

HAWAII



FILIPINO CHRONICLE

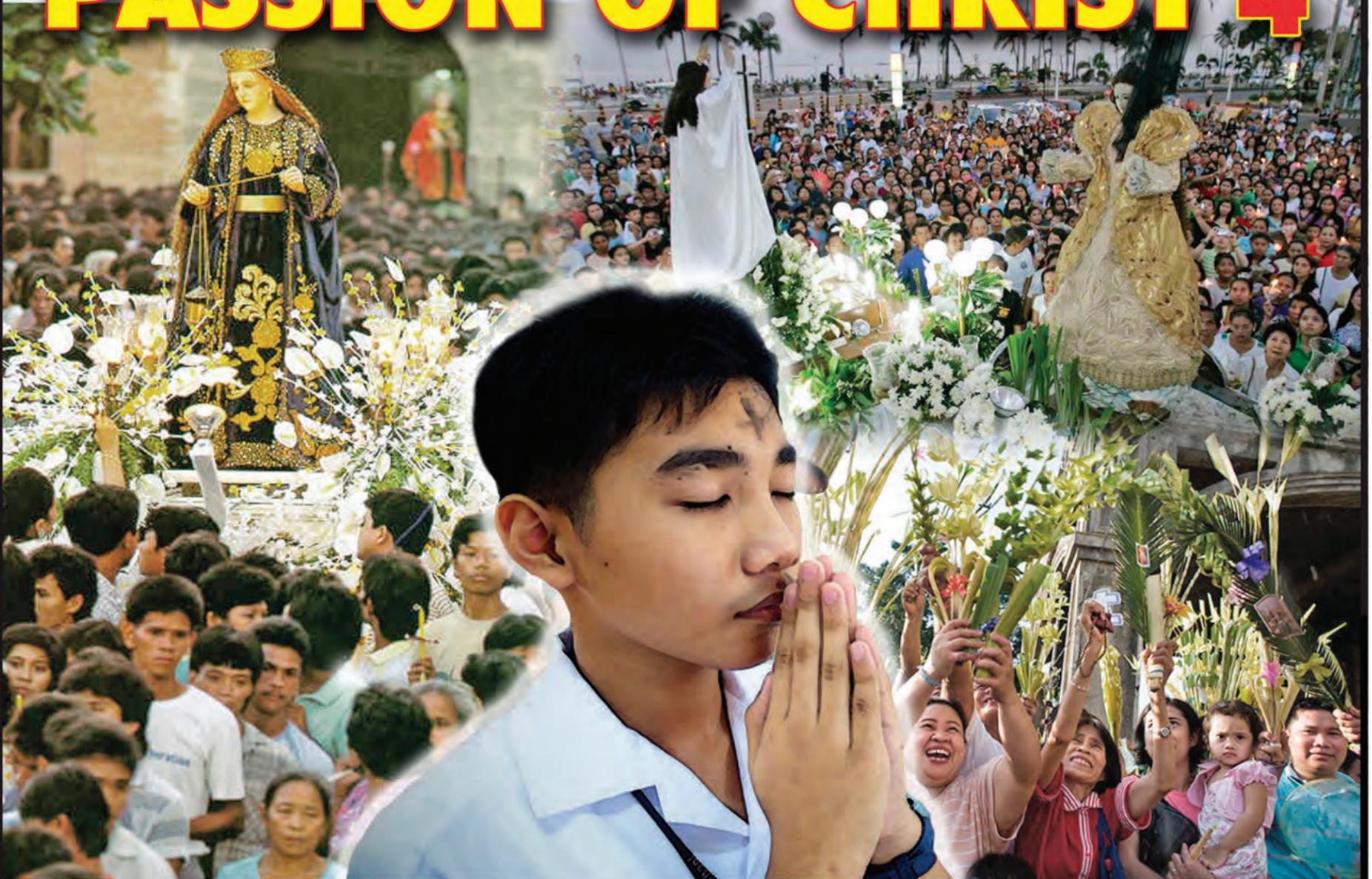
HAWAII'S #1 FILIPINO NEWSPAPER

◆ MARCH 23, 2013 ◆

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EDITORIALS

Remembering Christ This Lenten Season

Second perhaps only to the Twelve Days of Christmas in terms of popularity for Filipinos is the celebration of Lenten Season, a 40-day period of prayer and self-denial to remember the sacrifices during the Passion of Christ.

