



Interreligious Event

Peace and Dialog: Strengthening Ties among different Paths

Malaga, Spain, January 18, 2020

By Marian Barnes

On January 18th we held in Marbella (Málaga, Spain) an interreligious meeting, “Meeting for Peace and Dialog: strengthening ties among different paths”. This meeting was organized by the Universal Peace Federation and ANDECO. Karl Oppermann (my husband) and I founded ANDECO with the desire of supporting projects of True Parents.

In October 2019 we started working on the organization of this event with Armando Lozano, the director of UPF in Spain. We wanted to invite the parish priests of various catholic churches in the area, and the official representative of Ecumenism and Interreligious Dialogue of the diocese of the area, looking forward to their participation. The response was negative and we discovered that they had sent a circular to all the churches so that our event would not be supported because they considered our Movement a sect. We tried to communicate with them but this was not possible. The Town Hall of the city took the same attitude although they had always supported us in the past. This worried us a lot because it limited our scope for action. Because Marbella is a town the rest of the churches and religions were influenced and thus there was no possibility of getting representatives of other religions; the imam of the mosque did not accept our invitation either. From then on Armando was determined to find interreligious representatives from other parts of Spain and looked for them among his good friends, making a lot of effort so that everybody would support the event in our town. It was not easy because all had to travel. By January 2020 Armando had put together a magnificent program with speakers who support the UPF and we spread word of it among our friends and people of the town. We had 10 days left to fill a room with capacity for 30-40 people but we felt powerless, feeling ourselves besieged in our own town. This was confirmed by a very lucid dream in which I felt God was guiding us to act with prudence and wisdom.

On the 7th of January I asked a clairvoyant for help, who is a good friend of mine and who had been blessed and is very well known in our town. We prayed together for the event. We also went to the rest of our friends pleading with them to tell their friends about the event. Following this, miracles began to occur through which we could experience the extraordinary support of the spiritual world. In 10 days we reached the figure of 100 registrations. Various associations shared about the event with other associations via Internet and WhatsApp groups and thus many prepared people became interested in the event. These people came to the meeting, generating a beautiful atmosphere, full of joy, tears of gratitude and a deep desire to repeat it and meet again. We felt that it was a beautiful miracle in which God and our blessed ancestors worked with us. Our greatest desire was to make this offering to True Mother and to be able to bless those present.

This event was held in the Hotel El Fuerte in Marbella and had 100 participants. The first part of the function was titled “Words for Peace”. It began at 10 o’clock in the morning with words of welcome from Armando Lozano, director of the Universal Peace Federation. Next Juan Carlos Ramchandani, president of the Hindu Federation of Spain, writer and lecturer spoke. He explained the basic precepts of the Santana Dharma, how Hinduism respects different religious traditions and the need to expand interreligious dialog. Then Tritul Rimpoché a Tibetan Bhuddist monk of the Chakrasamvara Centre of Seville spoke about Bhuddism and peace. He was followed by Samuel Benarroch, surgeon and representative of Judaism who spoke about respect, tolerance and good fellowship between various creeds. Afterwards Antonio Damien Requena, president of the Malaga Unesco Club gave a short but brilliant talk in which he spoke about how spirituality and dialog between cultures is the solution in these times of conflict.

The first part of the program finished with a talk by José Cruz Igartua, a catholic priest who spoke about the importance of meditation and prayer in all religious traditions. Then there was a coffee break.

The second part was entitled “Prayer, Music, Celebration” and began with a performance of Sufi music and a reading of poems of Rumi e Ibn Arabi given by Ignacio Béjar. Ramchandani officiated Arati, the ceremony of the 5 elements and then lead a kirtan (a hymn) in which the audience participated dancing and chanting mantras. Then came the recitation of Tibetan mantras by Lama Tritul who explained the origin and use of various instruments of Tibet. Father Jose Cruz lead the audience in reciting the Our Father, explaining its deeper meaning.

The musical section finished with the violin cellist Erwin Graffe Urruela who, in addition to playing a piece by Bach, did sounds

and incantations of the shamans of Siberia. The function finished with the water ceremony directed by spiritual therapist Amparo Shalome in which the representatives of the different religions poured water into a vase which would be then poured into the sea, symbolizing how all rivers (religions) flow into the sea (reach God). The culmination of the ceremony was a toast for peace and harmony in the world.

The audience left very content, inspired and expressed the great need for this type of event to be repeated more frequently. Everybody is looking forward to the next one.




**ENCUENTRO POR LA PAZ Y EL DIALOGO:
ESTRECHANDO LAZOS ENTRE CAMINOS DIVERSOS**
Sábado 18 de enero, 10.00 a 13.30 h.
Marbella, Málaga

PALABRAS POR LA PAZ, REZOS, MÚSICA, CELEBRACIÓN
 Juan Carlos Ramchandani, sacerdote hindú ✪ Ignacio Bejar, músico sufi
 Tritul Rimpoché, monje budista tibetano ✪ José Cruz, religioso católico
 Erwin Graffe, músico ✪ Samuel Benarroch, médico cirujano judío
 Beyant Kaur Khalsa, kundalini yoga ✪ Amparo Shalome, terapeuta espiritual

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Organizado por la Federación para la Paz Universal
 con la colaboración de la Asociación ANDECO
 la RED GFU (Red Cultural para la Fraternidad Humana)
 y UNESCO MALAGA (Club provincial)