

Hong Kong Catholics welcome Our Lady of Fatima statue

The statue will tour Asia but 'Our Lady of Anti-Communism' will not stop in mainland China Hong Kong Catholics welcome Our Lady of Fatima statue



More than 1,000 Catholics packed St. Teresa Church for a Mass and veneration to Our Lady of Fatima with flowers and prayers on Jan. 16. (ucanews.com photo)

A statue of Our Lady of Fatima blessed by Pope Francis started its Asian pilgrimage with Hong Kong as its first stop to celebrate the centennial of the Marian apparition in Portugal.

Pope Francis blessed six Centennial Pilgrim Statues of Our Lady of Fatima at the Vatican on Jan. 11 before sending them on tour in six continents. Hong Kong is the first place in the world where a statue landed.

"Pope Francis was really excited about this event. He looked at each statue, said a long prayer in front of each single one and gave his blessings," an organizer who escorted the statue to Hong Kong told ucanews.com. "He said he is expecting a news report of the pilgrimage journey too."

The organizer, who wants to keep a low profile and asked not to be named, is a member of the Queen of the Holy Rosary of Pompeii Prayer Group, a lay Catholic community in Hong Kong that organizes the local pilgrimage from Jan. 13-28.



HONG KONG: Our Lady

On Jan. 16 more than 1,000 Catholics packed St. Teresa Church for a special Mass. The liturgy was followed by an overnight adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.

"It is a good time to re-proclaim Fatima's message about world peace and conversion along with the pastoral direction of Hong Kong Diocese," Father Dominic Chan, vicar general, told ucanews.com.

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"Cardinal John Tong Hon of Hong Kong has decided to adopt marriage and family as the pastoral direction for this year," said Father Chan, who is also parish priest of the Immaculate Conception Cathedral which will host the statue.

Louis Kwan, a member of the Legion of Mary, said his first impression of the Our Lady of Fatima were the messages associated with the apparition.

"I understand they were related to repentance and prayer. Although the messages were 100 years ago, they are still relevant today," Kwan told ucanews.com.

The Blessed Mother appeared to three shepherd children in Fatima, Portugal in 1917 and told them three prophecies: of hell, the consecration of Russia and the death of a pope and other religious figures.

The second prophecy is widely believed to relate to the Second World War and the disintegration of the Soviet Union.



One of the centennial pilgrim statues of Our Lady of Fatima blessed by Pope Francis arrived in Hong Kong. (ucanews.com photo)

Our Lady of Anti-Communism

The visit of Our Lady's statue to Hong Kong has drawn wide attention from Catholics in mainland China. Some even prepared to make a pilgrimage to Portugal as the statue is unlikely to visit mainland China.

"We underground Catholics have nothing to protect us but the Blessed Mother. Thus, she is very dear to us," said Father Joseph, an underground priest in northeastern China.

"But the Chinese communists are very afraid of Our Lady of Fatima as she mentioned communism will be destroyed in one of her secret prophecies," he said.

"In the 1950s, a time of religious persecution, the communists were angry to find that the Holy See had called on Chinese Catholics to pray for the intercession of Our Lady of Fatima. They regarded her as 'Our Lady of Anti-Communism' and 'Our Lady of the Counterrevolution,'" recalled an elderly Catholic from the underground church community.

The statue of Our Lady will continue its journey to the Philippines at the end of January.

<iframe width="606" height="300" src="https://www.youtube.com/embed/TIQtws41iuI" frameborder="0" allowfullscreen></iframe>

UCAN - Hong Kong January 18, 2017