

An Update On The May Celebrations Planned In Korea And The EUME Region

Michael Balcomb
March 4, 2023



Letter From Europe and the Middle East Regional President – Saturday 4th March 2023

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

We are now just two months away from the great celebrations in Korea to mark the Dedication of the *Cheonwongung*, the True Parents' Holy Blessing Anniversary and major Holy Days; the 2023 Cosmic Blessing Ceremony, the UPF Summit Conference, the 2023 Spring Great Works and other events. Some of us are planning to go to Korea to participate in person, but most families will be joining the celebrations from our communities in the EUME Region. We want to give you a summary of what is being prepared.

1) CELEBRATIONS OF THE CHEONWONGUNG DEDICATION AND THE HOLY DAYS (May 5th 2023)

We expect that the celebrations in Korea will be live-streamed around the world from about 10am Korean time, which is 2am BST (3am CET) on Friday, May 5th. Whether this is an interactive program or not, we would like to encourage all members who can do so to participate online in real time.

Additionally, we are encouraging every community to hold a **public in-person celebration** where our families and friends can gather together. This should feature all normal holy day preparations, including a Pledge Service, Holy Table, Worship, Fellowship, Food and Entertainment. Ideally this would be held later on the day itself (May 5th) but it is also acceptable to schedule your celebrations for the weekend of May 6th and May 7th. By then we should be able to provide a concise video summary of the program in Korea which can be shared during your own celebrations.

2) THE COSMIC BLESSING CEREMONY (May 7th 2023 or May 5th 2023)

The Blessing Ceremony will be officiated by True Parents during the overall celebrations in Korea. We have encouraged all candidates to attend in person in Korea and receive the blessing directly from True Mother. The opportunities to meet True Parents in person are now very limited indeed.

For those who cannot attend in Korea, there will be TWO Blessing locations in Europe: in **Albania at the new Cheonilguk Peace Embassy in Tirana**; and in **Germany at or near Frankfurt**. We will also support a small ceremony in Moscow for those who cannot travel at all due to the conflict still raging in Europe.

There is one final and important detail that is unfortunately still not clear. The Blessing was originally scheduled for around 10am Korea Time on May 7th, (2am BST/3am CET) but it seems possible that the date could still be moved to May 5th at around 12noon (4am BST/5am CET). For this reason, it is important to include as much flexibility in any travel plans as possible.

A NOTE ABOUT THE BLESSING PROGRAM IN ALBANIA

We want to take this opportunity to explain why we are offering a Blessing ceremony in Albania. You will remember that True Mother last visited Europe in 2019 when she came to Albania at our invitation to host the Europe Summit and the National Blessing in Tirana. It was our privilege to be present at both events, and at the National Blessing the First Lady of Albania and her daughter gave congratulatory remarks to the couples and presented a gift to True Mother representing the entire nation. It was a beautiful ceremony and a victorious and joyful day. Just before she left, True Mother gave her benediction to Albania as "Heavenly Albania" and accepted our request to build the brand new CheonIlGuk Peace Embassy in Tirana, which was opened in late 2021. We are proud to say it was built entirely with funds and donations from our region and it is now more than fully self-supporting. I really hope that all our members from the region can make plans to visit and be inspired by this magnificent building. One day we should have such a facility in every nation!

We consider the Peace Embassy in Tirana our EUME "mini Cheonwongung" and as such the perfect counterpart to the Blessing location in Korea. The current President of Albania, Bajram Begaj, is scheduled to attend the events in Korea in person, so it seems even more appropriate that a European level blessing should be held in Albania. It will certainly be featured in the Albanian national media, and it was always one of True Parents' wishes that the Blessing not be just an internal and private event but a public witness.

3) THE 2023 SPRING GREAT WORKS (May 6th and May 7th)

True Parents have encouraged all of us to attend the Great Works worship services four times a year. The Spring Great Works will be hosted in Cheongpyeong at the HJ Cheonwon on May 6th and May 7th and all those in Korea will be invited and encouraged to participate directly. For those joining online from the EUME region, we expect that the Great Works will be broadcast live on the Saturday 6th and then repeated on video on Sunday 7th. These dates are subject to change.

4) THE UPF SUMMIT CONFERENCE (May 2nd to May 6th)

The UPF Summit Conference is an invitation-only event which will mostly feature current and former heads of state and heads of government from around the world, representatives of the world's major faiths, and the leaders of major international and intergovernmental organizations. For most of us, all we can do is pray for the success and safety of this important event. However, it is anticipated that the Opening Plenary and some other sessions will be livestreamed..

5) THE FINAL VICTORY CELEBRATION (May 8th)

Those who are in Korea will likely be invited to attend the final victory celebration hosted by True Mother. Again, it is likely that this will be live-streamed for members around the world to join.

6) THE EUME LEADERS' MEETING AND PILGRIMAGE (May 9th to 11th)

Those who are coming Korea are invited to attend this additional and optional program. We will have a time of reflection and sharing on the week of events we will have experienced together, and we will visit a number of the sites around Korea that were and are special to True Parents and God's providence. A separate memo about this opportunity and registration details will soon be available.

7) THE CHEONWONGUNG DEVOTIONAL OFFERING

Thank you to all families who have already contributed to the special devotional offering on the occasion of the dedication of the Cheonwongung. We are just about halfway to our goal of 3000 donors from the EUME region. Let's all encourage ourselves and others to make this goal in the next two months.

Thank you for reading to the end of this long document!

Sincerely,

Michael and Fumiko Balcomb

Regional President, FFWPU Heavenly Europe and the Middle East