Jesus died a horribly painful death, yet He was completely innocent of the charges brought against Him. The amazing thing is that He never retaliated against those who beat and nailed Him to the cross. He could have called for legions of angels to squash His enemies but He did not, choosing instead to forgive them. He showed compassion and forgiveness beyond what we can even imagine. But as for us, how quick we are to hurl back insults and retaliate angrily! Even for the most devout among us, all it takes to send our blood pressure soaring is for someone to suddenly change lanes in front of us while driving. The next time someone cuts you off in traffic, don't sweat it. Simply take a deep breath and extend a bit of forgiveness their way.

In short, followers of Christ are not to retaliate in any way. Instead, we are called to forgive those who wrong us. If Christ can ultimately forgive those who put Him to death, what right do we have to strike back or even hold ill will against those who have offended us? The answer is none.

Let that be a poignant reminder this Lenten Season as we celebrate Christ's resurrection from the dead and His glorious promise of eternal life for all who believe in Him. The tomb is empty. Mankind is redeemed. That's what the entire Lenten Season and Easter is truly all about.

Difficult Challenges Ahead For New Pope

Leaders in Catholic church recently elected Jorge Mario Bergoglio from Argentina to head the world's 1.2 billion Catholics. The past month has been a whirlwind of activity for the church, beginning with the unexpected retirement of Pope Benedict XVI, the first pontiff to have done so in 600 years, to the new pope's installation mass at St. Peter's Basilica attended by princes, presidents, rabbis, muftis and thousands of ordinary people from around the world.

The first Jesuit pope and first non-European since the Middle Ages, Bergoglio has chosen to name himself Francis after St. Francis of Assisi, the humble friar who dedicated his life to helping the poor. Although he has won the papacy, there is little time for celebration for the new pontiff who now faces the monumental task of leading the Catholic Church—a huge global organization comprised of 5,000 bishops, 415,000 priests, 750,000 women in religious orders and 1.2 billion devotees. As the spiritual leader for Catholics, the pope issues regular instructions of the faith through weekly public audiences and periodic encyclicals—lengthy letters that articulate church teachings on a wide range of issues, both contemporary and timeless. The pope also oversees such functions of the church as Catholic education, spiritual orders, interreligious affairs, foreign policy and the approval of hundreds of bishops worldwide each year.

Pope Francis takes over a Vatican plagued by a number of highly publicized scandals, including a widening crisis over child sex abuse and a probe into the dealings of the Vatican Bank. He must also address other controversial issues that have been at the heart of raging debates all over the world.

FROM THE PUBLISHER

W

ith summer right around the corner, many of you are already planning for a well-deserved vacation. If you'll be away from home for an extended period, did you know that you can ask the Honolulu



Police Department to conduct a check of your residence? Before you sign up, certain criteria must be met. You must be away for a minimum of five consecutive days and a maximum of 30 days and must have a definite return date. You must also own a single family home (no condos, town homes or businesses). To get started, call 911 or visit your nearest police station.

Easter is also fast approaching. I personally am looking forward to Easter Sunday—the day when Christians everywhere celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ. To help get us ready for Easter, contributing writer Fiedes Doctor submitted her cover story on page 4 entitled “Passions for the Passion of Christ: How Filipinos Remember.” She examines the many Lenten traditions practiced in the Philippines as well as here locally. During this Lenten Season, I hope you have an opportunity to ponder your personal life and examine your current relationship with God. Let's prepare our hearts as Easter Sunday approaches. We truly need Jesus—the Way, the Truth and the Life.

