

Report on 4 day pilgrimage to 7 Holy Grounds in Albania & Kosovo

11th – 14th of September 2014

Dear brothers and sisters,

We would like to share with you about the first pilgrimage to the 7 Holy Grounds established last year by Rev. and Mrs. Shin – the Special Envoy to Albania and Kosovo.

Right after summer activities finished with the 4 Day Divine Principle Seminar and 40 day witnessing campaign mobilization, after a very short notice to start the pilgrimage, a group of 16 brothers & sisters, blessed couples, Community Leaders, AfPs and 2 Second Gen. responded to the call representing 7 communities in Albania & Kosovo.

The purpose of the pilgrimage at this very time was:

- To connect spiritually and physically all Holy Grounds and local communities and establish a strong unity among all brothers and sisters and Ambassadors for Peace while striving to become owners of CIG by practicing True Love resembling our Creator the Heavenly Parent centered on vision 2020.
- To mobilize the spirit world and the ancestors of our nation to work together with us at this very important time to fulfill Heavenly Parent's and True Parents expectation for Albania and Kosovo as strategic nation.
- To set up a good spiritual condition for the success of Pope Francesco this month on September 21st.
- To prepare spiritually for the Seonghwa Ceremonies we plan to organize in each local community by the end of this year to honor, pay respect and lift up the ancestors of this nation and connect them to True Parents works.



On September 11th we gathered at the Peace Embassy HQ and after praying together started the journey which lasted 4 days and traveled 1450 km.

The first stop was Shkodra city where 2 Ambassadors for Peace and several members were waiting for us. In each holy ground the purpose and meaning of the pilgrimage was explained, we read True Parents words and offered three representative prayers. In every place the spiritual atmosphere was great and the presence of the spirit word was felt very strongly. In each city local brothers and sisters prepared lunch and dinner for us.



The second city we traveled was Prishtina – Kosovo. From Shkodra to Kosovo, Mr. Ali Lacej also joined the pilgrims, even though he had so many things to do. He felt called to join at least one part of the tour. We arrived late in the evening and were welcomed warmly by brothers and sisters there and also the Chairman of UPF Kosovo Mr. Kurteshi and member of Global Peace Council Mr. Hyseni who stayed with us until late night. The next day early morning at 6.00 AM, 27 brothers and sisters and AfP gathered at the Holy Ground in Prishtina and prayed in the beautiful park welcoming the new day and sunrise with holy songs, TP's words and sincere prayers for Heavenly Parent's blessings to come to this nation



Right after breakfast, at 8.00 AM, the pilgrims departed to Elbasan city, around 300 km away. We arrived in Elbasan at lunch time and after meeting brothers and sisters in the center and having lunch together, at 15.30 we all gathered at the holy ground to pray. 34 brothers and sisters and Ambassadors for Peace joined the prayer meeting. It was a very beautiful sunny day. Brothers & sisters were moved and had tears in their eyes.





The next stop right after prayer in Elbasan was Korca city, some 150 km away. We arrived in the evening in Korca and were welcomed by brothers and sisters who had prepared delicious dinner for pilgrims. Some of us met with Chairman and Former Chairman of Korca Local Peace Council and shared with them the purpose of this tour and invited them to join the prayer meeting next morning at the holy ground.



On the next morning, at the Holy Ground which is located above the city, 33 brothers and sisters and AfPs gathered together to pray for the city and connect it to the world providence. When we just finished our prayers, the sun jus rose and started to embrace the city and it felt like Heavenly Parent was showering it with His blessings.



Immediately after breakfast, we started our journey to our next destination which was Durres city which is some 230 km far from Korca. 37 brothers and sisters gathered in Durres Holy Ground which is located in a hill which divides the city and the Adriatic Sea. It was a very strong wind coming from the sea and it felt like heavens blessings were flowing from the sea toward the whole country. As Mrs. Shin mentioned last year during the establishment of that Holy Ground that the name of that place sounds like *"blessings coming in"*, in our prayers we felt strongly the spirit world was really moving and very active.





