

## Conversations on our present

+18 Young Unificationists & Families Retreat

April 30th – May 1st, 2022

Manantial del Corazón, Madrid

It is not easy for anyone to find safe spaces to share what we think, how we feel or express doubt or uncertainty. During this short two-day retreat, we had the opportunity as second generation of unificationists to reflect openly on the topics that are harder to articulate without the context of a good-willed community, in a calm and respectful atmosphere filled with constructive criticism; as well as time for play and rest.

The program consisted of sharing sessions. Some of the topics covered were:

– *What are the reasons behind the slow but steady withdrawal of young unificationists from the faith of their parents and communities?* Some of the answers being: the idealization of second generation, an education that carried a hidden fear of making mistakes, an implied lack of acceptance disguised as infantilization.

– *How can we create a community where there is a deeper sense of belonging?* How to overcome the atmosphere of skepticism towards the institution? What are the causes? What can be done about it? Some of the answers being: creating and nurturing a variety of spiritual references that make it easier to connect and contribute in many ways; accepting that there is a wider variety of ways and intensities in which one can identify as unificationists; investing in the future of families, giving real support and possibility for genuine connections.



– *How do we want to educate the future generations?* What was good about our upbringing, and what can be improved?

– *In which of our traditions do you find meaning?* Which would be more essential to you to pass on to the next generation? Some of the answers being: honest prayer, Sunday Service as a sacred day, community holy days and celebrations, 8-days ceremony and birthdays.

Knowing it or not, we have been living a transition process in our communities for the past two decades. The hope of such gatherings is to create a way to discuss openly about issues without being merely negative, embracing that space of acceptance and uncertainty, so necessary for anyone to mature and become responsible for



their faith. To accept and recognize hard or tragical realities as they come does not mean that we give up on our ideals, but rather that there is a possibility to live more fully, sincerely, in our path towards the Kingdom. And in this process we can realize we are not alone, that there are others who also feel this way.

On Sunday morning we had a workshop on **the Inner Child** given by Gracia

Fehlberg, which added a different note on the gathering, an exercise of meditation, focusing rather on how each one feels hurt or inspired, nurture creativity, etc.

In the afternoon we had a program for **children**, a near farm-like place where they could interact with animals, which were trained to be touched, ridden, etc.

We took the opportunity also have a farewell BBQ to say good-bye to our dear brother Youngwoo, who is moving overseas after receiving the blessing.

Thank you for all the support and the trust given to us in order to hold these space of sharing, joy and conversation.

