

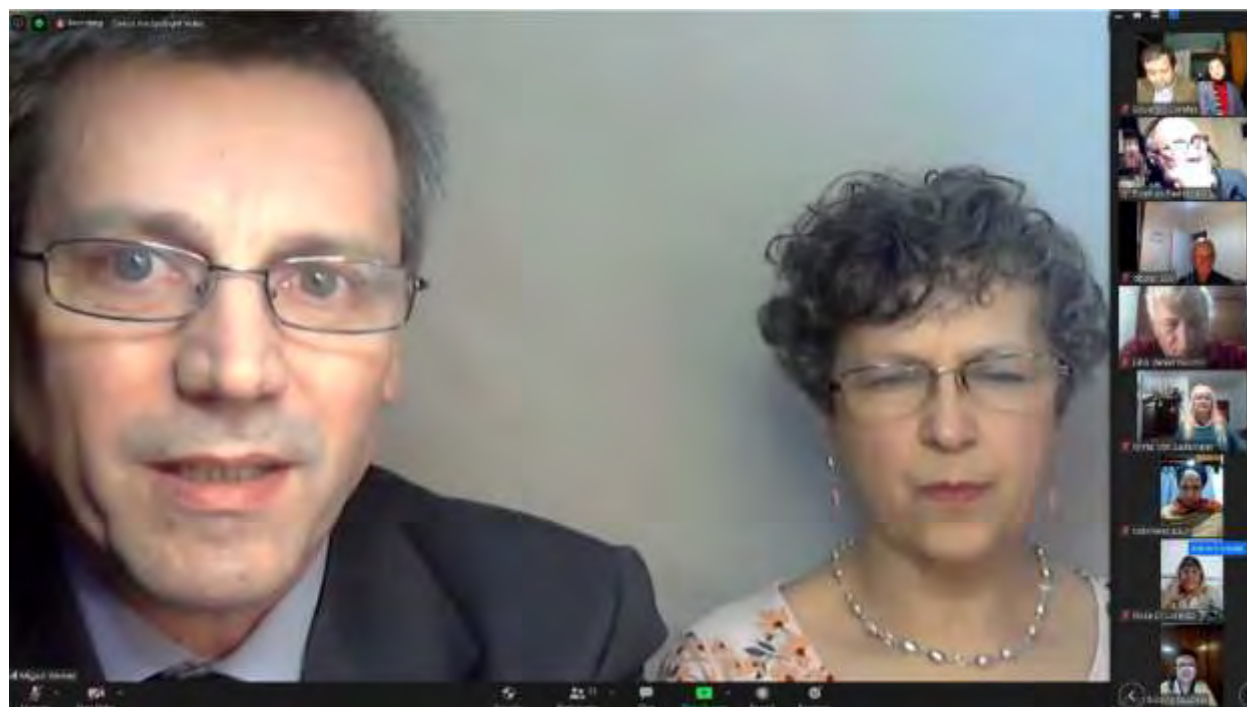
The Family is Focus of UPF-Argentina's Monthly Meeting

Miguel Werner
September 9, 2020



Buenos Aires, Argentina -- "The Family and the Common Good" was the theme of UPF-Argentina's monthly Ambassadors for Peace meeting on September 9, 2020, on Zoom, with more than 40 connections. There were presentations by Allaéviton Galdino and Sofía Visser, coordinator of the Universal Youth Force (FJU) in the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires; Hugo Cattoni and Leticia Castorina, directors of the San José Home, Ciudadela's Peace Messengers, Province of Buenos Aires; and Rosetta Conti, president of the Women's Federation for World Peace (WFWP) in Argentina. Moderator was Adrián De Angelis, member of the UPF-Argentina's Peace Council.

Recording link: www.youtube.com/watch?v=NouxDUkoOoY



Allaéviton Galdino and Sofía Visser

Allaéviton is coordinator of the Universal Youth Force (FJU) in the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires

and coordinator of the FJUNI Project (Universal Youth Force), which trains young people in the academic, labor and professional spheres, raising visionary young people. He is a pastor of the Universal Church of God's Kingdom in Buenos Aires.

