

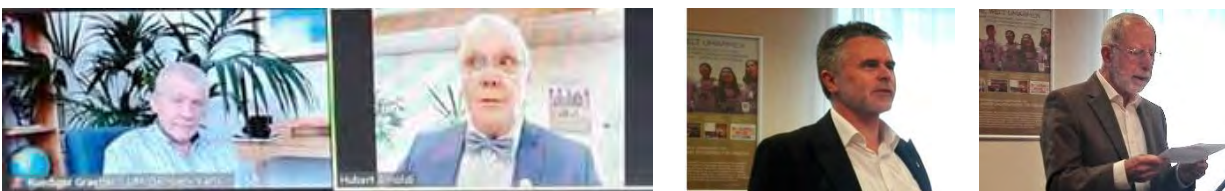
UPF-Event in Stuttgart to mark the International Day of Families.



INTERNATIONAL
DAY OF FAMILIES
15 MAY 2021

The International Day of Families 2021 was celebrated this year on Sunday May 16 by a small gathering in the large meeting room in the UPF Stuttgart premises, joined by others online via zoom.

The topic this year was: ‘A socially fair transition to sustainable development: the role of digital technologies in the social development and well-being of all’.



The program included inspiring presentations, music, and a podium discussion. To be guided by God and the realization of His original ideal for the family, was the quintessence of the presentations and ensuing discussions.

In his commemorative speech, Christian Hausmann, national representative of UPF Germany, stressed the importance of the role played by the family in establishing the UN sustainable goals. Nothing is more scientifically secure than the sociological understanding about the importance of the role played by intact families in assuring the well-being of the individual and society. He commented: ‘The pandemic has made it clear just how much we humans need social exchange. Feelings of loneliness are soon triggered. Not only is there material poverty; there is also a poverty of



time for each other. Modern technologies have proved to be a blessing in this exceptional time because they help families separated by long distances to keep in touch. Of particular note is the spiritual role that the family plays as the 'school of love', where different forms of God's love - the love of a child, sibling love, conjugal love and parental love - can be experienced and perfected.



Rainer and Kerstin Knaack, founders of 'Relate Works', an academy for marriage and family by Lake Constance, sent an inspiring video message. They addressed three megatrends (as formulated by Jörg Berger, psychotherapist in Heidelberg) with which families feel themselves confronted in

connection with technological developments: raised expectations of education in the family which cannot be perfectly realized despite best efforts; greater demands causing more time to be spent with the media (for example planning a holiday); and the power of the attention-industry by which large concerns steal time and energy leaving less time for spouse and family. The advice given by the Knaaks - who see their consultancy work as a 'ministry' - is not to adapt too much to the 'standards of the world' when dealing with digital media, but to lead a 'life of spirit' - ie to allow oneself to be led by God and to develop one's own family culture. Parents should not only develop established rules for how their children deal with the media but also spend more quality family time together.

Moderation: Hubert Arnoldi – UPF Stuttgart

Report: Hubert Arnoldi and Hildegard Piepenburg (English: Catriona Valenta)