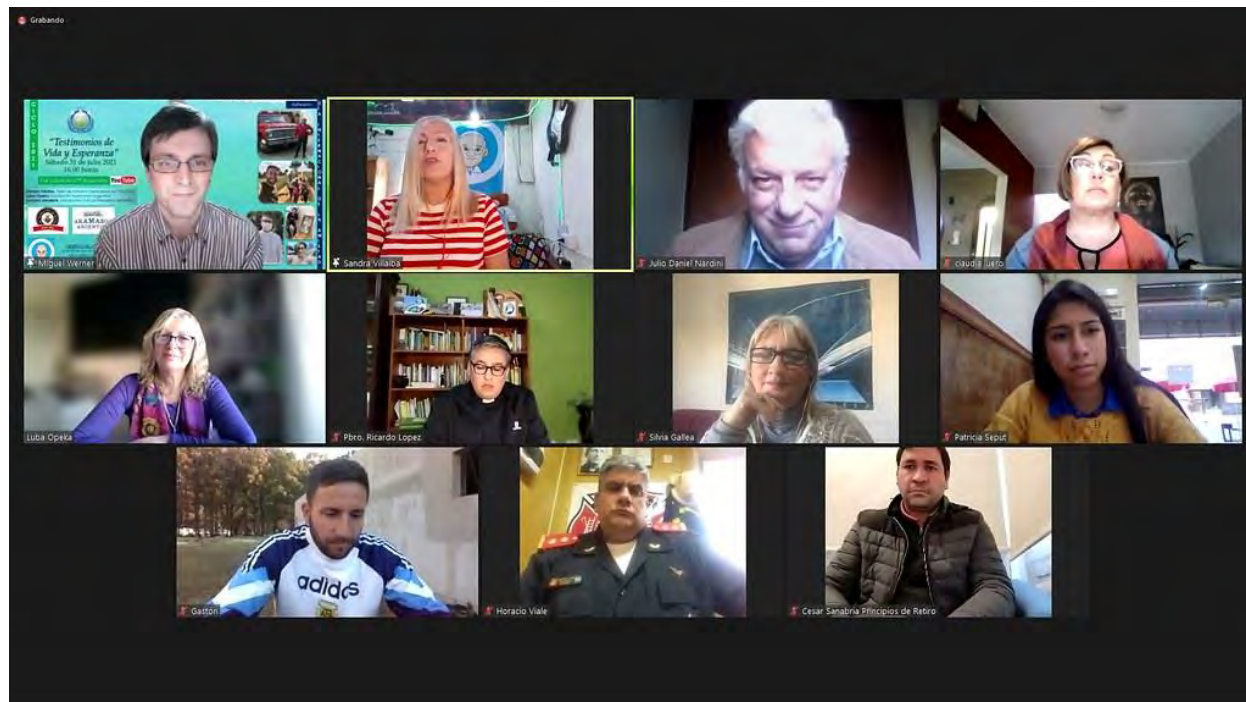


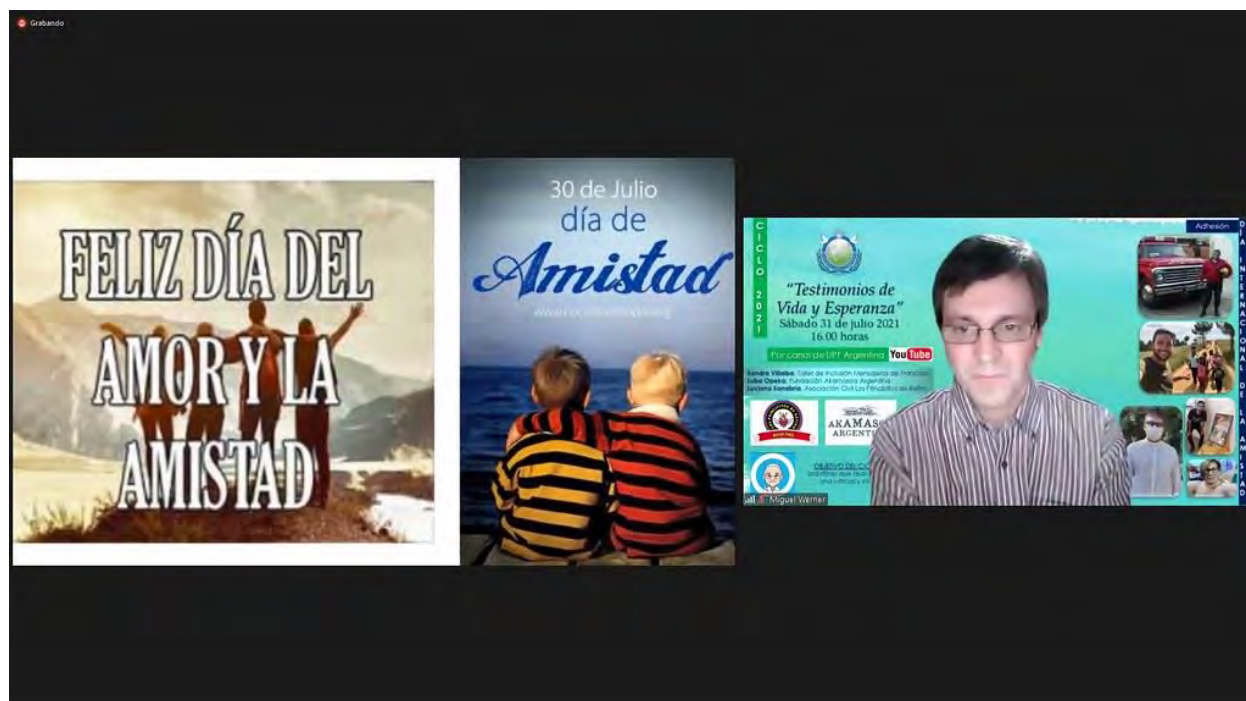
UPF-Argentina's program: Testimonies of Life and Hope on Friendship Day

