

UPF Odivelas, Portugal Joins Annual Interreligious Prayer for Peace

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Odivelas, Portugal -- Representatives of UPF-Portugal were invited to participate in an annual interreligious "Prayer for Peace," which was part of the city's Week of Interfaith Harmony and Intercultural Dialogue held from October 10 to 15, 2022.

Odivelas, a small city on the outskirts of the capital, Lisbon, is known and recognized nationally for the great cultural, racial and religious diversity of its population.



As the Portuguese chapter of UPF is known for being involved in many interfaith events and already has been an institutional partner of the Municipality of Odivelas, the City Hall invited UPF to participate in the week's events, which included temple visits, cultural events and concerts, and a gastronomic and cultural fair.

On Tuesday a delegation came to visit the UPF Peace Embassy, where they received an introduction to UPF, its founders, and affiliated organizations, particularly in the religious and spiritual spheres.

UPF representatives, in turn, visited the Islamic Community and Brahma Kumaris, making new contacts during these rich encounters.

This significant event of the Odivelas City Hall, in partnership with the Lusophone University of Lisbon (also a partner of UPF-Portugal) and the High Commissioner for Migrations, had as a highlight the presentation of the Charter of Religions, an academic and scientific document unique at the international level, which made a complete mapping of the intercultural religious phenomenon in this municipality through the work of our common friend, **Professor Paulo Mendes Pinto** of the Science of Religions course in a Memorandum of Understanding protocol with the High Commissioner for Migrations.



On October 15, the last day of the initiative, the main event was the Prayer for Peace, which brought together various denominations in an urban park in Odivelas. Each of the speakers had 12 minutes to introduce themselves and communicate their message of peace, promoting once again the dialogue between religions and cultures.

Participating in this moment of prayer, open to all believers and citizens, regardless of confession, age or gender, were:

- the Islamic Community of Odivelas (Aisha Siddika Mosque of Odivelas);
- the Brahma Kumaris Academy for a Better World;
- the Roman Catholic Apostolic Community (Santo Adrião Parish);
- the Hindu Community (Temple of Shiva);
- the Evangelical Community (International Ministry Kairós);
- the Adventist Community (Seventh-Day Adventist Church of Odivelas);
- the Sikh Community of Portugal (Gurdwara Sikh Sangat Sahib Lisboa).

Dr. Susana Santos, a city councilwoman with responsibility for equality and citizenship, thanked the religious entities for their presence and stressed the importance of the celebration of the word of good, "the Word of the fraternal union of all beings." She emphasized the important role of the different confessions in a pluralist society, with interfaith dialogue contributing to the building of a more tolerant and inclusive society.

Universal Peace Federation presented the autobiographies of both Father and Mother Moon to Dr. Santos and to each of the leaders of the religious denominations.

The event ended with the reading in unison of an interreligious prayer, written for the occasion:

Dear God

Praised be Your Name

Thank You for Your love and for the moments that we share together. We are blessed because You are an understanding God and of union.

In this hour we want to recognize before You

and the communities present,

that we have not been living in accordance with Your plan of universal love.

Transform our hearts, sensitize our minds. Give us the strength to overcome the pride that prevents the social, economic, religious barriers from being eliminated.



In this hour we ask You to open our minds to accept all Your designs. Enable us to see the world through Your eyes.

Oh God!

You know that our families are in great crisis, You know that they are the core of society.

Families in trouble represent a society in trouble. Please visit the homes of Odivelas (and the world), no matter the creed, the color of the skin, the economic condition.

We implore You to instill in us a spirit of forgiveness, of love, of tolerance. We want to beg for Your help to change behaviors, to overcome addictions and bad habits. Forgive us because we have lived in ignorance. Help us, from now on, to commit ourselves to You and to each other.

All this we want to ask You, and thank You for, not that we have any merit, but in Your name. Amen / Amin. ...

[Click here for the video "The Religious Diversity in Odivelas," produced by the Lusophone University of Lisbon.](#)