

## UPF Prague, Czech Republic: World Interfaith Harmony Week Observed in Prague

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Prague, Czech Republic - UPF co-sponsored a meeting of religious leaders to commemorate World Interfaith Harmony Week.

Together with the Community of Christians in Prague, the Czech chapter of UPF held a meeting on February 3, 2022, in the evangelical Church of St. Salvator. The theme was "The Responsibility of Faith-Based People: Building Bridges across Borders and Peace among Religions Brings Peace to the World."

The meeting started with a musical performance. Then each of the participants gave a short speech.

Rev. Tomáš Boněk, a pastor from the Community of Christians, said the fact that we are meeting every year to celebrate this day in the religious community is very important.

President Martin Pilka, the Prague leader of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, stressed the importance of love and service for each other to bring peace among religions.

Dr. Robert Řehák, a special envoy from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for Holocaust, Interfaith Dialogue and Freedom of Religion or Belief, said that the religious voice is not strong enough in society. The potential of religious people is great but not visible enough in the nation. Religions should bring especially spiritual values into the society, and this can enrich people's lives, he said.

Rev. Mikuláš Vymětal, an evangelical pastor from the Evangelical Church, introduced the idea of world ethos of Swiss theologian Hans Küng. He pointed out that there is an exhibition in the church about this initiative to bring harmony among religions. Peace among religions can bring peace in the world, he said.

Monk Allalanath from the International Society for Krishna Consciousness spoke about the connection between nature and humans. This is a natural order of the world, and we need harmony, he said.

Jakub Koldovský, representing Zen Buddhism, mentioned that inner peace is the starting point for religious harmony.

The final speaker was Dr. Eva Vymětalová Hrabáková from the Hussite Theological Faculty in Prague. She quoted the Old Testament and said that we need a house of prayer to bring the religions together.



Dr. Juraj Lajda, the president of UPF in the Czech Republic, said that this is a very important meeting. Religious people should bring the spiritual power of God to people. It is not enough only to pray - we need to serve others and practice true love, he said.

Through the speeches of the various faith representatives, we could see that all religions have maybe 70 percent to 80 percent in common.

After the second musical performance by two young cellists, the participants performed an Interfaith Water Ceremony in which each poured a glass of water into one vessel and then lit a candle.

The meeting concluded with a final musical performance on the organ and a short meditation, which created a special atmosphere.

After the meeting, the participants could walk through an exhibition introducing the different religions.

This meeting also was streamed online. Altogether around 40 people participated, either in person or online.