

FFWPU Philippines Blessed Children Department's Coming of Age Festival

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The Blessed Children Department held the first Coming of Age Festival last June 11, 2023, at the Philippines FFWPU Headquarters with the theme, "Springtime of Life: Blooming with a Heart of Hyo Jeong." The Coming of Age Festival is a whole-day program that aims to guide and empower elder blessed children aged 18 and above to cultivate a heart of hyo jeong (filial piety) and align their life goals and plans to Heavenly Parent and True Parents' dream in the course of their young adulthood. Moreover, the program seeks to encourage blessed children to open themselves to bigger opportunities and take up higher responsibilities in the movement; a step toward becoming leaders and contributors of Cheon Il Guk.

61 Filipino blessed children, 53 Universal Peace Academy (UPA) cadets, and around 25 parents participated onsite. Simultaneously, 21 blessed children all over the Philippines and abroad attended online via Zoom. A total of 135 participants joined the event.

The Coming of Age Festival consisted of two programs: 1) Part 1: Coming of Age Ceremony which encompasses Key Messages from leaders, Testimonies of Blessed Children, the Bestowing of Ceremonial Rings, and the Pledge of Maturity; and 2) Part Two: Family Day covered family games and the Awarding and Recognition program. A variety of booths and activities were also initiated for the participants to visit in their free time.

Three key messages were integrated into the first part of the program: 1) "Providence and Me," which was delivered by Dr. Julius B. Malicdem, Regional Vice President of FFWPU Heavenly Asia Pacific 2; 2) "Matching and Blessing," given by Mrs. Dulce Buyayo, Blessed Family Department (BFD) Director of Heavenly Asia Pacific 2; and lastly, 3) "IAYSP and Youth" by Mr. Ronnie Sodusta, the President of International Association of Youth and Student for Peace (IAYSP) Asia Pacific 2. Outstanding blessed children were also invited to give their testimonies centering on different themes: 1) Testimony of a Universal Peace Academy (UPA) cadet by Mr. Preston Kyle Tanate, Academic Excellence for Heavenly Parent and True Parents by Ms. Leong Sil Rose Panuelos, and World Collegiate Association for the

Research of Principles (W-CARP) Testimony by Ms. Blessie Ramos.

Blessed children who attained notable achievements were also recognized and awarded. This recognition ceremony was conducted to acknowledge and appreciate the blessed children who excel in their respective fields and to inspire their fellow blessed children to aspire to do the same in their studies, career, and life of faith. The achievements are classified into three categories: 1) Blessed Children with Spiritual Children; 2) Blessed Children who received the Blessing; and 3) Blessed Children with Academic Excellence.



One of the main highlights of the festival is the Coming of Age Ceremony where the ceremonial rings were bestowed to the blessed children. The ring symbolizes one's sworn eternal promise to Heavenly Parent, True Parents, their parents, and themselves as a proud blessed child, inheritor of Heavenly Parent's lineage, builder of Cheon Il Guk, and substantial citizen of God's nation. It will always be a reminder of one's identity, the tremendous love Heavenly Parent and True Parents have for them, and their pledge to become a mature individual by building an exemplary life of faith, respecting and honoring the Blessing, and leaving a positive and principled impact on society. In this solemn ceremony, the parent(s) and child (children) stood beside each other as the parent put the rings on the right ring or middle finger. This was followed by the recitation of the "Pledge of Maturity."

Blessed Children aged sixteen (16) to eighteen (18) are recommended to prepare for the Matching and the Blessing. It is also a period where they must decide what career or course they will pursue and what path they will take. Not only that, but it is also a time when they will be introduced to organizations and institutions like IAYSP, W-CARP, NLTP, etc. Through this Coming of Age Festival, blessed children and their parents were able to take a new step forward together and begin a new chapter of their lives with the tremendous love and grace of Heavenly Parent and True Parents!