

150,000 Receive Interfaith Peace Blessing in Philippines

Julius Malicdem
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Dr. Sun Jin Moon addressing the audience

Marikina City, Philippines - "Let's pray for perfect weather on the day of the Interfaith Peace Blessing." True enough, heaven answered their prayers.

On Feb. 1, 2015, on a cloudy day, without rain or very hot weather, the biggest Interfaith Peace Blessing in the Philippines was held at the Marikina Sports Complex in Marikina City in the eastern part of Manila. An estimated 150,000 people, garbed in white, trooped their way to Marikina City, coming from all over Metro Manila and neighboring provinces. "The jeepneys filled with people in white just keep on coming," said one of the staff. From as early as 9 in the morning, participants started to arrive for the Blessing and continued until around 3 in the afternoon. It was amazing to see the participants lined up and entering in an orderly manner. "I cried several times!" said one person who saw how the whole sports complex was filled with people.



"All the couples in their white clothes! You look so noble and angelic. It feels as if we are in the true Garden of Eden: the garden of pure love and boundless joy!" said Dr. Sun Jin Moon, who delivered the Blessing Address in behalf of her parents, UPF Founders Dr. Sun Myung Moon and Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon. She said further, "Today is a glorious day. From this moment forward you stand in a new relationship with God and with one another. Today and for eternity you are a precious, complete couple. Your beloved spouse is your counterpart on the path to realizing God's ideal of true love. In your eternal

unity as a couple you resemble our Heavenly Parent.” Such beautiful words of encouragement for the participating couples!



Distinguished leaders from the Philippines and other nations, in particular the delegates from the Asian Summit in Manila City that had just finished, took part in the historic event which had the theme “Strengthening the Families, Rebuilding the Nations, Creating a World of Lasting Peace.”

Former Prime Minister of Nepal, His Excellency Madhav K. Nepal, delivered a Congratulatory Message. Five-time Speaker of the Philippine House of Representatives, Honorable Jose De Venecia Jr., also delivered a very dynamic Congratulatory Message. He then encouraged Prime Minister Nepal to organize a large-scale Interfaith Peace Blessing event in the nation where the highest peak of the world is located: Nepal. The last to give his message was American evangelist Bishop Jesse Edwards, who testified that his own marriage had become more exciting and filled with greater love after Dr. and Mrs. Moon had bestowed the Marriage Blessing upon them. He said he wished that all couples who came to attend the Blessing would experience a renewed and much stronger love as couples.



The Vice Mayor of Marikina City, Honorable Jose Fabian Cadiz, representing Mayor Del De Guzman, welcomed all the participants. He expressed the full support of the Marikina City government for the noble activities being carried out by UPF around the world, especially in regard to the strengthening of marriages and families.

Before the event began, there was a pre-program of entertainment, starting from 2 p.m. The students of the International Peace Leadership College (IPLC) performed a very energetic Tongil Moo Do martial arts demonstration. The angelic pupils of Sun Hwa International Academy presented a traditional Korean fan dance to the delight of the audience. Later they also danced the very popular K-pop dance. One of the staff preparing for the event, Ms. Marve Villamero, rendered a beautiful song which drew cheers from the audience. Then Dr. Robert Kittel, the UPF-Asia education director, introduced a way in which young people can save their nation. He challenged the audience to stand up for purity before marriage and fidelity after marriage. He then called two youth representatives to lead the recitation of the Pure Love Pledge. The whole stadium and sports complex erupted when in unison, everyone shouted the pledge at the top of their voice while standing and raising their right hand. Also part of the pre-program was a short lecture explaining the significance of the Interfaith Peace Blessing ceremony.



The main event started at around 4 p.m., with Rev. Julius Malicdem, UPF special advisor to the Philippines, serving as the emcee. First, the Water of Harmony ceremony and the Universal Prayer for Peace were led by representative religious leaders from various faiths and traditions. The Blessing ceremony started with the entrance of 24 attendant couples. Dr. and Mrs. Chung Sik Yong, regional chair for UPF-Asia and his wife, officiated the ceremony.

After the proclamation of the Blessing, a congratulatory song, "When You Believe," was offered by Professor Agnes Barredo Fenoli.

The event continued with a heart-moving ceremony to offer prayer requests from the families and couples who participated in the Blessing. While a sea of candles were lit, the song "The Prayer" was performed by Professor Agnes Barredo Fenoli and Mr. Elijah John Marquez. With all the dignitaries on stage led by Dr. Sun Jin Moon and her husband, Mr. In Sup Park, with Dr. and Mrs. Chung Sik Yong and the representative religious leaders all holding their candles, a special prayer was then offered by Bishop Jesse Edwards which echoed all over the venue. Tears fell as the prayer requests were offered up to Heaven and also prayers were offered for all the victims of calamities and conflicts in the Philippines.

Shouts of "Eog mansei (Mabuhay)" then echoed throughout the venue, followed by fireworks and showers of confetti to conclude the Interfaith Peace Blessing.