

## UPF Cavan, Ireland marks 2019 International Day of Peace with Peace Road Walk

Colm O Cionnaith  
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Cavan, Ireland -- UPF marked the 2019 International Day of Peace with the fourth annual Peace Road Walk followed by the second annual Peace Road Forum.

The town of Downpatrick, which is across the border in Northern Ireland, was the site of the combined event, which was held on September 22.

The morning's events commenced as more than 30 interfaith "pilgrims" arrived from the four provinces of Ireland, braving their way through stormy conditions, and made their way up the short hilly walk of Slieve Patrick ("Patrick's mountain") just outside the town. The heavens smiled as dark rain clouds receded to a beautiful, soft mist. On reaching the summit, participants were treated to a breathtaking view of the region.



After milling around the world's tallest statue of Saint Patrick, participants made their way to an altar area a bit farther down the hill and assembled to hear readings from the Bible, the Qu'ran and other inspirational sources as Ambassadors for Peace Mrs. Maryam Timile and Mrs. Zeinab Mustafa read passages from the World Scripture book.

Ely Loew, the national pastor of Family Federation for World Peace and Unification (FFWPU), an organization that is affiliated with UPF, offered a prayer of unity and gratitude to our Heavenly Parent for sending Saint Patrick to our shores in 432 AD. In his prayer, he reflected on Patrick's origins as a slave

and how he was effectively one of the earliest recorded campaigners for the rights of victims of slavery and trafficking.

In holding the Peace Road Walk in Ireland, UPF not only was celebrating the UN International Day of Peace but also was remembering the 21st anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement, which secured peace for our island and helped us to live with dual identities and citizenship after 30 years of civil war.

Concluding the Peace Walk, the participants made their way down the hill and headed for the Saint Patrick Centre in Downpatrick for the Peace Road Forum, where a number of presentations were given by current and new Ambassadors for Peace.

The 2019 Peace Road Walk and Forum had the theme "Global Family, Local Harmony," and the topic the presentations addressed was "Is There a Role for Faith in Modern Society?" Colm Ó Cionnaith of UPF emceed the afternoon events.

First up was proud Irish-American Kate Tsubata, who delighted the audience with the first Irish and UK private screening of her new motion picture *Dancing Joy*, which features Beethoven's famous Ninth Symphony as the inspiration for traditional dance troupes from all over the world, from Japan and Fiji to Bulgaria, Honduras and Africa, as well as Belfast and Dublin, to name but a few of the locations.

Before the screening she gave some insights into her work and what motivated and inspired her to make the film. She emphasized that creativity was universal and that all cultures and nations can appreciate art, music and dance as expressions of cultural and religious unity.

Next up was Dr. James Uhomobhi from Ulster University, who said that education not only is the best way out of poverty but also can lead to improved health and life expectancy. He conveyed very well the heart of someone who has given much to his colleagues, family and friends and who continues to spread light to all he comes into contact with.

His colleague at Ulster University, Dr. Marisol Giardina de Navarro, movingly explained that she was determined through her work with the Healing Venezuela organization to highlight the decline of this once great nation, which has been left destitute by the entrenchment of Marxist doctrine. Later Pastor Ely Loew called on the participants to support the charities showcased at the forum: Healing Venezuela, Religious Youth Service, and E-ducare.

Rev. Marshall de Souza reminded the forum that we were celebrating the 20th anniversary of the historic Religious Youth Service (RYS) service project in what was then the Columcille Centre in Belfast. He showed a video of the former president of Ireland, Mrs. Mary McAleese, visiting the Peace Garden project shortly after it was completed.

Speaking about the work of RYS in Britain and throughout the world, Rev. de Souza emphasized that service learning is so beneficial to both the participants and the areas chosen, enabling education and healing to take place. Many testimonies of transformational internal change have been recorded due to his work with various interfaith endeavors such as RYS and the anti-AIDs project WAIT, which provides abstinence-based education through the medium of modern hip-hop dancing.

Rev. de Souza thanked earlier presenter Mrs. Kate Tsubata, who in the United States many years ago set up WAIT, which is still active in many parts of the world, such as the Philippines.

In the final presentation Bruno Miresse, a former UPF-Ireland secretary general, and his colleague Pierluigi Cosca described the incredible work that the charity E-ducare -- which Mr. Cosca founded -- is doing in funding the education of young people in developing countries such as Vietnam and Tanzania, as well as with the homeless in Dublin.

A call to action for our global network of peacebuilders, given by UPF-Ireland leader Colm Ó Cionnaith, was echoed by Pastor Ely Loew and Dr. David Hanna, FFWPU regional director for Northern Europe, in their closing remarks.

Ambassador for Peace certificates then were awarded to Dr. James Uhomobhi, Dr. Marisol Giardina de Navarro, and Mrs. Marisa Goldstone-Leavold from Cavan in Northern Ireland.

In presenting the certificates, Colm Ó Cionnaith emphasized that this award was in recognition of lives lived in service to others, but that it also is a call to continue to uphold the UPF values of living for the sake of others by working together as Ambassadors for Peace.

*Photos by Róisín McManus*