

UPF Paris, France honors World Refugee Day with Interfaith Scripture Readings

Jean-Francois Moulinet
June 20, 2021

"Les réfugiés" - Partage scriptural (20 juin 2021)

Mettre des visages sur les statistiques

Malgré la pandémie, le nombre de personnes fuyant les guerres, les persécutions et les exactions a atteint un record de **82,4 millions**.

(1 % de l'humanité)

Réfugiés ≠ migrants

- Réfugiés de guerre ● Réfugiés politiques
- Réfugiés religieux ● Réfugiés climatiques

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Paris, France - An online interfaith scripture reading reminded participants of the plight of refugees.

In commemoration of the United Nations' World Refugee Day, the French chapter of UPF's Interreligious Association for Peace and Development (IAPD) organized an online interreligious meeting on the topic "Refugees."

A few texts on the topic of refugees, selected from the Hebrew Bible, the New Testament, and the Quran, were sent in advance to the guests who registered.

The more than 50 attendees of the event on Zoom on June 20, 2021, included participants from France, Germany, Mali, Pakistan, Republic of the Congo, Senegal, Spain, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and Zambia, with even more people following on Facebook.

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Regard chrétien

Commentaires :
Mgr Jacques GAILLOT
évêque catholique de Partenia

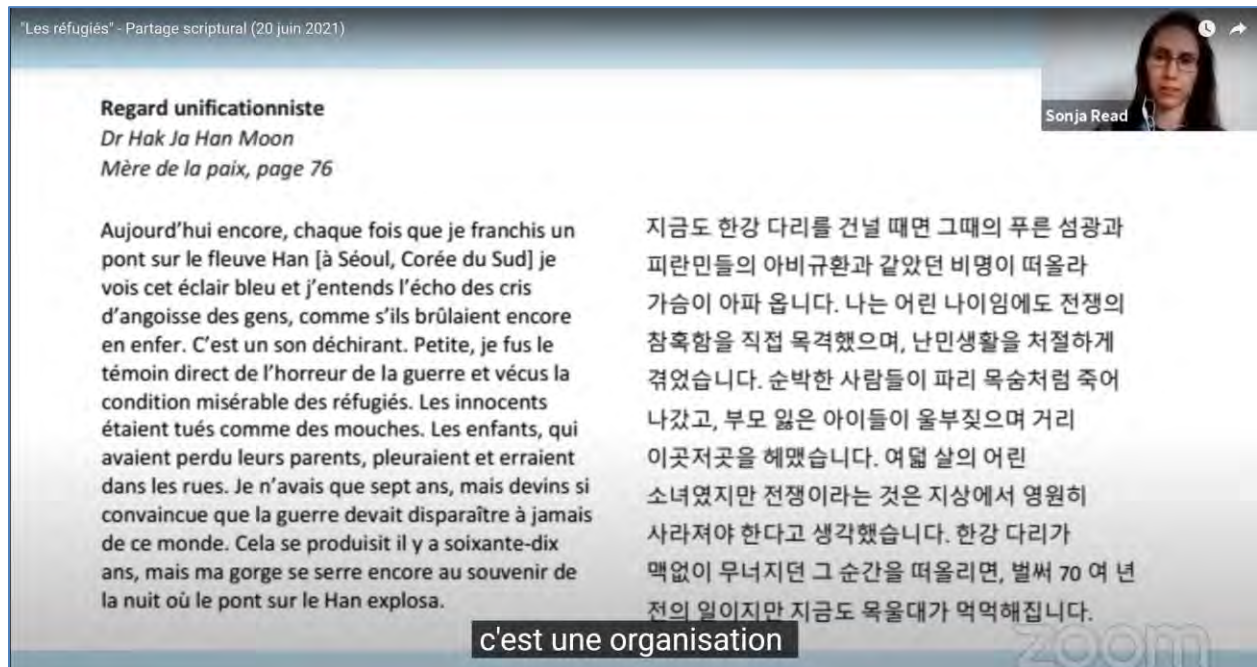
Chapelle du séminaire de Saint-François, maison mère évêque catholique de Partenia

The moderator was Dorian Gravrard of UPF-France.

The program started with a short introduction by Jean-François Moulinet, coordinator of the interreligious forum Dialogue and Alliance of UPF-France. After explaining that the theme of this year's World Refugee Day was "Together we heal, learn and shine," Mr. Moulinet said that during this meeting, they would try to put faces to the statistics.

Then the reading of sacred texts started, with comments by representatives of different traditions.

Judaism: The text, from Exodus 2:11-22, was read in French by Dr. Noémie Komagata-Nguyen. Comments were offered by Don Aristide De-Carli, president of the organization Jewish-Christian Friendship in Switzerland and a historian, Jewish theologian, and human rights activist. He is committed to religious education for mutual respect and the mutual dismantling of prejudices. He explained in great detail the situation of Moses killing the Egyptian and going to Midian, where he was protected by Jethro.



Christianity: The text, Matthew 25:34-40, was read by a representative from the beautiful House of the Spiritains in Paris. Comments were provided by Jacques Gaillot, the Catholic bishop of Partenia, who is responsible for the association Droits Devant!! whose aim is the defense of equal rights against precariousness and exclusion. He is also a prison visitor.

Mr. Gaillot said that when he understood that Christianity was the religion of the human being, he decided that his whole life should be focused on the disadvantaged. At the end of our lives, he said, we will not be asked about religious practice, but we will be judged on what we have done for other human beings. He encouraged the audience to reflect on what we receive from the refugees, the sick or the prisoners whom we meet.

We then watched a beautiful video tribute to refugees created by the Swiss association Donnerzens: youtu.be/m8Np1P8xtOY.

Islam: The verses 20 to 24 of the 28th Sura of the Quran were read and also commented on by Dr. Mouslim Fidahoussen, an Islamic scholar. He also explained the situation of Moses in Midian from the Quran's point of view. He suggested that we reflect on how we would react today in the place of Jethro and if the present world has made us lose this humanism that the texts show us.

Unificationism: The text was an excerpt from Mother of Peace (p. 60), the memoir of UPF co-founder Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, in which she explains that each time she crosses the Han River Bridge in Seoul, she remembers the bombing of the bridge in June 1950 in which an estimated 800 Koreans died. The text was read and commented on by Sonja Read, who has worked for several NGOs in the Middle East, where she works with refugees and non-refugees on food security, health nutrition, and psychosocial support projects.

Over the next 20 minutes, the participants were divided into four groups for a discussion.

The program finished with a clip from the new animated film La Traversée ("The Crossing") about refugees: youtu.be/yfZkdeoK6OE.

The next IAPD meeting is scheduled for the end of August, on the topic "The Environment."