Miguel Werner
July 31, 2021



Argentina -- In support of International Friendship Day, UPF-Argentina's program "Testimonies of Life and Hope" sought to share good practices and social commitment in different Argentinian neighborhoods, where even more people have fallen into poverty. This online event took place on July 31, 2021, and was broadcasted on YouTube with more than 260 views (2).

Ambassadors for Peace **Sandra Villalba**, coordinator of the Francis Messengers' Inclusion Workshop; **Luba Opeka**, from the Akamasoa Foundation in Argentina; and **Luciano Sanabria**, from the Civil Association the Little Princes of Retiro, proposed potential speakers. Through them, we witnessed examples of resilience, solidarity, overcoming of difficult situations and commitment for common good in different neighborhoods across the country. All this was done with the assistance of **Patricia Seput**, UPF-Argentina staff.



"Roads of Hope" was the theme chosen by Father **Ricardo López**, new Ambassador for Peace, priest at the Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish in Paraná in Entre Ríos Province. He talked about entrepreneurship, workshops and spiritual practices to help the San Martín Neighborhood community ("Volcadero"), which is experiencing different issues, from illiteracy to drug addiction (2).

From the same city, a solidarity experience under the theme "Helping is Gratifying" was shared by journalist **Claudia Luero**, general coordinator of Once por Todos (TV channel in Paraná). She explained

a campaign to collect food and other resources which has taken place in Paraná each December for 17 years (3).

With the theme "Firefighters of Hope," **Horacio Viale**, chief of volunteer firefighters from Barrio 31, talked about his duties there in the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires. With very limited resources, they have to put out fires and attend various emergencies in a wide area inhabited by more than 80,000 people (4).



Finally, **Gastón Vigo Gasparotti**, founder and president of Akamasoa Argentina, presented a PowerPoint on "Lima, City of Hope," where he shared the valuable work he develops in Lima, an impoverished town in northern Buenos Aires due to the closure of factories (5). Inspired by **Father Opeka**, who brought dignity back to thousands of people who lived in misery in Madagascar, Gastón recently initiated his work and education project with effort and resources provided by the religious community.

After the "Testimonies of Life and Hope," a commentary was given by professor **Julio Nardini**, member of UPF-Argentina's Peace Council and representative of the International Association of Academicians for Peace (IAAP) in Argentina. He went over various highlights and expressed appreciation for the protagonists of social transformation in each of the locations. At the end of each presentation, the organization's information (e-mail, phone number, etc.) was displayed for those who might wish to help any initiative.

Miguel Werner, president of UPF-Argentina, moderated the meeting, the objective of which was "to introduce testimonies of life and hope with the presentation of good practices that inspire and allow us to see the reality of poor neighborhoods; to encourage a valuable, positive action for common good through a collaborative work between Ambassadors for Peace and their organizations." The meeting concluded with artistic performances from different locations. A song was performed at Los Nazarenos School from "El Volcadero" of Paraná, where pediatrician **Eduardo Ailan** does a valuable job. Also, performers danced to the famous song "Jerusalem," in Lima town and Madagascar.