Allaéviton Galdino:

We work really hard with the spiritual side. Not only because we are a church, but because we understand that all comes from marriage, all comes from our relationship with God (...) We teach young people that when God is absent, when the Most High is absent, either from marriage or the family group, unfortunately what we see nowadays occurs: breakdown, the breaking-up of the union, and so forth.



Sofía Visser:

Nowadays we see that the concept of the family is missing, unfortunately. Today, it's very common that young people grow up in families that are not united, in families where parents break up very young. We tend to see that young people do not have a model at home and, sometimes, due to the lack of a model to follow, we see many young people suffer. They lack a vision, and they do not imagine themselves within a family, in a home. Thus, one of our main missions is the concept of families, since we understand that God is the Father, God is the Son, and God is the Holy Spirit. God is the family. Families come from God.

Allaéviton Galdino:

Sofía and I always talk about how many people say God is the Father, but in their own home they did not have the vision of a father. So that is why many people have the vision that God is merciless, since they never had a merciful father at home. So, how can they believe in a merciful, loving God? God only enters the life of a person when the person invites Him. Evil is not the same; it comes to us. Evil comes, destroys, and we do not even invite it. Jesus taught us the "Our Father" prayer, which means that the Father is not for him or her, but for us. However, our Father is the Father as written in the Bible (...) Unfortunately, the meaning of the word father has been lost in families, and due to the loss of the meaning and function of the word father, people are also drifting away from God."

We always say that, when we point with one finger, we have three fingers pointing back at us. Instead of pointing our finger, we need to look at ourselves. We need to seek to be the model. It is beautiful to see that some have managed to be that model. So, if we focus and do our part, I think we will be on the right path.

Hugo Cattoni and Leticia Castorina

Hugo holds a Master's degree and is director of the San José Home of Ciudadela, in the Province of Buenos Aires, which relies on the Peace Messengers international association. As the home director, he is in charge of planning, directing and monitoring all of its services and activities. Leticia is the coordinator of the San José Home and is in charge of different activities, especially those of spiritually supporting the residents. They have been married for 50 years and have four children.

Leticia Castorina:

The nicest part of my job in the home is the spiritually supporting the residents, along with a resident who is a Eucharistic minister. We organize weekly meetings at the chapel, and we work on the residents' spirituality. We organize prayer meetings, Eucharistic worship, and spiritual retreats. In fact, these are personal meetings with God. At the home, not everyone is Catholic; there are people from many religions, and they are all welcome to these meetings we hold once a week at the chapel.

Hugo Cattoni:

We have a lot of teamwork. What I care about the most is people's wellbeing, and they have to feel themselves at home. The technical team works hard on the loneliness issue. We work in interdisciplinary ways, which is an advantage for us, and we do a lot of research.

The family is God because it is the institution the Lord has created: being respectful, loving others, lovingly looking at others, not claiming that we are right. One does not have more rights than the others, nor vice versa. These are the fundamentals, especially respecting each other, that keep families together. I have seen many times, working as a legal expert, how families are torn apart. The family is torn apart and the child is a trophy; it is terrible to witness, since there is no communication, there is nothing. This is because they stopped talking to God in the house, in the family. All the values we have mentioned to you are missing.

The message we want to explain and that I always try to convey is that grandchildren, through parents, should highly respect the individual, the elder, and the grandparent as a balance of society. The elders are the balance of society. We go to them to ask for advice when we have problems..."



Rosetta Conti

Rosetta is president of the Women's Federation for World Peace (WFWP) in Argentina since 2010 and member of UPF-Argentina's Governing Board. She is Italian, graduated in Foreign Languages and Cultures at the Bologna University, Italy (1981). She has been a volunteer of the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification since 1978 and has developed various educational campaigns and social service activities with the Collegiate Association for the Research of Principles (CARP). She is married to Sergio Castellón. They have two children and four grandchildren.

The focus of WFWP, as the name says, is women. We want to make women aware of their value, their position and their role along men in society. One of the main approaches is to aid the family institution, where the female presence is fundamental. It is fundamental due to the influence of women in their roles of wife, mother and educator in the family.

