

UPF Buenos Aires, Argentina's monthly Ambassadors for Peace meeting

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Buenos Aires, Argentina -- Peace Culture was the theme of the panel that took place at UPF's monthly Ambassadors for Peace meeting on July 8, 2020, with 29 Zoom connections. Speakers were Stella Maris Arzuaga, director of Culture, Education and Ceremonies, and director of the Arrecifes Museum and Historical Archive (Buenos Aires Province); Jorge Alcaraz, president of the Almafuerite Circle and union secretary of the Argentinian Writers Society (Buenos Aires City); and Eduardo Alberto Borri and Mariel Jackeline Giusti, Coordinators of the "Pacis Nuntii" Peace Messengers movement from Santa Fe. Afterwards, there was a QandA session.

Previously, Julio Nardini, member of UPF's Peace Council, gave a report on June's activities, highlighting the beginning of Zoom webinars with a parliamentarians' panel. On that note, Humberto Benedetto, Mercosur parliamentarian and moderator of that panel, gave his reflections. Then, Miguel Werner, UPF-Argentina's secretary general, announced some of the upcoming activities. The event closed with poems by Lucrecia Potenza, Founder and Director of FUNDARTES; and by María Irene Giurlani, President and Founder of Real-Izar la Paz. They performed "Argentinos" and "Celebremos la Cultura de Paz," respectively.

The "Peace Culture" panel focused on one of the eight UPF lines of action: "Art, Sports and Peace Culture." We consider that all artistic expressions (literature, poetry, illustration, painting, music, dance, etc.), the language and the world of symbols as well as culture as a whole, can contribute to local and global peace, based on universal values, transcending borders, ideologies, and religions. Likewise, sports, with values such as respect for the rules and teamwork, can bring peoples, nationalities and cultures together through national and global meetings. Manifestations of the body, the mind and the heart can make practical contributions to coexistence from a particular or universal language that benefits knowledge and mutual understanding, combining art, talent, and common good.

Stella Maris Arzuaga, Director of Culture, Education and Ceremonies/Director of the Arrecifes Museum and Historical Archive (Buenos Aires Province)/Ambassador for Peace: She considered that COVID-19 has allowed us to talk about peace in a different way in new situations. She expressed, "We should create peace in situations when divisions and political differences are mentioned."

In her presentation, she showed only one picture, San Martín crossing the Andes, recalling his epic achievement during the liberation campaign. She expressed she was grateful for having raised a family, with children and grandchildren, "but the Andes crossing changed my life," she confessed, since it brings "a real dimension of loving your homeland," which "is something that you feel and do." She admitted crying at that special moment, "since I couldn't understand how at that time they could make such endeavors, such undertakings, with minimal security and strategic conditions." Today, the Andes crossing means "bringing peace to each one of the activities I carry out," she stated. She finished with a quote from Saint Francis of Assisi: "While you are proclaiming peace with your lips, be careful to have it even more fully in your heart."

Jorge Alcaraz, president of Almafuerite Circle/union secretary of the Argentinian Writers Society (Buenos Aires City)/ Ambassador for Peace: He said that reality seems like "a melodramatic novel or tale" and "an ordeal with no ending" for men's competition for power. He described other types of violence, besides war: deception, corruption, divisions, poverty, indifference, provocation, and intolerance. However, he called for common good, working for a better society, because he understands history can be reverted "together." He repeated that making this a better planet, a better world, maybe a utopia, "can be achieved by all of us." He said, "Everything starts from the family (...) from education (...) and then it comes our

culture in all aspects." He considered a priority to be learning to coexist; without it, "we cannot solve many problems we are facing" in our country and in the world.

He valued art for how it reaches people because, through art, we can promote peace, values, attitudes, and behaviors that redo violence. This can be achieved through education, culture, and family. "I believe building a peace culture is a process that needs time and requires a change of mindset, individually and globally," he said. From his cultural endeavor, which is literature, he believes "our art should sensitize (...), enrich ethical and human values." He claimed the Word, which invites to dialogue; "Love, dreams, truth, justice, and freedom, and of course, accepting each other, despite our differences," he reflected. He expects culture to contribute to social change: "Leaving a message in times of pandemics. I hope we change such mindset" and that differences can be resolved with dialogue.



Eduardo Borri – Jackeline Giusti, coordinators of the "Pacis Nuntii" Peace Messengers movement, Santa Fe/Ambassadors for Peace: Jackeline showed a review of Pacis Nuntii. Its name translates as announcers, messengers, peacemakers in Latin. This movement is defined as a "dynamic, wide, flexible way of acting of people voluntarily committed to Peace." She described the origin of the group, in 1985, with the canoe expedition Pacis Nuntii, which united Brasilia and Buenos Aires in a canoe, carrying the Universal Peace Flag; a lantern, which represents light; and an image of Christ on the cross made by a craftsman descendant of the Guarani people. They traveled 5,400 kilometers, "conveying a message of peace, love, and brotherhood to the world."

Pacis Nuntii includes children, adolescents, young people and adults in order to establish and promote the Universal Peace Flag and its values. She is the founder of a canoe school in 1987. She swims in open waters on the shores of Parana River, upholds sports as a tool to build peace, and promotes expeditions in defense of the Parana River. She has created solidarity, ecological, and sport institutions. She promotes the Universal Peace Flag, which is given to the most diverse institutions and individuals, such as Pope John Paul II. The flag has reached the top of the Aconcagua and the Everest; it has been in India and Kenya, and the most distant places on earth, hoisting the ideals of union and universality, "with the hope of contributing to the creation of a fairer, more humane and fraternal century," she expressed.

Eduardo explained how the Universal Peace Flag was created: When crossing the Alvear de Paraná Park (Entre Ríos Province), along with a flock of pigeons which flew with the sound of San Miguel Church's bells, they discovered in the sky winged clouds powered by the South wind, which came with the full moon. That was the inspiration of the Universal Peace Flag: "a symbol of direct interpretation." "Peace is an emotion independent of any circumstance," he reflected, pointing out the flag "irradiates a subtle energy, which is empowered in the heart of those who observe and choose it." He explained that the white dove holding an olive branch and embracing the planet, with no borders, which includes a family, represents humanity, with the guidance of a starlight, transcending ethnicities, religions, and nationalities. The blue of the Milky Way and the astronomical objects refer to the depths of time: "Present, future and the divine presence in the stellar universe." He compared the joy of Noah when he saw the dove carrying the olive branch with "our joy when we overcome this trial of nature we are facing," he stated.

"We do not see the nations' borders when we see the Earth from space," he referred to Carl Sagan. However, "we do not need to fly so high, we just need to love." He agreed with the hope expressed by his colleagues: "I believe we can achieve the spin [the change] ... Humanity will reconcile with all kingdoms," he expressed. At the same time, he reflected that Ambassadors for Peace "have great assets ... since we have peace, and those who have peace of conscience have it all."