiography of UPF Founder Rev. Sun Myung Moon, “As a Peace-Loving Global Citizen.”

One Home for Everyone

All the participants received a copy of the anthology with the winning and selected poems, a biography of each author and UPF-Argentina’s Statement for the Day (3).

The event also included a performance by CARP-Argentina's chorus, who sang "Un hogar para todos" (One Home for Everyone).

(1) Supporters:

Dirección General de Cultos de la Municipalidad de José C. Paz; Intendente Municipal de Vicuña Mackenna; Consejo de Paz de la República Argentina; Foro Permanente para la Educación, la Ciencia y la Cultura por la Paz (FOPAZ); Organización por la Paz Mundial (WWPO); PAZIFLAC; Unión Mundial de Escritores por la Cultura, la Ecología y la Paz (UMECEP); Acercando Naciones Asociación Civil; Fundación FOCOS de Compromiso Social para la Acción; Red Interreligiosa Juntos para la Comunidad; Iglesia Evangélica Luterana Unida; Escuela Argentina de Yoga y Ayurveda / Escuela Científica Basilio; Asociación del Espíritu Santo (AESUCM); Iglesia Scientology Argentina; Sociedad Argentina de Artistas Plásticos (SAAP); Departamento de Cultura de la Central de Trabajadores de Uruguay – PIT-CNT; Foro de los Sabios (Córdoba); Sembrar Valores; Asociación de Educadores de Latinoamérica y del Caribe (AELAC) - Filial Ciudad Autónoma de Buenos Aires; Red Cooperar de Organizaciones de la Sociedad Civil de la Ciudad Autónoma de Buenos Aires; Maestros Sin Fronteras; Asociación de Mujeres Peruanas Unidas Migrantes y Refugiadas (MPUMR); Foro Femenino Latinoamericano; Centro de Planeamiento Estratégico para la Seguridad Social (CPESS); Casa de África en Argentina; Asociación Ciudad Hermana San Clemente Argentina; Profesionales para la Salud Integral (PROSAI); Taller de Inclusión Mensajeros de Francisco (Paraná); SADE Filial Zona Norte; SADE Atlántica Mar del Plata; SADE Filial Lomas de Zamora; Red Cultura de Mujeres Alfonsina Storni; V.OC.ES. (Villa Ocampo Escribe); La Lupa Cultural - Revista digital de letras, arte y música; Ustedes, Nosotros y el Arte; Acción de Paz – Revista y programa radial; Programa radial "Kanto Sin Fronteras"; Todo Aroma Programa Educativo; Programa radial Esperanza Argentina.

(2) First Prize Poems (Shared)

(3) International Day of Peace 2016

STATEMENT

First: Conflict and violence are rooted in the absence of dialogue in human relationships, and they originate from the removal of our highest ideals and hopes. Aggression is a symptom of social, moral and spiritual failure. If we really want to end violence and weapons of mass destruction, we should commit ourselves for a moral and spiritual awakening.

Second: Law alone cannot change the culture of violence. It has to be upheld by significant educational programs related to character development, conflict resolution and the promotion of a "culture of encounter," dialogue, cooperation and service to others, transcending ethnicities, nationalities and religions. Men and women who have been educated by these values will fulfill their duties and responsibilities to others and will respect and live for the sake of their community and nation.

Third: Family, being the cornerstone of society, is the primary school of ethics, the institution where children should learn about respect, values and living for others. By strengthening marriage and such families, we can establish a culture of coexistence and fraternity. The countless resources which are now used for weapons instead of solving conflicts by peaceful means can be reassigned to human development, starting with that "basic cell" for the progress of societies and peoples.

Fourth: Lasting peace cannot be ensured by simply avoiding the use of weapons and nuclear arsenals. It is grounded in the solidarity of the community and the recognition that we are all brothers and sisters who share the same planetary home, the same origin and spiritual heritage, an inalienable dignity.

Fifth: The understanding that we are a great family under the same, one God raises the collective will to end violent conflicts. Goodness and harmony with other peoples and cultures will result in coexistence with our natural environment.

UPF-Argentina embraces and celebrates the International Day of Peace, established in 1981 by the UN Resolution 36/67, which calls us to dedicate every September 21 "to reinforce the ideals of peace in all nations and peoples of the world."

Buenos Aires, September 21, 2016