

UPF UK's Family Festival celebrates the importance of marriage to bring together

Josh McGuigan and David Wills
June 1, 2019



Family and friends gathered in Lancaster Gate to participate in a Family Festival to celebrate the importance of marriage to bring together people in love from many different races, religions and nationalities in today's divided world.

The festival began with MC Matthew Huish welcoming attendees before inviting Jeff Bateman onto the stage for a rendition of 'Danny Boy', played on an Irish flute.

Ajay Rai followed this speaking of his experience of marriage beyond borders. He explained his preparation for matching within his traditional family background while he was in his early teens. When he was in fact blessed in marriage later in life it was with someone of a very different background and culture. He had to consider, "Was this marriage just about me? Or was it something more than just me? Was it even something more than just me and my wife? And that's what I came to understand. That actually through this marriage, through this blessing, we are doing something beyond ourselves. We, as families, are bringing the world together."

David Rennie spoke of 'Ending Hatred, Starting Love'. He shared about his own experiences in his family. His wife is German and he is English. They were introduced and blessed in marriage by Father Moon. They had gradually broken down barriers of resentment and bitterness in his family that had suffered greatly during the Second World War. He spoke of the stages, over a number of years, by which those barriers had been slowly overcome. He showed a picture of a charming young grandchild being embraced by her grandmother. Healing within such a family takes a natural course!

Ron and Catherine German, the Marriage Blessing Ceremony officiators for the family festival, came on stage together in order to initiate the ceremony for couples to rededicate their marriage to each other. It also included interfaith readings, vows and prayers. The couples participating in the Blessing joined Ron and Catharine German in front of the stage.

Once this Ceremony was concluded, David Mann offered two celebratory songs before inviting his spouse onstage for a third song. A quiz based around the family followed, before MC Matthew Huish brought the festival to an end with closing remarks. Those participating joined together to eat a celebratory meal and shared time together for a quite some time afterwards.

The Family Festival gave everyone there the opportunity to celebrate the union of marriage as well as helping them understand how important marriage is in healing a world that is still far from being one loving family under God.