

## UPF Düsseldorf's Meeting: Martin Luther -- Paths to God

Anja Brina  
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Düsseldorf, Germany -- To commemorate the year of Luther, UPF-Düsseldorf held a meeting entitled "Martin Luther -- Paths to God."

The speaker, Christian Haubold, who teaches religion and history, explained in detail how Luther found his personal God.

Martin Luther, who studied law and was not very interested in religion, decided to enter a monastery after experiencing a life-threatening thunderstorm. Despite the strict life in the monastery, he was not happy, lived in a constant state of uneasiness, and saw himself as a sinner. This was a time in which people generally held God in great fear.

In 1515, Luther had an experience in his room in the tower. As he was reading the New Testament book of Romans, it left a deep spiritual impression on him. He recognized that one cannot buy oneself free from sin by good deeds, but can only obtain God's grace (*sola gratia*) through faith (*sola fide*). Good deeds are thus the fruits born from faith and a love for God. He understood that God is just and merciful, and he felt that the Holy Scripture should be available to all (*sola scriptura*). For this reason, he translated the Bible from Latin into German.

Luther emphasized the value of prayer, especially in the morning and evening. His opinion was that Christians who pray are like pillars supporting the roof of the world. Prayers should not be long and drawn out, but frequent and heartfelt.

The August 14, 2017, presentation was very informative and gave much food for reflection. Afterward the participants took some time to pray for world peace. They thought especially about Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the two Japanese cities on which atomic bombs were dropped on August 6 and 9, 1945. They also prayed for the critical situation in North Korea.

They passed round a prayer stone, and each person had the opportunity to offer a prayer. They ended by singing the song I Believe from the group Adoro. Then followed much animated discussion over refreshments.