

# Dominican Pilgrimage Taiwan

To celebrate the 800 years of Saint Dominic's *Dies Natalis*, the province of Saint Vincent Ferrer set out on a three-day pilgrimage to southern and central Taiwan. In this part of Taiwan, the final arrival of the Dominicans of the Holy Rosary in Isla Hermosa (Formosa) took place in 1859 where they laid the foundation of the present Catholic Church in Taiwan.

## Day 1

聖若瑟天主堂  
荊桐巷

The first pilgrim site was the Church of St. Joseph in Chiwaka, Cihung County 荊桐巷. It is where Sr. Margarita Lin, the first native vocation of the Province of St. Vincent Ferrer, was born and raised. Sr. +Rosa Lin (RIP), her cousin, was also a sister of our Institute. We found her picture with along other vocations from this small town, proudly posted on one of the walls of the Church.



## 中華聖母朝地

The next stop before heading to Kaohsiung was Mei Shan, Chia Yi 嘉義縣梅山鄉, soon to be canonized by the Vatican as a pilgrim Church of Our Lady of China in Taiwan where the Dominican friars arrived to preach in 1913. The Parish Priest, Fr. Ma Liyou, a TOP missionary who studied at UST Central Seminary presented the Province with a precious image of Our Lady.



Day 2

高雄市岐山區



The statue of St. Dominic on the right side of the façade of the Church in Qisan

On the way to visit Qishan), the sisters reminisced the times when there was a community of sisters who used to work in a hospital. Sr. Rosario Chiu who was on this pilgrimage, fondly recalled how the locals used to call her the “Taiwanese doctor” who worked alongside Sr. Margarita Revilla, a physician by profession, and Sr. Concepcion de Vera. People waited in line to be attended to so that they had to skip meals to make sure that everyone was examined. During those times, the medicine and medical supplies came from the American military, based in Kaohsiung. She mused over how they were loved and cared for by the people.

## 萬金聖母聖殿



The oldest Church in Taiwan is located in the South, the next stop. It is under the patronage of Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary in Wan Jin. It was founded by a Spanish Dominican missionary in 1863. The Church is a pilgrim site and was declared a minor basilica in 1984. It has been called the “Holy Cathedral of Mary” by St. Pope John Paul II. The Dominican Fathers of Taiwan has a priory within the area.

天主教佳平法蒂瑪聖母堂.

In Jia Pin, Pingtung where the Spanish friars evangelized the natives, there is a newly constructed Kaviyangan Church of Our Lady of Fatima 天主教佳平法蒂瑪聖母堂.





The ornate aboriginal design made it to the list of "Taiwan's southernmost county 8 Instagrammable spots" according to Taiwan News. The parishioner/guide informed us that it was constructed at a cost of 100,000,000NT\$ (around 3,000,000Euros).



The lectern has a bas relief of St. Dominic in honor of the Dominican missionaries who brought the faith to them.



The backrests of the pews are shaped like each family member's head including the grandparents.

武潭無染原罪聖母堂

After visiting the Church of Fatima we proceeded to the Church of the Immaculate Conception. To enter the Church, the Sisters had to pass through the “Holy Door”.





The floor then literally splits into two and opens up six steps below the ground to reveal a mosaic of Jesus being baptized by John replicating the baptism in the river Jordan. The sisters had to descend six steps to go through some kind of a “cleansing rite”. Water comes out from fountains attached to the sides of the floor that parted in the middle. It was designed by the same priest who built the Church of Fatima in 佳平.



