

HJ Youth Academy Europe and the Middle East: How did True Parents celebrate their Birthday in 2024? (Part 1)

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Today, we celebrated True Parents' birthday. Although there are 23 years between them, True Father and True Mother were born on the same day 1.6. (This is the 6th day of the 1st month according to the lunar calendar.) We also celebrated the 11th anniversary of the Foundation Day of Cheon Il Guk (1.13), the founding God's Kingdom here on earth.

How someone chooses to celebrate his or her birthday says a lot about them. True Mother celebrated these two special anniversaries with three events.

The first event was the 8 am Pledge Service at Cheon Jeong Gung ('the Palace' and main residence of True Parents).

The second public event was the Birthday Celebration and Blessing Ceremony of 70 couples in the Hyojeong Cultural Center, a cultural facility right behind the big stadium (the 'World Peace Center').

The official title of this event was 'Celebration of the Holy Birth of the True Parents of Heaven, Earth and Humankind and the 2024 Heavenly Top Gun Special Blessing Ceremony'. That is quite a mouthful and raises at least two questions. Why do we call True Parents the 'True Parents of Heaven, Earth and Humankind'? What is the meaning and history of this title? It also raises the question what 'Heavenly Top Gun' is. Questions to explore in future posts here on hyojeong.eu.

The third event was a luncheon (a fancy five-course meal, live music, and cultural performances) again at Cheon Jeong Gung.

The focus of this post is the Pledge Service and how I (Bogdan) experienced it.



POV: Drs Balcomb and Otsuka getting ready

A grand and intimate occasion

A Holy Day Pledge with True Parents is always a special experience. This time I didn't have a loud or sounding spiritual experience but could witness the subtle peace that is present when True Father and True Mother connect.

The Pledge Service started as usual with the Cheon Il Guk Anthem, Family Pledge, and the Invocation Prayer. Lee Ki-song's prayer was powerful and the call upon Heaven to support the unity and reconciliation in True Family, brought me to tears.

Next was the Gyeongbae, members of the True Family, representatives of all regions and nations offered a full bow to True Parents. This moment felt grand and intimate at the same time. It has a biblical dimension. It signifies the peoples and nations of the world gathering around the throne of God's Glory - reconciling with Heavenly Parent and each other. At the same time, it is intimate. True Parents' family (physical, spiritual, and extended) comes together to honor its root. It's a Korean tradition that reaches beyond. All this is in the air during such a ceremony.



Sharing a meal with True Father in Heaven

The moment that touched me the most was the solemn and peace that filled the room and my heart, when True Parents shared their birthday meal. First, True Mother took the spoon and chopsticks on her right, touched the food and ate. Then she took the spoon and chopsticks on her left, touched the food, and ate. The warmth of that moment brought heaven and earth together. The intimacy that connects heaven and earth, husband and wife, often does not need words.



Then True Mother spoke. Her first words were "Thank you very much". She offered thanks and praise to Heavenly Parent for His divine grace. She also thanked all the blessed families, for their efforts which

made this day possible. Unfortunately, the translation was not the best, but I understand that she emphasized this time, as the time when Heavenly Parent seeks to extend His presence and influence on earth.

"We live together in this special time. Together we can move forward, so that all blessed families, ambassadors of peace and all righteous people on earth can hear the voice of Heavenly Parent." True Mother continued to explain that in the year of the Blue (or Azur) Dragon all negative energies will dissipate. She also encouraged us to "forget all the wrongdoings and burdens of the past", whatever weighs us down, and to renew ourselves as God's children. She emphasized working together and our health so that we can achieve great things for Heavenly Parent.



Team Europe and Middle East

In the end our team representing Europe and the Middle East took a picture. And we had little three mochi rice cakes and some coffee for breakfast.



Watch the full video of the pledge service [here](#).