In other news, the Filipino community bid a fond farewell to Deputy Consul General Paul Raymund Cortes who is leaving his post at the Philippine Consulate General after almost seven years in Hawaii (see page 11). He will be returning to Manila for the next two years and will be eligible to obtain the rank of Chief of Mission, which makes him eligible to be posted as an ambassador. The Chronicle thanks him for the many accomplishments he has achieved as well as the memories we have shared together these past few years. He will most certainly be missed. Aloha and Godspeed, Consul Cortes!

Lastly, the Philippines' Commission on Elections (Comelec) recently ruled that the thousands of delisted overseas absentee voters will now be allowed to vote in the upcoming election from April 13 to May 13, 2013. Comelec earlier unknowingly nullified much of the work done by the Global Filipino Diaspora Council, which pushed hard for absentee voting for overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) during the last 10 years. If you are or know of any of the 238,557 OFWs affected by this ruling, please turn to our Opinion Column on page 10 for more details.

In closing, there are other useful and informative articles in this issue that I hope you will enjoy reading. As always, if you would like to share a story idea, suggestion or concern, please send it to our staff at: fipinochronicle@gmail.com. Until next time... *aloha* and *mabuhay!*

Chona A. Montesines-Sonido

These include the position of the church on abortion, divorce, same sex marriages and contraception. Another of Pope Francis' challenges is to reinvigorate a church that has suffered from dwindling numbers. So far, observers say that Pope Francis has gotten off to a rather good start with his humble charm which was evident during his installation mass in which he appealed to audiences to protect the planet as well as the poor.

At age 76, the 266th pope has been described as a moderate conservative who is unlikely to change key doctrines on abortion, gay adoption and gay marriage. However, he could push for more social justice and a “friendlier faith.” For instance, on the issue of birth control, he has preached pragmatism, saying contraception should be allowed in some cases to

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LEGISLATIVE UPDATE



By Senator Will Espero

School Readiness, Protecting Elderly Among Bills to Advance at Legislature

We are half way done with the 2013 legislative session, and with crossover, senate bills have been forwarded to the House of Representatives. Here I will summarize key legislation which we have approved in the Senate. The following is merely a handful of the 356 Senate Bills we have advanced. Much of our surviving legislation aims to ensure the basic welfare of those—such as children, elderly, homeless, animals, and the infirm—who cannot care for themselves alone.

SB 1093 establishes a school-readiness program within the Department of Education, to provide four year-old children the social, emotional and cognitive skills necessary for success in kindergarten. Many of Hawaii's children will become ineligible for kindergarten in 2014, as the age requirement will rise to exclude all children born between July 31 and December 31 of any given year. The proposed school-readiness program will prioritize children newly excluded by this age cutoff, as well as children of low and moderate income families who cannot afford alternative preschool educations. As the average Hawaii family now pays \$720 per month for each child in preschool, few can comfortably afford this financial burden. A staggering 43% of 2012-2013 kindergarteners did not attend preschool, and only one in five teachers report at least 75% of their students being ready for kindergarten. Analy-

ses have forecasted a \$4.20 societal gain for every dollar Hawaii invests in early learning. To ensure Hawaii youth keep pace with their mainland colleagues, investment in quality education is essential.

We have also striven to protect the elderly this session. SB 102 requires financial institutions to directly and expediently report any suspected financial abuse of elderly clients—defined as those over age 62—both to county police and to the State Department of Human Services. This bill was motivated by episodes of fraud, as well as instances whereby third parties drove elders to banks and coerced them to hand over withdrawn cash. Numerous banks, credit unions and individuals have testified that elders in Hawaii are now being exploited financially, to increasing extents. SB 106 also dedicates funds to support Hawaii's elderly population via the Aging and Disabilities Resource Center, Kupuna Care, the Healthy Aging Partnership Program, and senior centers. It also contracts an Alzheimer's and dementia services coordinator through the Executive Office on Aging. As our Baby Boomer generation reaches seniority, efficient elderly support will become vital to Hawaii's social and fiscal well-being.

