

UPF-France Holds 13th Interfaith Program on Scripture

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Paris, France -- "Encountering God in Art" was the theme of the monthly interfaith meeting held by the Dialogue and Alliance cooperation circle.

The theme was inspired by the French Bible Society, which chose for its "Bible Month" the topic "When the Bible Inspires Artists."

About 20 participants attended the meeting of March 6, 2022, in the Espace Barrault conference center. More than 50 additional people watched the meeting online.

Registrations came from 16 countries: Algeria, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Canada, the Democratic Republic of Congo, France, Gabon, Italy, North Macedonia, Mali, Morocco, Niger, Spain, Tunisia, and the United States.

The moderator was **Dorian Gravrand** from the French chapter of International Association of Youth and Students for Peace, an organization that is affiliated with UPF.

The first reading, Exodus 31:1-11, was commented on by **Ana Aurouze**, a biblical scholar and project leader at the French Bible Society. She described God as an architect or interior decorator who gives all the details for the construction of the Tabernacle. She urged us to become "craftsmen" ourselves, makers of beauty, who thus transmit the message that God wants to give to our world.

The second reading, Psalm 8:4-7, was commented on by **Father Stephen**, rector of the Orthodox Parish in the town of Vézelay and former researcher in religious anthropology at the French National Center for Scientific Research (CNRS). He spoke about catechesis (religious instruction) in the Orthodox Church, which is done first simply through beauty (Byzantine or Slavic chants, liturgical poetry, icons, etc.).



Sister Marie Keyrouz, a Lebanese Maronite nun, performed a song based on a poem by the Indian poet Rabindranath Tagore. Sister Marie, who specializes in religious singing, travels the world and makes her voice resound with an incredible purity and perfect technique.

The last reading brought a Unificationist point of view: a passage on the Theory of Art taken from the book *Essentials of Unification Thought*. **Laurent Ladouce**, a UPF research fellow and director of the site www.culture-et-paix.org, gave a brilliant commentary on the reading.

The meeting concluded with a question-and-answer session.