

## International Day of Peace Observed in Italy

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Monza, Italy—On the occasion of the UN International Day of Peace, UPF held a conference on the theme "Peace Education: Nourishment of Conscience."

The Italian branches of UPF and the Women's Federation for World Peace (WFWP), an affiliated international organization, worked together to hold the conference on September 26, 2015, in the northern city of Monza. The conference was sponsored by the Italian UNESCO Commission, the City Council of Monza, the House of Culture of Monza, and the Province of Monza and Brianza.

The sessions of the conference dealt with a variety of themes, such as the role of women in the peace process and how to find a real path to peace.

The Rev. Dr. Sun Myung Moon, the founder of both UPF and WFWP, stressed the fundamental role that women have in this era, said Gabriella Mieli, vice president of WFWP, in her speech. "Women are fully involved, as it has always been in their DNA, thinking about how to nourish (physically and spiritually) the younger generations, and they have always tried to do so through collaboration rather than competition," she said.

Introducing the session "The Role of the Economy," UPF-Italy President Carlo Zonato stated that not only interfaith and international cooperation but also interdisciplinary efforts are fundamental in the philosophy of UPF. Someone asked, "How can the economy contribute to peace, when it seems that often it is the cause of conflict?"

One answer was given by Dr. Stefano Bartolini, professor of political economy and social economy at the University of Siena and author of the book *Manifesto for Happiness*. It is normal for economists to talk about happiness, he said. And the connection between happiness and peace is almost immediate: Happier people are also more peaceful!

In his book Professor Bartolini affirms that economists generally think that more money corresponds to a higher degree of happiness, and they try to find this correlation in statistical data regarding the United States.

However, one sees that the almost constant increase of the GDP (gross domestic product) in the United States corresponds to a decrease in happiness. This is seen in both "subjective" data (obtained analyzing the perception of the respondents about their level of happiness), and "objective" data (which show a greater spread of mental illness and consumption of soft and hard drugs).

"The real prevention of problems lies in promoting happiness. Unfortunately we have created a society that is not based on cooperation, which is instead one of our most important biological capabilities," Professor Bartolini said. One of our challenges is to return to investing in this huge relational capital.

The relations of African states among themselves and with the West were discussed by Dr. Beatrice Nicolini, a professor of history and institutions of the Catholic University of the Sacred Heart in Milan. Professor Nicolini showed some of the strengths and weaknesses of many African states.

There was a discussion about environmental ecology and on how to eliminate the culture of waste, especially in relation to food. Finally, other speakers emphasized the importance of religious values in increasing integration and understanding between different cultures.

The celebration concluded with the traditional "Vigil Prayer for Peace." Starting at 9 p.m. in Trento e Trieste Square just in front of the Municipality of Monza building, many representatives of faiths and associations offered their prayers, reflections and songs dedicated to the International Day of Peace.



### Some Great Small Ideas for a Peaceful World

*\*Excerpts from a news article in the newspaper Il Dialogo di Monza*

It was a day interwoven with words, stories and suggestions, the one that took place yesterday at the Urban Center Theatre of Monza. A day that has given space and voice to many small stories that tell how it is really possible to build a world of peace in everyday life. A day in which proposals have been made that to many seem maybe out of this world, visionary and utopian, but that perhaps need just a pinch of goodwill to become reality.

The theme was "Peace Education"; the subtitle, "Nourishment of Conscience"; the occasion, the celebration of the International Day of Peace organized by the UN; the organizers, UPF (Universal Peace Federation), WFWP (Women's Federation for World Peace) and the Municipality of Monza. There has been talk of sustainability, sharing, inter- and intra-religious dialogue, care of the planet, etc. The "enthusiasts" speakers, mostly representatives of religious organizations and political associations, are credited with introducing themselves appointment as people first, bringing their experiences and ideas with humility and willingness to listen, in a climate constructive and open.

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"Never before Monza has been called to be an open city, a city which is a 'house of cultures,' a city of peace," said Mayor Roberto Scanagatti opening the conference, after an introduction by Carlo Chierico and Ettore Fiorina, both representing UPF-Monza. "We are all called to spread a culture of peace, and this is a battle that must be waged every day. Recognizing 'the other,' 'the different,' as a subject with whom you can exchange important is the only way we can really

make the difference in nourishment for the conscience." The reference was to current events and to the territory, to the issue of migrants and their reception, a problem that is part of a global geopolitical situation that during the conference several speakers have called "a kind of Third World War."

Giuseppe Cali, honorary president of UPF-Italy, led everyone across the world introducing Modadugu Vijay Gupta and Anote Tong, winners of the Sunhak Peace Prize awarded by the association at the world level. The first, an Indian biologist, is promoting aquaculture as a solution to food crises in the world. The second, the president of the Republic of Kiribati, is committed to solving the difficult environmental problem of his island, an atoll in the Pacific Ocean that gradually is being submerged as a result of climate change. Two facts that have introduced one of the most pressing and urgent topics of our time, which represented, together with the issue of international migration and the encounter between cultures, the second common thread of the day: the theme of the care for the planet and for our natural resources.

\*Taken from <http://www.ildialogodimonza.it/piccole-grandi-idee-per-un-mondo-di-pace/>