Homelessness in Hawaii, a major focus this session, has become a critical issue. On Oahu alone, a 2006 tally counted 33,000 unsheltered homeless individuals; 64,000 residing in emergency accommodations with multiple families; and 170,000 within three monthly paychecks of homelessness. Figures have risen substantially since then with

homelessness increasing by 3% between 2009 and 2010 alone. SB 515 aims to combat alarming trends, with fiscal appropriations to various homeless services across the State, including mental health care, substance abuse treatment programs, and shelters. SB 91 adds funds to the state rent supplement program for those working homeless ready to rent permanent housing. Working individuals accounted for 26% of shelter residents in 2011, guaranteeing thousands of hardworking beneficiaries for a rental supplement program. Likewise, SB 301 establishes an earned income tax credit to help those on the brink of poverty establish firm footing. Also crucial, SB 1340 lifts the maximum age for foster care from 18 to 21, ensuring otherwise homeless youths a nurturing transition into adulthood. Finally, SB 331 raises the minimum wage to \$8.25 by 2014; \$8.75 by 2015; and \$9.25 by 2016.

Animal rights have also been a nexus of discussion. We at the Senate strive to intercept future violations such as the 2011 Waimanalo puppy mill outrage, which alone resulted in 153 counts of animal abuse. SB 978 imposes a minimum one-year prison sentence on anyone convicted of cruelty to animals in the second degree, when at least five pets are involved in any one instance. SB 9 further bans anyone convicted of first-degree animal cruelty from owning or residing with a pet within 5 years of conviction; and those convicted of second-degree cruelty from owning or residing with pets within 1 year. SB 414 requires dog breeders to meet minimum standards of care, and not to

place certain dogs in the same enclosure. It also prohibits any person from owning more than thirty sexually intact dogs per year, and requires written records for each dog.

Finally, Hawaii's infirm community has generated substantial debate. Given advances in medical technology and heightened mental health awareness, health insurance coverage must expand to include services now deemed essential. SB 654 mandates coverage for smoking cessation

treatments; SB 1240 for dental care; and SB 668 for autism spectrum disorder treatments. SB 192 addresses the transfer of sexually-transmitted diseases by discouraging the market for prostitutes. Unlike existing legislation, this bill places a hefty legal burden on the solicitor as well as the prostitute, criminalizing solicitation of a minor, habitual solicitation, and solicitation near schools or public parks.

To see and track bills, visit www.capitol.hawaii.gov.

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EDITORIALS (cont.) (from page 2, DIFFICULT...)

block the spread of disease. There are no early indications of how Pope Francis might tackle the challenges ahead. For the time being, observers say he has focused on mes-

sages and gestures that signal a total shift in priority and personality from his more austere 85-year-old predecessor Benedict XVI.

We pray for Pope Francis

and wish him the very best as he faces the many daunting challenges that lie ahead in an increasingly secularized world. Let's hope the new pontiff is up to the task.

COVER STORY

Passions for the Passion of Christ: How Filipinos Remember

By Fiedes Doctor

M

ore than 2,000 years ago, a man was beaten, tortured, humiliated and hung on the cross. He died. After three days, a boulder was rolled away from his tomb and He walked out alive.

His name is Jesus, the Messiah, the Risen Lord. The movie "The Passion of the Christ" (2004) gives a very graphic portrayal of the last 12 hours of his life in Jerusalem, from betrayal to violent death. It was agonizing—people came out of the theaters feeling gutted from the inside. This was the man whose death bore humanity's sin.

