

American Clergy Pay Their Respects to Father Moon on Holy Ground

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Among the tens of thousands gathering daily in Gapyeong Korea to say goodbye to Father Sun Myung Moon were 72 ministers from across the United States, including many who studied the Divine Principle with Father Moon in Korea a year ago and some who say they have been guided by his vision for decades. The clergy assembled at the Renaissance Hotel for an orientation breakfast and later boarded buses on Sept. 13, 2012 at 1:30 p.m. to visit the sacred venues for the wake of the Founder of the Unification Movement. The clergy at the hotel are guided by scores of white-suited college girls bowing and ushering them to their meeting locations.

The clergy participated in the wake for Father Moon both at the stadium known as the Cheongshim World Peace Center and at the Cheon Jeong Gung palace where Father Moon's body is lying in state. The 24,000-person capacity stadium ground floor is lined by scores of floral wreaths from those sending condolences. The ministers were given roses and lilies lay upon a long table underneath a 20-foot official portrait.

After standing in rows of 10 and bowing, the clergy then mounted buses again to ride approximately one mile up a steep road to the palace perched on a cloud-shrouded mountain overlooking the legendary Cheongpyeong Lake. Rev. Moon had used the hills above the lake as a prayer ground and retreat center since the 1970s, and he was guided to create a palace of devotion there that would be his residence and final resting place.

The sky was overcast the entire day as soft rain pelted the bus windows, and funeral staff in alabaster raincoats stood at every sharp turn of the road to give signals to the bus drivers. Rev. Jenkins guided the party into the white-granite palace to the second floor of the Rotunda where Rev. Moon's family awaited them. All in the assembly removed their shoes and walked quietly up the white-marbled stairs in their socks. Inside the viewing room, the ministers, many with tears, paid their respects before the casket. True Father's body is arrayed in the golden and rose-colored robes of a Korean King and wears a tall silver Korean crown.

Rev. Peter Ho Yeul Kim, True Father's close disciple, greeted the ministers and invited them to fix in their minds what they experienced in that room and to remember the day.

"Ladies and gentlemen, this is a historic occasion. Father Moon is still in the process of his ascension and is almost three-quarters done. Please look carefully at the True Parent of all mankind, and make a determination to serve him on earth and in the spiritual world," he said.

After a short prayer period, each visitor then went through a receiving line where he or she shook the hand of Father Moon's family standing to the left of the casket: International President Hyung Jin Moon, Tongil Group Chairman Kook Jin Moon, and their wives.

"It was breathtaking," commented Archbishop George Stallings. State Sen. Donzella James of Atlanta said, "Oh it was so beautiful. But I feel kind of sad, and I miss him so much. I can't believe that he has gone, that I won't be able to see him again and call me daughter and feel him tap my forehead with his fingers, like he did so many times."