

Beat: Politics

A NATIONAL MARCH FOR PEACE IN BRUSSELS BRINGS FOUR THOUSAND PROTESTERS

SANTEGIDIO CLAIMING TOGETHER FOR PEACE

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USPA NEWS - Protesters (4000) were holding each other by their hands at some point of the march while they walked through a symbolic itinerary on Sunday, March 15 in Brussels. They stopped on the way to the Orthodox Cathedral of the Holy Archangels Michael and Gabriel, the Protestant Church of Brussels Museum.

Jan De Volder, spokesman of the Catholic Community of Sant'Egidio coordinator of the march "Together in Peace" brought together fifty associations to give a new answer to what divides: "At the moment, it is important to stress what unites us. It should not be that anxiety prevails. We want to be together in peace, freedom and respect, and pledge to live together."

The mayor of Molenbeek Françoise Schepmans stressed the importance of this event at the local level. "My village is at the forefront of these challenges that we know today. Our difficulty is that in our neighborhoods, there is no religious diversity and therefore it is difficult to know the other philosophical and religious currents."

For his part, the Minister of Justice Koen Geens recalled the importance of education and quality information, "There is no better way to destroy the identities than the deformation of religious and philosophical messages". Protesters wrapped up their march before the Brussels Palace of Justice as the Minister of Justice Koen Geens gave a speech on the occasion; another highlight of the event was a message of hope relayed by three young people being Muslim, Jewish and Catholic.

CLAIMS OF THE PROTEST IN BRUSSELS-----

Participants are opposed to the stigmatisation of the population and the strategy of fear from terrorist acts in Paris and Copenhagen and foiled attacks in Belgium. Many religious and political personalities are present in the forefront, including the Interior Minister Jan Jambon, Bishop Robert Innes (Anglican Church), the Chief Rabbi Albert Guigui (Judaism), Archbishop Léonard (Catholic Church), the pastor Steven Leek, president of the Union of Protestant Churches of Belgium, Peckstadt Athenagoras, Metropolitan of Belgium of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople (Orthodox Church) and Henri Bartholomeeusen, President of secular Action Centre.

The Minister of Justice for his part, has stressed the importance of education and quality information, "There is no better weapon to destroy the identities than the deformation of religious and philosophical messages." **Jews Christians and Muslims gathered and tied by solidarity for this Pacific march**-----

In front of the Great Synagogue, the Chief Rabbi of Brussels Albert Guigui said. "Together, we must more than ever transmit to future generations the base of the founding values of Europe (...) An infinitely difficult task weighing on each of us and we will be judged on what we have accomplished."

Jan De Volder, spokesman of the Catholic Community of Sant'Egidio, in charge of coordinating the mobilization, argues that this march is a first step towards a cluster approach of religions. "There has even been with us Buddhists today. Every religion has to make a self-criticism. It requires a purification. Blood was shed in the name of religion and today it always did. Today, religions say together with force," he said-----

Nouredine Smaili, president of the Muslim Executive of Belgium, opened the speech by calling all representatives of the Islamic religion to condemn violence and terrorism in all its forms and to advocate a peaceful discourse, respectful of democratic values.-----Source <http://www.rtbf.be/info> For more information see www.santegidio.org

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