

UPF Upper Austria breakfast meeting on Spirituality and Politics

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Linz, Austria -- An interreligious breakfast meeting held by UPF of Upper Austria focused on the topic "Spirituality and Politics -- Are Religious People Called to be Actively Involved in Political Affairs?"

Eighteen representatives of five religious directions came together at the Linz offices of UPF for the latest in a series of such meetings. After several talks on the topic, the participants had a lively discussion with many interesting contributions.

Heinz Krcek, a theologian and the initiator of the interreligious breakfast meetings, gave a historical outline of the relationship between politics and religion in Western Europe. He pointed out that the original meaning of the word "minister" is to serve and that the central role of politics is to help people live a dignified life.

A Protestant pastor gave an overview of the challenges and changes of the Protestant view toward politics, both before and during the Second World War. He emphasized that religious people are called "to be political," meaning to be engaged in society. Such a social engagement should be distinguished, however, from efforts of the church "to do (party) politics."

The unofficially ordained Catholic bishop Christine Mayr-Lumetzberger then made an ecumenical contribution. She spoke about the four Lübeck martyrs, three Roman Catholic priests and a Lutheran pastor from Lübeck, Germany, who were executed in November 1943 for speaking up against the crimes of the Nazi regime. Bishop Mayr-Lumetzberger conveyed how Protestant and Catholics together gave their lives to stay true to their conscience.

www.luebeckermaertyrer.de/en/index.html

Other contributions to the discussion referred to the yin-yang principle or the fact that inner peace is the starting point of world peace.

Hans Brunnbauer of the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification (FFWPU), an organization affiliated with UPF, pointed out that people's notion of God influences the political reality.

Paul Ettl of the Peace Academy Linz remarked that he felt a universal basic income was necessary for people to come closer to being co-creators in the image of God.

To conclude, Maria Pammer, the secretary general of UPF for the state of Upper Austria, reported about the first national peace breakfast held in the Austrian Parliament.