This event was held as part of International Friendship Day 2021, established by the UN General Assembly in 2011, "with the idea that friendship between peoples, countries, cultures and individuals can inspire peace efforts and build bridges between communities." In keeping with this goal, we showed related videos made by Ambassadors for Peace. One of them included different messages collected by **Luba Opeka** (6), and a poem recitation, "Luz de la Amistad," by plastic artist and writer **Silvia Haydeé Bojart**, with background music by **Miguel Ángel Basso** (7).

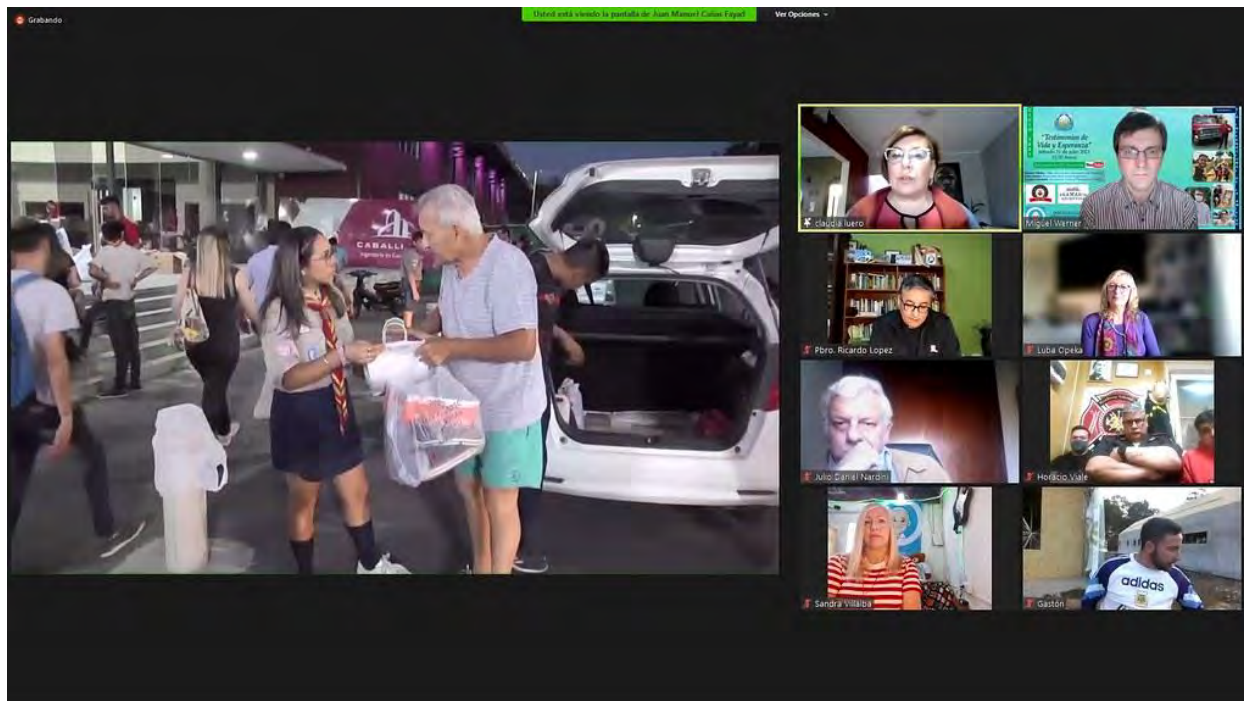
The moderator also shared a related excerpt of *As a Peace-Loving Global Citizen*, the autobiography of UPF's Founder, Rev. Sun Myung Moon: "I believe the world will develop better societies when people transcend race, nationalities and religion and, under a wide variety of opinions, they meet and discuss honestly about world peace."

Quotes:

1) Recording of "Testimonies of Life and Hope" 31-7-2021:
www.youtube.com/watch?v=rdOw7Ghf8mo

2) "Roads of Hope" - Father Ricardo López in "Testimonies of Life and Hope" 31-7-2021:
youtu.be/Cy5DfxysjiU

3) "Helping is Gratifying" - Claudia Luero in "Testimonies of Life and Hope" 31-7-2021:
youtu.be/603PbZIQ84c



4) "Firefighters of Hope" - Horacio Viale in "Testimonies of Life and Hope" 31-7-2021:
youtu.be/kCxKj2IzlfM

5) "Lima, City of Hope" - Gastón Gasparotti in "Testimonies of Life and Hope" 31-7-2021:
youtu.be/UFFo081ZHIY

6) Message on the International Friendship Day 2021:
www.youtube.com/watch?v=3nD2S5iN2e0

7) Poem "Luz de la Amistad":
www.youtube.com/watch?v=NagC6TVtKC4

