

Disorder and Harmony. Men and Women, Earths and Heavens

The event was part of the "World Interfaith Harmony Week" 2020, promoted nine years ago by the United Nations, aimed at promoting dialogue between religions: an invitation to solidarity and a culture of peace as antidotes to the increasing growth of an attitude of suspicion and general distrust towards the other. From Monday 3rd to Saturday 8th February, in occasion of the International Week of Harmony between Religions 2020 an initiative for dialogue among five great religious traditions (Hinduism, Islam, Hebraism, Christianity and Buddhism) took place in Milan. The project "Disorder and Harmony" aimed to renew the dialogue between different cultures by involving young students from Milan and all other citizens. Among the excellent speakers: the Prefect of Central Directorate for Religious Affairs, Giovanna Maria Iurato; the Councillor for Environment and Climate of the region of Lombardia, Dott. Raffaele Cattaneo; the Deputy Mayor of Milan, Dr. Anna Scavuzzo; the Director of the Territorial School Office of Milan, Director Marco Bussetti; H.E. the Consul General of India, Dr. Benoy George; the Journalist and writer, former President of the Italian Partito dei Verdi, the Hon. Grazia Francescato; the Director of Mudec, Dr. Anna Maria Montaldo; the Chief Rabbi of Milan, Rav. Alfonso Arbib; the Director of UNEDI, Italian Episcopal Conference, Don Giuliano Savina; the President of the Islamic Religious Community COREIS, Imam Yahya Pallavicini; the Secretary General of the Islamic Religious Community COREIS, IlhamAllah Chiara Ferrero; the President of the Italian Buddhist Union UBI, Avv. Filippo Scianna; the Vice President of the Italian Hindu Union, Svamini Hamsananda Ghiri; the Professor of Theology Catholic University of the Sacro Cuore; Prof. Roberto Maier; a young professor involved in Ecological care issue for "Casa Comune", prof. Beatrice Nuti. Free laboratories, meetings, a permanent exhibition, music and dances to inspire and open new areas of debate, not only looking at individual issues but also major global and social issues, such as climate change, in a plural and intercultural vision.

It has been an opportunity for dialogue and mutual knowledge constituted by an initial phase of meeting, coordination and planning between the promoters of the initiative (Hindus, Muslims and Jews) working together at the organizational and practical aspects aimed at the realization of a common ideal. Therefore, a close dialogue, which helped to get to know each other and to share special moments, harbingers of friendship and in the respect of the peculiar traits of each tradition. The fruit of this first phase of planning ripened in an "offer" firstly to students of all schools and to their teachers invited to take actively part in laboratories and classes held by different faiths every day, and secondly, to a vaster and heterogeneous public that attended the conferences held in the afternoon by experts, scholars and religious representatives.

Since the initial participation of schools from the city of Milan and neighbourhood, participation has extended to schools throughout the national territory, which have connected online thanks to a specially designed system, despite some technical difficulties.

Thursday 6th February the highlight event of the week took place: the five religions involved literally sat at a table together to talk. Representatives of political institutions and members of the associative panorama actively involved in the dialogue and environmental issues of the care of the environment were also invited to participate in this table.

The evening ended with the artistic interlude "Teofonia, note di fedi per un'unica armonia" ("Theophony, notes of faiths for a single harmony", music, dances and choirs of the Hindu, Jewish and Islamic traditions. We thank the Sukun Ensemble, an Islamic instrumental music orchestra for their participation; the Tala Vidya Academy with Atmananda for Indian Classical Dance and the Kol Hashomrim Choir (Jewish songs).

The tool of art and the laboratory approach have also guided young people deeper into contemporary issues as well as those concerning the main existential questions that teenagers experience in a very intimate and particular way. A work also aimed at demolishing prejudices and stereotypes that have shown how religions in their essence can truly be sources of harmony.

SOME NUMBERS:

650 participants (over 100 per day)

200 participants to conferences

120 people took part in the central day of Thursday

5000 schools invited

450 students took part in lessons, of which 250/300 via web and 100/150 directly

5 regions participated: Lombardia, Veneto, Emilia, Calabria e Puglia