

DEVOTEES OF BLACK NAZARENE FLOCKED TO DELAND, FLORIDA



8th of January 2023 - Hundreds of devotees flocked to the solemn Sunday ceremonies, for the feast of the Black Nazarene. This was celebrated in Deland, Florida together with the community and in cooperation with the St. Peter's Catholic Church.

Morning ceremonies began with a Holy Rosary. Dedicated volunteers then worked through the hand-lifting of the image of the Nazarene as it goes out for a procession at the St. Peter's compound. Rev. Fr. Gilbert Medina, parish priest of St. Peter's together with Rev. Fr. Kenny Aquino from Divine Mercy Catholic Church in Merritt Island Florida, officiated the Holy Mass as the highlight of the event.

Deliciously well prepared meals, including the famous Filipino lechon or roast pig were shared to the guests after the Mass. Entertained by our emcees, and various groups singing and dancing added the joys of sharing the culture to the community. Dances like the La Jota, Kzadoratan and Tinikling, as well as song renditions with solos and duets from the Volusia county, Jacksonville and Ocala provided smiles in everyone's faces.

This Philippine celebration in Quiapo, Manila caught the attention of Rev. Fr. Thomas Connery, former parish priest of St. Peter. From his request, it was awe-inspiring that the couple Romy and Ligaya Cortez tried to find ways to bring the Black Nazarene image to the parish. From Florida

to the Philippines and back, in 2017, a life-size specially customized woodcrafted image was brought in.

Since then, till now, for the past six years, this celebration is a heartwarming unifying event attended by diverse races. Volunteers, devotees, donors, patrons, benefactors, relatives, friends, communities, from Volusia county and from other areas of Florida and even from other states make it their devotion to come annually in respect, giving time and efforts for such a very beautiful event.

The Black Nazarene devotees of Volusia county annually spearheads this celebration and everyone has a lot to be thankful for all the blessings that we all received that day and everyday.

