

## International Day of Families Observed in Argentina

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Buenos Aires, Argentina—Couples who have been married between 25 and 57 years were recognized by UPF-Argentina during the May 21, 2016 celebration of the International Day of Families.

“Families, Healthy Lives and Sustainable Future,” was the theme chosen by the UN for this year’s Day and focuses on the third goal of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): to “Ensure healthy lives and promote the well-being for all at all ages.” Poet Donato Perrone, who is a member of UPF-Argentina’s Peace Council, read an excerpt from UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon’s message for this year’s Day.

Among the honorees were Pastors Edison Guillermo Renjifo Salgado-Silvia Patricia Pini (25 years of marriage); Andrés Melgarejo-Alzira Probo Chaves and Héctor Horacio Castellón- Margarita Duré (27 years), two international couples who were married on January 12, 1989 in Seoul, Korea; Rafael Santiago Iglesias-Elena Aurora Yori (34 years); and Gaspar and Claudia Bustamante (35 years).

Also honored were the pastors of the Ambassadors of Christ Evangelical Church, Carlos Edgard Laluf and Edith Noemí Paredes (36 years), who, when they received the certificate of recognition, said, “God has been our support” and “everything is possible with God.” Rubén Samuel and Mabel Cervello (37 years) could not attend the event and were represented by their daughters Vanina and Greta, who gave a moving testimony about the values their parents instilled as well as taught them.

Afterwards, Mr. Hugo Muñoz, a choir director, and his wife, Mrs. Adriana María Blanco (43 years) and Mr. Jorge Repsys and Mrs. Lidia Quintana of the nonprofit organization Teachers Without Borders (49 years) were recognized.

Alejandro Omer Rosales and Nélica Dora Musso of San Clemente del Tuyú in Buenos Aires province, were the last couple who were recognized. They traveled more than 200 miles (328 km) to attend the event. On April 1, 2016, they celebrated 57 years of marriage; however, they have been together for more than 68 years. They sealed their love once more with a tender kiss, and Mr. Rosales read a poem he wrote for the couples’ 57th wedding anniversary: “Y no falto a la verdad / si digo, de corazón, / que eternamente, esta unión, / nos dará felicidad. / Pues somos uno, no dos. / Parte del Gran Universo. / Y culminó aquí mis versos, / dando las gracias a Dios.”

Two songs were offered as part of the tribute to all the honorees, who also received a copy of the autobiography of UPF Founder Rev. Sun Myung Moon, As a Peace-Loving Global Citizen, and the anthology, Peace in Our Hearts and Light for the World. Araceli Melgarejo, the daughter of one of the couples who were recognized, played “Bourree” by Johann Sebastian Bach and a composition by Vivaldi. Then, Roberto and Mauro of Amaranth Duo (which means “flower that never withers”) performed “Mujer, niña y amiga.” Both young men, who come from Salta in the Lerma Valley in the northwest part of Argentina, sang two more songs by request of the audience.

All the honored couples then came on stage to share the symbolic cake cutting during the end of the event. During that moment, Mr. Carlos Varga, director of UPF-Argentina, spoke of the values the couples exemplify and the example they set through their marriage, and wished them everlasting love. The celebration concluded with a reading and the distribution of UPF-Argentina's statement for the International Day of Families (see the text at the end), and with the guests enjoying snacks together.



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### **Statement For the International Day of Families**

The Universal Peace Federation (UPF) honors the UN Resolution celebrating the International Day of Families (\*) and shares the following statement on this significant date:

**FIRST:** UPF recognizes the family as the microcosm of the global community. Once the world finally arrives to an age in which sustainable peace and harmony can be enjoyed among peoples and cultures, this coexistence will be based on that basic unit, humanity's heritage. In other words, a functional family is essential to building a healthy society, and is a significant element for reconciliation and peace.

**SECOND:** Regardless of any conditions of race, ethnicity, nationality, culture, and religious belief, we are all members of a certain family. Family is universal. Even more important, family is the school of love and ethics. Through experiences in our families, we learn how to value all the other relationships in our society, which is our bigger human family, and with friends, neighbors, coworkers, colleagues, and strangers. Moreover, families can help dissolve the old resentments that fuel civil, tribal and religious conflicts.

**THIRD:** A faithful marriage between men and women, and a harmonious family, form the foundation for human development and social progress. It becomes essential for the growth and stability of children, character education, social relationships and civic duties. Solid, healthy and loving families help protect society from moral decline in young people; increase in crime, drugs and corruption; as well as the spread of infections such as HIV/AIDS.

**FOURTH:** The family has successfully adapted to changes throughout history. It has survived revolutions and empires, and it has prevailed despite economic and social turbulence in many societies. This is called adaptability; nonetheless, nowadays it is being threatened by a range of social, economic, cultural, political and ideological situations. This is the time to strengthen the family. To restore the family is a way of addressing the spread of social and civil problems that desolates this world.

**FIFTH:** Everlasting peace will not be settled just with the establishment of laws supported by the State and with the cooperation of social organizations. All of this has to be ensured as a basic human right, promoting awareness of human solidarity as a family, as brothers and sisters that share a moral and spiritual heritage. In short, as one universal family under the same God.

For this reason, UPF-Argentina celebrates the International Day of Families, with 2016 marking the twenty-second anniversary of the International Year of the Family.

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(\*) In 1993, the UN General Assembly designated May 15 as the International Day of Families (Resolution 47/237, September 20th). In 1989, the General Assembly proclaimed 1994 as the International Year of Families (Resolution 44/82) as a way to "raise awareness, increase understanding and promote policies that improve the position and well-being of the family."