

Jerusalem Interfaith Forum for Understanding and Cooperation Among Religions sends a message of harmony and peace among religions as it visits the Church of the Holy Sepulcher

Jerusalem, Friday, February 9th 2018

On the UN World Interfaith Harmony Week, on a sunny winter day at the Old city of Jerusalem 30 men and women, young and old, Jews, Christian, Druze and Muslims gathered from all four wings of the country at the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in a call for peace and harmony among religions

Fr. Zion – the head of the Orthodox Ethiopian Church in Israel together with Fr. Yihun Gabreselassie Tesfa hosted the Interfaith Forum members in at the Church of the Holy Sepulcher: touring the stations of the Via Dolorosa inside the venue explaining about the meaning of the place, the history of the Ethiopian church in general, and in the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in particular.

Since the Ethiopian wing of the Church is located at the back of the Church, the visit was combined with walking in the small streets of the old city, surrounding the church in order to visit all its wings, passing by groups of worshipers and pilgrims as well as tourists and local merchants. With the sounds of street prayers and church bells, mixed with smells and sights from the nearby market, being pated softly by the sun, the Jerusalem interfaith forum members carried a message of mutual respect, hope, peace and harmony among religions.

When arriving to the content part of the event, Mrs. Miri Kamar, the director of the forum, greeted the guests and conducted the panel of religious leaders. The Orthodox Ethiopian Archbishop Eilvakom greeted the group and called all the world to choose and follow the way of peace. Rabbi Yaakov Luft spoke about the godly unique spark in each person, in each culture, religion and nation – enriching our world, making it thus colorful and interesting. He called to respect one another and learn from the other rather than strive to compose each one's way or opinion on the other religions and groups. Sheik Qasem Bader from the Druze village of Horfesh called to stick to the holly scriptures and peace that all religions teach. Sheik Majed Ibrahim, the Imam of Masjur took also meaningful part in the event. Dr. Nurit Hirschfeld, secretary General of UPF Israel concluded with words about True Love (bellow) by UPF founder, Rev. Sun Myung Moon:

“Let me reiterate: To resemble God, the original Being of true love, we should become the owners of true love. We should embody true love and practice it in order to develop our character. This is the way each of us can become true parents.

Then, what is a life of true love? True love is the spirit of public service. It brings the peace that is at the root of happiness. Selfish love is a mask for the desire to have one's partner exist for one's own sake; true love is free of that corruption. Rather, its essence is to give, to live for the sake of others and for the sake of the whole. True love gives, forgets that it has given, and continues to give without ceasing. True love gives joyfully. We find it in the joyful and loving heart of a mother who cradles her baby in her arms and nurses it at her breast. True love is sacrificial love, as with a filial son who gains his greatest satisfaction in helping his parents. God created the universe out of just such love: absolute, unique, unchanging and eternal, investing everything without any expectation or condition of receiving something in return.

True love is the wellspring of the universe. Once a person possesses it, true love makes him or her the center and the owner of the universe. True love is the root of God and a symbol of His will and power. When we are bound together in true love, we can be together forever, continually increasing in the joy of each other's company. The attraction of true love brings all things in the universe to our feet; even God will come to dwell with us. Nothing can compare to the value of true love. It has the power to dissipate the barriers fallen human beings created, including national boundaries and the barriers of race and even religion.

The main attributes of true love are that it is absolute, unique, unchanging and eternal, so whoever practices God's true love will live with God, share His happiness and enjoy the right to participate as an equal in His work. Therefore, a life lived for the sake of others, a life of true love, is the absolute prerequisite for entering the Kingdom of Heaven.” (Modified World Tour Speech – God's Ideal Family The Model For World Peace, Sun Myung Moon Nov 20, 2005)