

UPF Prague, Czech Republic: Through Arts and Culture to Mutual Understanding

Juraj Lajda
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Prague, Czech Republic - "Through Arts and Culture to Mutual Understanding" was the title of an interesting and inspirational meeting.

The Czech chapters of UPF together with UPF's International Association of Arts and Culture for Peace (IAACP) held the meeting at the Prague Peace Embassy on November 10, 2022.

The program was introduced by Dr. Juraj Lajda, president of the Czech UPF chapter. He explained why arts and culture are important. Every human being is endowed with some creative and artistic talent and is, in fact, an artist. If the result of our activities is something that we do with love and for the sake of others to bring them beauty, then we can call it a work of art.



When we look around ourselves at nature and the whole universe, we can say that it is a beautiful work of art, he said. Even the ancient Greeks and people in the Renaissance and Classicism eras turned their attention to nature as a source of beauty, goodness and inspiration, and tried to imitate it in their work.

We can conclude that the Originator and Creator of the universe, God who is the Parent of humankind, is the greatest artist, Dr. Lajda said. True art springs from our desire to pay tribute to the Creator, and when we experience His enormous love and inspiration, it can become a source of values such as truth, goodness and beauty, which we can convey to other people. Unfortunately, not all artists fulfill this

standard, he said.

Next, H.E. Daniel Herman, a former Czech minister of culture, introduced the main guest speaker, the young Czech actress Sarah Haváčová.

We all are creating a work of art through our lives, she said. The border between good and evil is very fragile.



Ms. Haváčová related some meaningful incidents from her life. Some years ago she went on a pilgrimage to the Portuguese city of Fatima where Holy Mary appeared to three children more than 100 years ago. She walked from Lisbon to Fatima on foot. When she lost her way, she had to spend the night outdoors. During the night she experienced fear but also a deep spiritual experience with the Absolute Being, God.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Ms. Haváčová volunteered in a hospital, helping the elderly despite the danger of being infected. Another unforgettable experience was when an old lady died directly in front of her eyes. She realized the presence of death.

In order to help and support the Ukrainian people, she traveled together with her colleagues to Ukrainian children's homes to enact fairy tales for these children in their own language.

Ms. Haváčová is also known for portraying the protagonist of a one-act play and melodrama called Alma Rosé. It is the real story of the well-known Austrian violinist Alma Rosé, who was a niece of the famous composer Gustav Mahler. During the Second World War, because of her Jewish origin she was arrested and sent to a concentration camp, where she later became a leader of the only women's orchestra in the Nazi camps. She molded a terrified group of young musicians into an ensemble that became their sole hope of survival. And although Alma herself died of a sudden illness at the age of 37, shortly before the liberation of the camps, she saved the lives of some four dozen members of the orchestra.

The meeting with Ms. Haváčová was inspiring and full of optimistic spirit due to her openness and honesty while telling about her life and her work as an actress. Her authenticity and humility touched the audience. It showed how the arts can cultivate our hearts and character and bring peace to the world.

video: youtu.be/DHHpCFm2SBA

Trailer for the play Alma Rosé: polar.cz/zpravy/opavsko/opava/11000031200/monodrama-alma-rose--divadlo-a-vazna-hudba-v-jednom