

# UPF Stuttgart celebrates UN- Day of the Family

13.05.2018

We celebrated this year's UN International Family Day with an event entitled „Family and Inclusion“.

Hubert Arnoldi greeted the audience warmly and gave a short introduction to the topic. The International Family Day was initiated in 1993 by the UN General Assembly in New York, and is celebrated in annually in many countries world-wide on May 15<sup>th</sup>. On this day, the important central significance and value of the family within the international community is highlighted and reflected upon. We used this opportunity to support family topics and to heighten our awareness about current social, economic and demographic processes in society.



After a piece of music on the concert guitar played by Daniel Henrich, Hubert Arnoldi gave a short presentation on the topic of family:

## **The Family is the School of Love**

It is only through strong families that we can hope to establish a successful, secure and healthy society. But how can we strengthen families? The key question is: does the family simply exist for itself, or does it have a higher purpose? If one merely sees the family as a goal for itself, then all efforts to support it will inevitably fail. The secret of how to revive the family lies in it finding its relationship with larger groups in society such as the nation, world and God. The family is a microcosm of universal love, starting from the intimacy of two people, extending to embrace the whole universe.

One must understand the dynamic of an enduring family or in the words of Martin Luther, of a „school of love“. Almost all of one's life is spent in a family; birth to young adulthood is spent in the parental home; a few years later comes marriage and the establishment of one's own family. In the family, the first experience of parental love is gained, and this love is character forming. No matter what the circumstances such as social status, educational standard, income, reputation or level of health and feeling of happiness, the family of origin and that which one later establishes provides life-long lasting relationships throughout the ups and downs of life, contributing to our development as human beings.

The family is the school of love. It is the first school for ethics and morality and the source of the values which most of us hold dear. The ethicist James Q. Wilson wrote: "the family is a place where one is continually bound by mutual responsibilities, resulting in a never ending school... we learn to live with others in the world because we learn to live with the members of our family."

But in reality, most families are far from this ideal. As one journalist remarked: "everyone talks about traditional family values, but nobody knows what that means." For many, the family is experienced as much as a source of pain and suffering as a source of love and joy. Why? Is it possible for an ideal family

to exist? What would it look like? We have the example of our parents, but are they an acceptable model? The traumatized family is often a school of neuroses, functional disorders, and hate, producing dysfunctional or criminal citizens. In order for it to become a school of love, the family must be infused with love, power and goodness and that will only become possible when it has withstood time and proved itself as good. We have to find true family values in order to create true families.



The speakers from the different religions stressed in their presentations that we all have the responsibility to acquire the knowledge of what an ideal family should be like today, based on the wisdom and truths of religion. How can parents practice an unselfish and unconditional love and similar values today? Reference was made to dangers posed to the family (eg gender -madness). After his contribution, each of the seven speakers lit a floating candle and placed it in a bowl of water.

To close, our concert guitarist played another wonderful piece of music and Mrs. Amina Froehner Suarez and her daughter Katy danced La Camisa Negra. The obligatory group photo was followed by lively, profound discussions over coffee and cake. This



successful event stimulated us to reflect deeply about the threat to the ideal of the family, while at the same time giving hope for a constructive method to tackle and deal with sexual diversity in our society with a good heart.

*Hubert Arnoldi*

*(English: Catriona Valenta)*