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'Relics of the Passion' tour inspires awe

Manolo Morales

It's a traveling exhibit that fits in a small suitcase. But it's big enough to attract thousands of people, and at times move them to tears.

It's called "Relics of the Passion."

Most of the relics, you can barely see. For Christians, there's a sliver from the cross where Jesus Christ was crucified. Not much bigger is a piece from the crown of thorns Jesus was forced to wear. Yet the exhibit draws crowds, who can't help but be moved by the collection.

Kaimuki resident Nelson Nakagawa says, "I didn't think I'd feel like this but you come up close and you say this is part of where everything started and being part of the whole this close is marvelous."

The exhibit also includes replicas of the nails used in the crucifixion. The whole collection was brought here by a group called Apostolate for Holy Relics, a non-profit organization.

In some cities, people wait two to three hours in line to see the exhibit. And their reactions were quite powerful.

"People crying and being deeply moved by the experience of being so close to something so holy is very common," said Andrew Walthers from the Apostolate for Holy Relics.

The exhibit's popularity has been helped in part by the blockbuster movie "The Passion of the Christ." As the exhibit moves from city to city, Walthers has seen some unusual reactions, even at airport security.

"Everything stopped in airport security in Saint Louis and everybody just started to pray over the relic and just started to have a moving spiritual experience right there in the middle of baggage screening."

"Relics of the Passion" is on display throughout the islands until Feb. 16.

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