

*Interreligious and Intercultural Breakfast  
On the Subject of  
„Motherliness - Unifying Force in Family and Society“  
On September, 29th 2018  
In the Mosque of the Bosnian Muslims Steyr/Upper Austria*



After a repeated participation in UPF-events Imam Lopo Saudin and Mr. Mehmed Becirbasic of the Bosnian Mosque Steyr invited us, to host an Interreligious and Intercultural Breakfast at their premises.



Early in the morning Bosnian women prepared a substantial buffet with specialties from their country. The men removed the carpets from the prayer room, so that the guests could come with shoes into the breakfast room.



After a prayer of the Imam and an introduction of Mr. Becirbasic Mrs. Pammer presented the cornerstones of UPF and Mr. Krcek gave a short summary of the five-year history of Interreligious Breakfasts in Upper Austria.



Then the representatives of various religious denominations gave a lecture on the topic „Motherliness – Unifying Force in Family and Society“.



Mag. Markus Gerhold, pastor of the Protestant community A. B., centered his statements on Maria, the only woman who receives in all three Abrahamic religions equally attention. He presented a short excerpt of the Christian history of theology concerning the view of Maria. Very interesting as well were his personal thoughts about Maria's reaction to the announcement of birth by the archangel Gabriel in the Gospel according to Luke. The simple girl from Nazareth communicated on equal terms with the archangel, herself she made a decision, which demanded from her strength and courage in this time.



Mrs. Agnes Steiner MSc and Mrs. Eva Reisz, representatives of the Buddhist community Sōka Gakkai, touched us very much with the song HaHa Yo (Oh Mother). The text of the song is a poem by Daisaku Ikeda, the founder of SGI. It is sung about motherly love and its importance for peace in this world. This is the link to listen to the song: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xZ38f59JdwE>



Mrs. Gerlinde Merl, public relations commissioner of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, spoke on motherliness going beyond the love for one's own children and mentioned as a world-wide known example Mother Theresa. The example of a family with a profoundly disabled child from the circle of her friends showed us particularly the power of love of a mother or parents respectively. Given at first only a few weeks to live the child reached already its sixth birthday through the sacrificial love of the parents. As attributes of motherliness, which is a unifying force in family and society, she listed „caring, dedicated, selfless, loving, courageous, considerate, strong and unselfish“.



Mrs. Yoshiko Pammer, holding together with her husband the community leadership of the Family Federation Upper Austria, pointed out that humans are created in the image of God, as man and woman. Therefore humans are looking for the motherly aspect of God. Motherliness covers the qualities intuition, carefulness, to be able to embrace and heal. Most of all it is the embodiment of self-sacrifice – „to do without in love to give birth to new life“. This is also the profoundest divine principle of creation. The path to become True Parents is a path Rev. Sun Myung Moon and his wife Hak Ja Han Moon pursued for their whole life.



Mr. Mehmed Becirbasic of the Association of Bosnian Muslims told that the Sura 4: an-Nisa (The Women) and the Sura 19: Maryam (Maria) are dedicated to the woman, thus the mother. He also recited a few Hadiths, in which the respect towards parents and especially the mother is highly emphasized.

In conclusion he quoted J.W. Goethe, who already in the 17<sup>th</sup> century suggested a common worship of all confessions: „... all march united to the church and are edified by the same religious service; they all form One circle around the fire and are enlightened by One flame ...“





Then Imam Lopo Saudin showed us the large prayer room on the first floor and answered our interested questions about various pieces of furniture, wall charts and the prayer traditions.

Mag. Maria Pammer (UPF-Upper Austria)

