

Head of Century-old Newspaper Advocating Environmental Protection

Written by Tzu Chi Foundation

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On December 7, the president of the oldest newspaper in the Dominican Republic and his wife visited Hualien to thank Dharma Master Cheng Yen and the Tzu Chi Foundation. Miguel Franjul is president of Listin Diario, which was established in 1889 and has a daily circulation of 150,000 in the Dominican Republic and cities in the United States like New York.

"After our newspaper reported the story about Tzu Chi, all our employees have been very supportive of Tzu Chi," he told Master Cheng Yen. "We all participate in environmental protection. I represent all the staff to express our gratitude and support." Such support from a major newspaper is important to mobilize local volunteers in a country to take part in the foundation's work. Franjul and his wife were accompanied by Rafaela Albuquerque de González, the ambassador of Dominican Republic; they visited the Jing Si Hall before going to the Jing Si Abode, where Dharma Master Cheng Yen lives.

In 2006, the Franjuls visited Taiwan and were impressed by the work of Tzu Chi volunteers around the world. Those accompanying them on this visit learnt that December 6 was the birthday of Mr. Franjul's wife, Nancy Magdalena Perez; they sang her a song to wish her a happy birthday. She was moved to tears and shared with them that the purpose of her trip was to thank Tzu Chi. When she visited the foundation five years ago, she saw a statue of Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva and the image was deeply printed in her mind. This year, her 30-year-old daughter was diagnosed with a tumor; she prayed devotedly to the Bodhisattva sincerely, vowed to do more good deeds and share with more people. Unexpectedly, the tumor disappeared – doctors could not explain this apparent miracle. So she wanted to return to express her gratitude.



The foundation first went to the Dominican Republic in 1998, when Hurricane Mitch devastated Central America. Volunteers from Taiwan and the United States acted together and prepared relief goods for the affected counties; they also held several free clinics. Dharma Master Cheng Yen said that, if local residents instead of foreigners provided the relief, it would save time and help more people. "I hope that, through the reports of the Listin Diario, more people will learn of the good deeds and will be inspired to do good works," she said.

"All the staff of Listin Diario are supporters of Tzu Chi," said Franjul. "We advocate environmental protection and hope to mobilise more manpower and more local people to join this work." The lady ambassador introduced herself in Mandarin. "Wo shi duo ming ni jia da shi, nin hao, xie xie! (I am the Dominican ambassador, hello, thank you!)" She earned a burst of applause. She has been in Taiwan for six months and has been learning the language diligently. "During my term in Taiwan, I want to interact and learn from Tzu Chi and do good things together," she said.

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Dharma Master Cheng Yen blessed the guests with red envelopes of Wisdom and Blessings and Buddhist prayer beads.