Social circumstances make us form different coexistence centers in society, but our main focus is to recover, where possible, the model that is more stable, more satisfactory for the family members. It is very important that grandparents also take part in this center: a structure of three generations, where they can develop constructive emotional relationships, as long as we respect the positions of each member and each life stage.

The family is a structure like a four- position foundation; such structures, having four positions, is like a

table with four legs. It has great stability. In this structure, parents represent the present, the children represent the future -- the hopes, the projections, the expectations that parents have, the dreams parents want to accomplish -- and grandparents represent, with their wisdom, with their experience, the traditions that are transmitted. These traditions are the values, the values that last over time, that are vertically transmitted. It is very important that grandparents are present because they represent God's presence. Within this family framework, we develop a very healthy social nucleus because the positions are respected and many positive emotions are developed. We especially cultivate four types of love, which are fundamental for the maturity of an individual. I am referring to filial love, fraternal love, conjugal love, and parents' and grandparents' love.

The family is a "school of love" where we develop the right heart to properly relate to others with maturity and confidence in other social spheres where we are called to be when we leave the family unit such as school, the workplace and playful circumstances. This learning nucleus in the family presents to each one of us a truly common good. It is an asset for the community where these families live because they represent a healthy model that expands and benefits others: the community, the neighborhood, the society, the workplace.

Women have a fundamental role in building this model because they possess an innate sensitivity to reconcile, harmonize, embrace, and forgive. They can educate in values from the womb; they can keep nurturing the child who becomes an individual who embodies these values we desperately need in this society. We all wish to be with honest, reliable, sincere, whole, respectful, coherent, and altruistic people. These are values a mother knows how to instill better than anyone and are values that need to be learned from childhood. They are the glue, the ones that allow relationships to be healthy because, otherwise, they break apart easily.

Connecting the family with the common good is very real. If we want to create a strong, healthy nucleus and set of values, it is like a gemstone for our society. This is something our society will treasure and take as a model. It is a reference point for people to become honest citizens who can become our leaders in the future, devoid of corruption. That is our function.

At the beginning of the Zoom program, there was an informative section in which Miguel Werner, UPF-Argentina's secretary general, presented a review of August's activities and anticipated September's schedule. The artistic performance was a recorded dance by Marcos Daverio and Elsa Ortíz, directors of the Ballet Huellas del Folklore; and a recitation by Mario Cáceres, teacher, cultural entertainer, and radio host of "Somos Nosotros."

It is worth remembering that every monthly meeting is an occasion to claim values expressed in different lines of action that UPF-Argentina promotes, along with the tasks developed by Ambassadors for Peace in different areas and organizations (*). On this occasion, the theme was "The Family and the Common Good," which now requires greater consideration, a new analysis, and a newer comprehension in light of the current social upheaval and violence. As said in the rationale introducing this theme: "Ignoring family breakdown and its consequences is like ignoring the disasters that would cause in the solar system the deviation of a planet. Even a few centimeters would cause chaos in the solar system and our own planet. The idea of a solid social network, which avoids distress, and healthy coexistence when the social atom is broken or dysfunctional seems an entelechy. This is why we need to reconsider the transcendent role of families in the internalization of values and standards, social integration and common good." Also: "To reaffirm gender equality, fortunately incorporated in the public policy goals; to revitalize the sacred value of marriage commitment, shared by different religious traditions; the gift of being parents, educating the children, taking care of the elders, the importance of intergenerational bonds and their positive influence in mutual respect and social peace."

*) Themes of the previous panels of the Ambassadors for Peace meetings:

"Peace with Creation": Panel of Ambassadors for Peace Meeting 5-13-2020
www.youtube.com/watch?v=uZ4PLeKophk

"Peace with the Neighbor": Panel of Ambassadors for Peace Meeting 6-10-2020
www.youtube.com/watch?v=t55F3gpHbJY

"Peace Culture": Panel of Ambassadors for Peace Meeting 7-8-2020
www.youtube.com/watch?v=wikiTg5cETWo

"Leadership and Cooperation": Panel of Ambassadors for Peace Meeting 8-18-2020
www.youtube.com/watch?v=oPxFjqU8vwk

"Family and Common Good": Panel of Ambassadors for Peace Meeting 9-9-2020
www.youtube.com/watch?v=NouxdukoOoY