Two blessed families came from Tirana to join the ceremony in Durres and in this way connected o the spirit of the pilgrimage. After having nice lunch in the center, prepared by Durres brothers and sisters, we then departed to Vlora city in the south of Albania.

We arrived at the Holy Ground at 18.00 and 37 people gathered together with Vlora brothers and sisters and AfPs. It was a very moving atmosphere while the sun was setting and creating a beautiful golden view on the Jonion Sea. Rev. Shin gave short speeches and deep everywhere we went. AfP in Vlora welcomed and thanked the pilgrims for visiting Vlora and praying for the city.



After the ceremony and prayer at the Holy Ground we went to the Vlora center and spent that night there with Vlora brothers and sisters. The next day early morning, members of the pilgrimage group shared their experiences so far and it was truly moving to listen to each person's testimonies.

After breakfast the group departed to the final destination – Tirana. On the way to Tirana, the pilgrims stopped in Fier city where the pioneer centered was opened in August 1st this year.



We all prayed there together with members of national team so that the pioneer center can continue to be open and finally established in that city and for Heavenly Parent's and True Parents blessings to come to Fier city as well.



We arrived in Tirana Holy Ground at 11.00 AM on September 14th and joined Tirana brothers and sisters and Ambassadors for Peace who had gathered there. Altogether we were 62 participants at this final gathering.

Right at the end of our prayer, a very strong shower rain started and we felt it was a blessing for this whole pilgrimage and everybody had no chance to escape the rain. However, the feeling was really great & we felt it was a great victory. Rev. Shin at the end of the prayer ceremony said to all brothers and sisters gathered there that he likes very much the American song "God Bless America" and said that from now on he would like to sing it for Albania "God Bless Albania!"



Finally, the gatherings of brothers and sisters and AfP in each Holy Ground was as follows:

Shkodra – 20 participants, 7 AfPs; Kosovo – 27 participants, 7 AfPs; Elbasan – 34 participants, 7 AfPs;
Korca – 33 participants, 7 AfPs; Durres – 37 participants, 12 AfPs; Vlora – 37 participants, 12 AfPs;
Tirana – 62 participants, 18 AfPs;
Total participation in this pilgrimage: 250 participants and among them 70 were AfPs



Few testimonies from brothers and sisters who were part of the pilgrimage group:

"I felt we should do a national spiritual condition & gave the idea of pilgrimage to Rev. Shin. I was very happy Rev. Shin supported the idea. I felt Heavenly Parent blessed the country everywhere we went". **Marjeta Rroshi (wife of N. Leader)**

"When we were praying and connected hand in hand I felt the spirits were coming up from the middle of our circle and when the prayer finished the stream of spirits coming up immediately stopped." **Lubin Argjir (Vlora community leader)**

"I felt very strongly the pain of the ancestors of this nation and I prayed a lot all the time. Actually I fell asleep while praying and woke up in prayer. We have to liberate this nation & ancestors." **Bajram Ibraj (Chairman of UPF Albania)**

"After deep prayer in Korca holy ground, when I was passing through the graves of the heroes who lost their lives to save the nation, I felt very strongly and asked myself if I am ready to offer my life for Heavenly Parent and True Parents at this very important time in history. We should become such people." **Ajet Bosi (Elbasan Community Leader)**

"I had a prayer attitude all the time and I felt very much True Father's heart when he had to travel each day one nation during world tours sacrificing his life each day for Heavenly Parent and humanity". **Arjan Haziraj (Durrës Com. Leader)**

"I felt pushed by spirit world to join the pilgrimage. I had the same feeling I had in 2005 when True Parents visited Albania. I felt spirit world is moving so much. I was very happy also that AfP joined the pilgrimage" **(Mateo Ziko (HQ staff))**

"I felt very good in every place I visited Albania and Kosovo. The strongest feeling I had during the pilgrimage was the education of myself and my relationship to Heavenly Parent and True Parents". **Guk Jin Shin (Rev. Shin's son)**

"I repented a lot during this time as I understood that Heavenly Parent & True Parents are the root of my being. I focused a lot in other things during past months and forgot my roots." **Elona Powell (Tirana Community member)**

Reported by: Albanian HQ Staff