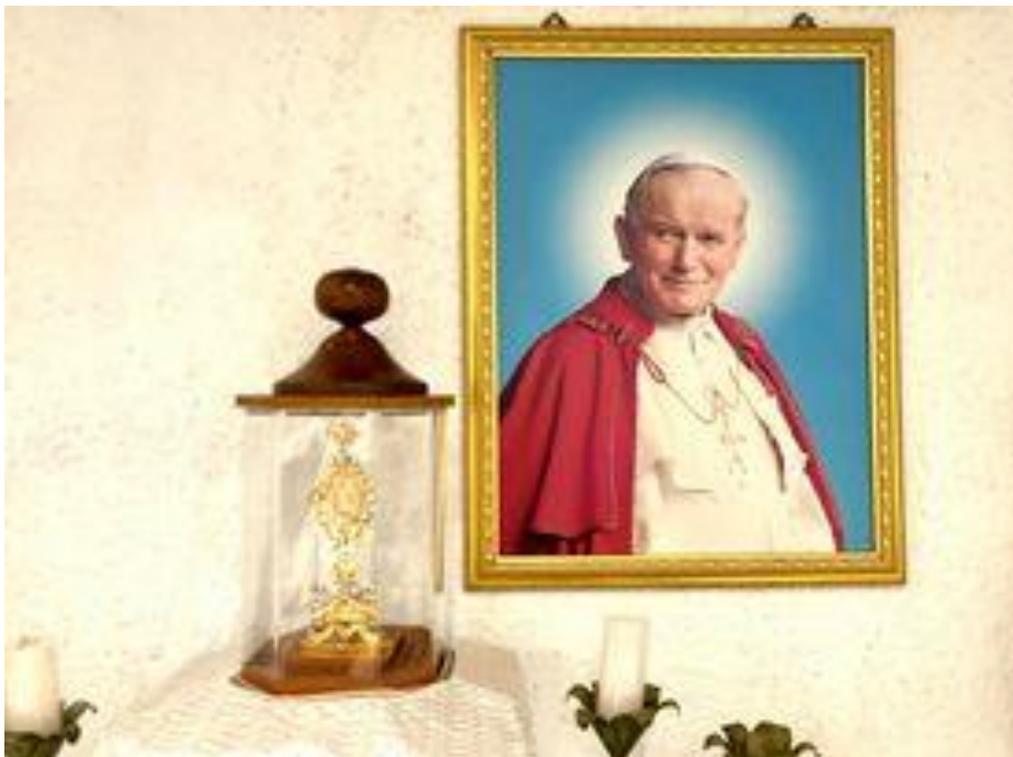
It is surprising to note that **before** the Year of Mercy was declared in 2016, the parish priest Fr. Dominic Du 杜勇雄神父 had already designed and created a bas relief of the same logo on the altar of the Church.





Father Du also designed and built the Church of Fatima in Jia Ping. In a span of 8 years he was able to build 4 Churches which are not only awe-inspiring but also serve to catechize and edify the faithful. Sr. Teresita Su, the incumbent Provincial, challenged us to examine ourselves and ask if we have the diligence and courage to preach as we ought to.

Our last stop for the day was the St. Pope John Paul II Church and Catechetical Center. The Church is a guardian of a first class relic *ex sanguinis* of its patron saint. The sisters were delighted to “bump” into old friends, who were equally excited to meet the sisters. One Sister said, she can’t remember some of the names but the memories were safeguarded in the heart as we are all co-workers in the vineyard of the Lord.



## Day 3

### 天主教高松墓園

First in the list on the last day of the pilgrimage was a visit to our sisters who had gone ahead of us at the Xiao Gang Catholic cemetery. We know that as we pray for their souls they are also praying for us.

It was the astute and insightful decision of Sr. Rosario Chiu, while she was the Provincial Prioress, to procure a lot in the cemetery, big enough to accommodate the future needs of the Province. Nowadays, even if one is financially able, there is no guarantee that there is available space in the Catholic cemetery.



## 天主教高雄教區後驛聖道明堂



Our final stop before heading back to Taipei was the Church of St. Dominic in Kaohsiung. It is for the reason of the 800 years of St. Dominic's *Dies Natalis* that the Dominican pilgrimage was organized. Thanks to the initiative of the Parish Priest, Fr. Jarvis Sy, the Church received the Papal document proclaiming the Parish as Extraordinary Jubilee Church from January 6, 2021 to August 8, 2022. After the celebration of the Eucharist, Fr. Jarvis presented a Jubilee sash and pin to each pilgrim.

May this pilgrimage rekindle the zeal that we had when we first received the gift of vocation. May we remember that we are like seeds scattered in the field, that in order to bear fruit we must first die. As missionaries, may we take consolation in the promise of the Kingdom rather than expect to see the fruits of our labor in our time. And may we, the fruits of the seed of our father St. Dominic, become witnesses of God's love and mercy to the people of Taiwan.