

UPF Stuttgart, Germany observes the UN International Day of Families 2018

Hubert Arnoldi

May 13, 2018



Stuttgart, Germany -- "Family and Inclusive Societies" was the theme of a celebration of UN International Day of Families 2018.

Hubert Arnoldi, the leader of the UPF chapter in Stuttgart, greeted the audience warmly and gave a short introduction to the topic. The UN International Day of Families, which was initiated in 1993 by the UN General Assembly, is celebrated annually in many countries on May 15. On this day, the central significance and value of the family are highlighted and reflected upon.

The Stuttgart chapter of UPF used its event on May 13 to support family topics and to heighten awareness about current social, economic and demographic processes in society.

After a performance on the classical guitar 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 sees the family as merely a goal in itself, all efforts to support it inevitably will fail. The secret of how to revive the family lies in it finding its relationship with larger groups in society, such as the nation, the world and God. The family is a microcosm of universal love, starting from the intimacy of two persons, extending to embrace the whole universe.

One must understand the dynamic of an enduring family -- in the words of Martin Luther, "a school of love." Almost all of one's life is spent in a family: The period from 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 one's circumstances -- such as social status, educational standard, income, reputation or level of health and feeling of happiness -- the family of origin and the family that one later establishes provide lifelong lasting relationships through 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 that 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 a source of pain and suffering as much 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 become possible only when it has withstood time and proved itself as good. We have to find true family values in order to create true families.

Seven speakers from different religions stressed in their presentations that we all have the responsibility to acquire the knowledge of what an ideal family should be like, based on the wisdom and truths of religion. How can parents practice unselfish and unconditional love and similar values today? Reference was made to dangers posed to the family (e.g., gender confusion). Each speaker, after his or her contribution, lit a floating candle and placed it in a bowl of water.

To close, our classical guitarist Daniel Henrich played another wonderful piece of music and Mrs. Amina Froehner Suarez and her daughter Katy danced to the pop song *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 deal with sexual diversity in our society with a good heart.

