

A TESTIMONY OF MIRACLES BY THE SANTO NINO

I booked a flight to Manila from Los Angeles when the pandemic situation seemed to have improved. I wanted to look into condominiums in the Philippines, and to look for a burial plot for myself. I miss the beaches of the Philippines, too. But in time, added to my itinerary was to search for an image of the Holy Infant Jesus of Prague (Santo Nino) for my organization to donate to Our Lady of Grace parish in Encino, California, where we hold the annual Nine-Hour Novena. The 40th year will be 2023.

I was able to talk to one place near my home, but after a few days, I find myself going to Tayuman with my friend, Jun. It is now that I realize that the Santo Nino has led me there, particularly the Catholic Trade Manila store. August 10, 2022. When we entered the store, we asked to see their images and we were led to another room where different images were including an image of Saint Joseph Freinademetz which I ended up buying later.

There, seemingly waiting for me, was an image of the Santo Nino that was 56 inches tall. Another was a bit smaller, there were several others that were for a desk, and the coats were either green or red. I took a few pictures of the 56-inch tall Santo Nino and a number of friends thought “He seems to have something He wanted to say.” I was feeling something about the 56-inch Santo Nino. I felt He was the one I should get for my parish in the US but of course, I had to communicate with the members of my organization first. My organization is the Infant Jesus of Prague Apostolic Group. I also felt He was waiting for me there. I did not seem to want to search anywhere else for an image. We measured His height, took His weight. I took some time to think. He must be the one! When we left the store, I got for myself one of the images which was about a foot high. After sharing the pictures I took with my co-members, and the Pastor over here, I received a relayed message from the Pastor – “Go for it.” I got very eager, wanting to go finalize the purchase, hoping that no one else would buy the 56-inch image. Even Jun was eager to go back to the store so on August 12, He was now mine. We did not take Him home yet as the store volunteered to touch up the paint on two spots of the image (one on His coat, and one on His crown), and we decided that they would do the packaging. First, we decided on crate. Later on though, mainly because of concerns of His weight, the alternative was to package Him in Styrofoam and box. I also believe the Santo Nino made us choose well – Styrofoam and box. A crate would need fumigation. I came back to the store on August 18.

Because I was so eager to get to the store, I was not able to ask anyone to come with me. When I got there, I was concerned on the height of the box that I asked Arnel to not include the Santo Nino’s head in the package, so he redid the package. With the help of the store staff, I was able to get the box into the GRAB transportation, and I also took home the Saint Joseph Freinademetz image, which is about 40 inches high, but very slim because it was made of fiberglass. A friend later said that most likely, the Santo Nino wanted me to take Him home by myself and for me to trust in my strength. I unloaded Him from the GRAB by myself and brought Him through the long driveway and hauled Him into the house. I did not need anyone else. He was there. He was and will always be my strength, I thought later on.

August 21, 2022, was my departure date for the USA. Friends Mike and Enchong were with me. From when I took the Santo Nino to my house in Quezon City until this day, I was concerned because Singapore Air thought they might not accept the oversize and overweight box with the Santo Nino. I made a backup plan of contacting Johnny Air Cargo which could transport to the tune of over \$1200. I went to NAIA3 early thinking it would give me more time to take the box to Johnny Air in Makati if I needed to. But the check-in windows would not open for another two hours and forty minutes. The man in the airport was kind enough to help me save my spot as first in line. Mike and Enchong waited at the non-passenger section. When the check-in opened, Noemi and the guy whose last name sounded like Limjoco helped. At first, I thought the box weighed 28 kilos (3 kilos over) and my suitcase weighed 26 kilos (1 kilo) over. Finally, I was handed the boarding passes and baggage claim stubs showing that both check-ins weighed a total of only 46 kilos. Still I asked, what's the charge? Noemi said none, and the guy gestured that there was none to worry about. No charge. And everyone who learned of this would comment, "Nagpagaang Siya (He made Himself lighter in weight)." Except for one big air pocket an hour away from Los Angeles, the fifteen-hour flight was smooth. Friend, Manny and his son, Fidel, picked me up with no difficulty and we transported the Santo Nino to Cora's place. The next day, we took the Santo Nino out of the box and said a welcome prayer.

It was only on the evening of August 23, 2022, while in my bedroom that I realized that the Santo Nino wanted to come with me, and through all these, He was with me, and that there was really nothing to worry about. Not only did tears roll down my eyes. I really cried. Jesus showed me that He is always with this man of little faith. He was with me all through this journey.

—Leo Nevada

