

## Blessing Event in Barcelona, Spain - Family Festival for a Culture of Peace

Maryvonne Jamois  
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For a few months, we had been preparing a blessing event with the Thai community in Barcelona. We have three Thai sisters, Mai, Kanyapat and Darune, in Barcelona and one, Chatiboot, in Andorra. As Chatiboot spent time in Thailand recently, she was inspired to do something in Barcelona, so we began to work together as a team with the Barcelona community. Kanyapat and Mai, who were already in contact with the Thai Association in Barcelona, began to look for some support. They contacted a monk from Norway, Phra Benjamin sae-Tia, whom the Thai Association already knows, and the event was set for December 10. Our place was too small, so we looked for a hotel or another place to rent. We eventually found a nice, large room for a reasonable price. We worked on the invitation, began to contact people and to prepare so that the event could be attractive for Thai people and others.

A few days before the event, the Thai Embassy in Madrid also supported us by putting our invitation on their web site. The ambassador could not come but she said she would send a representative from the embassy.

On Friday a team came from Madrid to bring the beautiful banner made by Armando, to help us and to support the event. On Saturday, within a few hours we were able to transform the room. Jose Manuel prepared a beautiful decor.

The expectation was great on Sunday morning; gradually guests were arriving. Around fifty guests came. Eighteen couples received the Blessing. Altogether, including members, the event attracted almost a hundred people. At the entrance, the couples were invited to have a beautiful picture taken near a heart of flowers prepared by Jose Manuel and Antonio.

The program had two parts. After welcoming remarks by me, we had a presentation by Manuel Campillo, titled, "The Family is the School of Love." After a coffee break, we began the second part.

The monk guided everybody in meditation and gave his blessing for this ceremony. It was followed by Holy Wine, the sprinkling of Holy Water and a Blessing prayer.

Manuel, as the master of ceremonies did his best to create a nice atmosphere and conducted the ceremony of forgiveness and invited all couples to make a new beginning. They all embraced as couples in a very loving way. We then invited a Thai singer who delighted us with a Spanish song and a Thai song. Words of congratulations were given first by Giuseppe Cali, president of FFWPU for South Europe followed by some words from Mr. Bancha Yuenyongchongcharoen, the representative of the Embassy of Thailand, who received a certificate of appreciation for the ambassador for her support to the event.

One of our Thai sisters posted pictures on Facebook and the people who participated thanked us for inviting them and for organizing the event. It had been a wonderful day and some people who did not participate are interested in participating next time.

True Mother said recently, "What is God's dream? It is one human family. If you cannot perfect your family, you cannot go to Heaven. The Family Federation is a religion of True Parentism." God's love embraces everybody beyond our differences. To bless people is to help them feel and experience God's embrace and see that we are all members of the same family. When all our guests left, we gathered with Dr. Michael and Fumiko Balcomb. He asked everybody to express very quickly some impressions of the day. It was an emotive moment as many members were deeply thankful and impressed by this event and this gave them a lot of hope to do much more in the future.

The key to this event's success was the cooperation and unity of all brothers and sisters from the Barcelona community, the Madrid community and the Andorra community; everybody is needed in his or her own area, and we need each other so much.

I want to express my gratitude to all brothers and sisters, especially our Thai sisters and Hector and Dulce, city leaders in Barcelona, who worked very hard in the past weeks. Thank you also to Dr. Michael and Fumiko Balcomb (chairman of Europe, the Middle East and Eurasia) who took time despite their busy schedules to come to Barcelona and give us their support, and to Giuseppe Cali, regional president of South Europe.