

Mayor Celso Lobregat yesterday noon led city government officials and employees in offering a mass in honor of the visiting relic of St. Clare of Assisi at the Metropolitan Immaculate Concepcion Cathedral as he described the visit to be very historic.

“This is very, very historic not only for Zamboanga City but perhaps also for Basilan. It is very, very rare that the relic of St. Clare is brought to a certain place”, the mayor said.

Originally, Zamboanga City was not included in the list of areas in the country where the relic will be brought “but Divine Providence had it that the relic of St. Clare will be here in Zamboanga for two days,” the mayor happily announced.

Zamboanga City, he said, was perhaps included in the list of cities to be visited by the relic, as it is the bastion of Christianity in Mindanao that gave birth to all other archdioceses and dioceses in the island.

Lobregat called on the residents to reflect on the life and virtues of St. Clare as well as to pray for her intercession to help them in their everyday life and to help keep Zamboanga safe and sound despite the adversities.

The relic of St. Clare (also spelled as Claire) arrived in Zamboanga City last Saturday together with the Philippine Ambassador to Vatican Merceditas Tuason.

The relic, which arrived in the country last February 22, was also brought the other day to Isabela City, Basilan Province where a mass was offered by hundreds of faithful.

Like the city government, the congressional office of House Deputy Speaker Rep. Beng Climaco-Salazar was also tapped to coordinate the visit of the relic to this part of the country.

The Archdiocese of Zamboanga has said it is a great opportunity for the country to become the first recipient of the relic since it is not allowed to leave Rome.

St. Clare was born in 1193 to the Offreduccio family in Assisi, Central Italy. In 1212, St. Clare joined St. Francis and so the Second Franciscan Order was born.

With many other women following her in the San Damiano monastery, St. Clare founded the sisterhood of poor ladies, which is now known as the Poor Clares.

She died in 1253 and was canonized by Pope Alexander IV two years later. In 1958, she was declared Patroness of Television. — Vic Larato