

Global Mercy Meeting in Manila

Philippine killings not on agenda at global mercy meeting Delegates pledge to present beauty of life as Tagle urges mercy for victims of violence Philippine killings not on agenda at global mercy meeting



A global church meeting on mercy being held in the Philippines will not discuss President Rodrigo Duterte's deadly war on drugs even as Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle of Manila issued a call for mercy for victims of acts of violence.

"There is no discussion on [extra-judicial killings], but of course we will present the beauty of life in the general sense," said Father Prospero Tenorio, secretary-general of the World Apostolic Congress on Mercy.

The priest said the international gathering, which has so far attracted some 6,000 delegates from 40 countries, is about "communion in mercy and mission for mercy."

"We give importance to the gift of life," said Father Tenorio. "Remember life is a gift from God and the way we live our life is our gift to God," he added. "We hope to show in our congress the importance of life."

In his homily during the opening Mass on Jan. 16, Cardinal Tagle urged delegates to "continue showing the face of Jesus to the world through acts of mercy."

The cardinal told them to be like Mary by being attentive to those in need.

The prelate said parents who lost their children "to violence, to vices, to human trafficking, to new forms of slavery" should feel the mercy of God and "would know they have a family."

Cardinal Tagle cited incidents around the world where children are kidnapped, sold into prostitution, or their body parts harvested by international business syndicates.

"When a mother cries, it is the hour of Jesus, it is the hour of mercy. We are the disciples that Jesus wants to be with his mother. We are the disciples of mercy, Jesus' mercy," the prelate told delegates. Father Tenorio said this year's meeting on mercy will discuss the "importance of life."

The priest admitted that drug-related killings in the Philippines were among the initial concerns of the delegates, especially those from other countries.

"At the onset, there were such concerns about the killings as well as the breakdown of peace and order," said Father Tenorio. But the priest the delegates were assured that organizers have been coordinating with security forces.

"We also told them that this is very a important situation, wherein through our faith, we can show our love to others, especially those in need. We told them we cannot let fear reign over us in this situation," said the priest.

The five-day World Apostolic Congress on Mercy, the fourth since it started in 2008 in Rome, has drawn a record number of participants.

The majority of international delegates come from the United States, Malaysia, Singapore, Italy, France, and Indonesia, while local participants mostly come from the cities of Davao in Mindanao, Bacolod in the central Philippines, and the province of Bulacan, north of Manila.

Father Tenorio said unlike at previous gatherings when delegates stayed in one place, participants at the Philippine meeting will go to various places in a pilgrimage "to have different experiences every day [and to] meet different people."

First introduced by the Vatican, the world congress is an international gathering of Divine Mercy devotees and promoters.

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