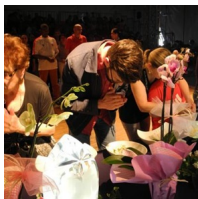


Tzu Chi Celebrates Buddha Day in Italy

Written by Tzu Chi Foundation
Friday, 16 May 2014 11:51



The second Sunday of May is a very special day -- three important occasions fall at the same time: Mother's Day, Buddha Day and Tzu Chi Day. Members of the foundation around the world celebrate this special day. In 2014, they held a total of 382 Buddha Day ceremonies in 39 countries. In Europe, the events were held in United Kingdom, Austria, Germany, France and Italy.

On May 20 2012, an earthquake of 5.7 magnitude hit the Emilia-Romagna region in north central Italy; it struck about 22 miles north of Bologna and killed seven people. On May 29, a second earthquake, measuring 5.8, struck the same area, causing an additional 20 deaths and widespread damage, especially to buildings already weakened by the first quake. One of the cities worst affected was Finale Emilia, whose community center collapsed. In July, Tzu Chi volunteers from Germany and France went there to survey the damage; in December, they held a winter distribution and also provided financial subsidies for students in the city. Right until today, the love of Tzu Chi has continued to flow into the area; its people are by now familiar with the volunteers.

On May 11, 2014, the Tzu Chi volunteers held a Buddha Day Ceremony in the city of Finale Emilia; the event also celebrated Mother's Day. Local volunteer Claudio Sabatini and his wife organized the event, together with Tzu Chi volunteers from Milan and Rome. Volunteers from Munich, Germany provided assistance. The ceremony was attended by 350 participants and 51 volunteers.



The Buddha Day Ceremony was held in a tent, in which the temperature was 31 degrees Celsius. It was stuffy in the tent -- but everyone sat calmly and peacefully. Deputy Mayor Angelo Dáiello expressed his deep gratitude; he said he was very thankful that the volunteers had traveled long distances to help. He said the lives of Finale Emilia residents were returning to normal but that the real problem was to find jobs and deal with psychological issues. The care given by Tzu Chi provides the power and stability they need, he said.

Claudio Sabatini said that he began to co-operate with Tzu Chi after the earthquake; he was very moved by their spirit of great love and was full of gratitude. He wished that everyone would come to know the beauty of the organization. A priest also expressed his gratitude for the selfless love of Tzu Chi; he said that it was an excellent opportunity for people to know different religions and cultures.

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