

Children Caged Ahead of Pope's Visit to Philippines

Instead of bringing life, joy and Spirit, the anticipated visit of Pope Francis has sent the Philippines into a scramble to hide its poverty by way of prison.

Hundreds of street children have been arrested and caged, according to the DailyMail. These children are mixed in with adult criminals, living in utter squalor.

"MailOnline found dozens of street children locked up in appalling conditions alongside adult criminals in Manila, where a senior official admitted there had been an intensive round-up by police and government workers to make sure they are not seen by Pope Francis," the article reads.

"They have no basic rights. There is no education. There is no entertainment. There is no proper human development," Irish missionary Father Shay Cullen tells the DailyMail. "There is nowhere to eat and they sleep on a concrete floor. There is no proper judicial process.

The children are taken in through "rescues," for sleeping on the streets, begging or stealing food.

Social Welfare Department Head Rosalinda Orobias tells the DailyMail the rescues increase before international visits, that officials know the Pope has a heart for the poor and will not like seeing the suffering.

"There is no question that children should be kept off the streets," Orobias tells the DailyMail, "but a campaign to do so just for the duration of a dignitary's visit helps nobody except the officials who want to put on a show and pretend all is well in our cities."

Other officials echo her sentiment.

Catherine Scerri, deputy director of street children charity Bahay Tuluyan, said the same sort of rescues happened before American President Barack Obama's visit. Instead of giving the city a presentable image, however, these rescues dump children into invisibility.

"There is no reason the shelters (centers) should be like this and what I find soul-destroying is the apathy of the people who work in and around places like RAC and allow this brutality," Scerri tells the DailyMail. "I can understand a lack of resources, but what I find so frustrating is the violence, torture and apathy and the fact that people are standing by and letting this happen. I think that is completely inexcusable."

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