UPF Czech Republic: Prague Panel Addresses the Question, What is Peace?

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September 28, 2026



Prague, Czech Republic – To mark this year's International Day of Peace, on September 24, 2026, UPF-Czech Republic organized a panel discussion on the topic "What is Peace?" This question was explored from the perspectives of speakers from four different backgrounds: the academic community, a non-governmental organization, political science and journalism.



The first speaker, **Dr. Roman Joch**, director of the Civic Institute, spoke on the topic: "Three concepts of peace." The first, he said, is the absence of war, but this is not true peace. The purpose of using weapons should be to establish a just order, rather than to enslave one's opponent. The second concept is of peace as a psychological category such as in "peace of mind." Aristotle spoke of happiness as overall contentment with life. This can be achieved when we fulfil our duties towards ourselves and others, Dr. Joch suggested. Thirdly, Dr. Joch referred to peace as a metanoia, or inner change – a fundamental change in thinking, a conversion or a profound transformation of one's attitude to life. As an example, he

cited Jesus, who spoke of an inner transformation of the human being.



Mag. Martin Slezák, representing the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification, reflected on the question "Peace and Shared Values," stressing that it is difficult to establish peace when each side upholds different values. He sought to define some cultural differences such as individualism, which has developed mainly in the West, as opposed to collectivism, which is practiced by nations in the East. He also noted the primacy of law over relationships in the West, as opposed to the prioritization of relationships over rules. He sought to identify certain values that are universally recognized, such as respect for human life, tolerance, dialogue and solidarity. In conclusion, he set out certain ethical minimum requirements for peace: the sanctity of human life, the Golden Rule, honesty and reliability.



Ing. Aleš Hodina, founder of the International Institute for Family and Children, spoke on the topic "Peace Begins in the Family." He emphasized that even within a family, members hold different views and uphold different values, but there is always a way to resolve conflicts. If this is learned within the family, it can be applied in society and in other relationships. Within the family, children learn how to

resolve conflicts.



Mr. Alex Švamberk, a journalist and commentator, explored the topic "The Media: An Opportunity or a Threat to Peace?" He emphasized that we live in a fast-paced age when information reaches people at an unprecedented speed. The media is not a herald of truth but an intermediary, conveying information which the reader must then evaluate. The media usually serves someone's interests and strives to attract and capture the attention of as many people as possible. That is why it mostly covers topics of everyday life (fuel prices, the weather, etc.), as these are what interest people most. According to Švamberk, universal values can only function in a climate of peace and tranquility. However, human nature is such that we are inclined to fight. His conclusion was that the most important thing in this turbulent world is to maintain a degree of peace through the use of arms as a deterrent, and to avoid violence.



The program was enriched by **Ms. Erika Lajdová** and two Korean students singing the Korean song "Tongil," meaning unity.

A lively discussion followed. One of the speakers emphasized the importance of becoming peacemakers and being a truth-seeker rather than one who tries to assert his correctness. The founders of UPF were commended for continuing to organize these activities.