Filipinos in Hawaii and in the Philippines celebrate this painful yet victorious event in different ways according to their religious beliefs, background or personal inclination. Though it is as big an event as Christmas by Christianity's standards, the somber tone and its non-commercial appeal have prevented the less devoted from fully participating, opting instead to watch a TV broadcast of a mass or service on Easter morning. Some devotees flagellate themselves in imitation of Christ's suffering as he walked to his death. Others have themselves

nailed to the cross.

Three-inch Nails, 180-pound Crosses

Bulacan faith healer Amparo Santos endured the pain of having three-inch nails driven into her palms and feet for the last time in 2004, culminating her 15-year penance during the famous and tourist-driven San Pedro Cutud Lenten Rites in Pampanga on a Good Friday. She is the only woman who has done so multiple times. One other woman was a Belgian nun who did it only once in the late 1990s.

"The annual crucifixion is the will of God," according to UCA News, an independent Catholic news source in Asia that quoted Santos who is now in her 70s.

"It was not my will, it was God's will," she said in another interview with ABC news. "Jesus is the one who has called me for this kind of position." She also claimed to have

received divine messages while on the cross.

The re-enactment of Jesus' crucifixion started in 1955 when amateur writer Ricardo Navarro wrote a Kapampangan version of the Way of the Cross. The play was performed by volunteer artists in the town. In 1962, San Pedro Cutud witnessed its first actual crucifixion when Artemio Anoz, a quack doctor, volunteered to play the part of Jesus. He had dreams of becoming a religious leader and established healer and saw the sacrifice as a prerequisite to achieve this.

Since then, actual crucifixions have taken place with not just one person being crucified but a few, often because they have made a vow or *panata*, after experiencing a miracle or huge blessing, to prevent sickness in the family, to gain healing powers or as penance for their sins. The ordeal, described by some as "painful but bearable," lasts several minutes. Painkillers are taken beforehand to deaden the pain. Others experience heavy bleeding.

The dozens of hooded penitents who follow "the Christ" carry a 180-pound cross, flagellate their bare backs with bamboo whips or chains, or get themselves beaten with glass shards embedded in a piece of wood. Blood is splattered everywhere, their raw flesh exposed to the heat of the sun.

The Catholic Church does not encourage this form of mortification as penance. In 2012, in response to reports of more than 20 people being nailed to the cross, Archbishop Jose Palma, president of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines, said that identification with Christ should be internal and more



about spiritual renewal.

"We do not judge or condemn but we discourage it," he said over Catholic Radio Veritas.

Some provinces like Negros Oriental follow the church's directives, while San Pedro Cutud of Pampanga and Dulio-Fatima in Cebu City continue to practice the custom.

"Contrary to the Catholic Church's teachings and the commercialization of the event, the fervor for the tradition stays, with the townsfolk sticking to their faith and spiritual practice, constantly remaining pure in their *panata*, which continues to be a source of community solidarity and strength," a statement in the official website of the City of San Fernando says.

Visita Iglesia, Pasyon, Morning Mass and Novenas

On Holy Thursday, Philippine Catholic devotees such as Estrelita Ramos, 48, go on a pilgrimage to different churches called the *Visita Iglesia*. She plans to visit seven churches this year, tugging along her entire family and several relatives in a rented jeepney. They start in their hometown of San Nicolas and move outward to the neighboring churches of St. William Cathedral, Sta. Monica Church in Sarrat, Vintar Church,

Bacarra Church, Burgos Church and Bangui Church.

"We stay at each church for a few minutes for prayer and look at the Catholic statues set up in the vicinity," she says. "We bring the kids and tell them why we need to go for these visits."

Ramos started her church visits five years ago after her last child finished college. This is her *panata*, she says, as a sign of her gratitude to God and to be in communion with him.

Some Filipinos observe Good Friday by chanting the *pasyon* (Passion), a lyrical rendition of the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus. People join the chanting or singing starting at night on Thursday all the way to Friday normally at the church or the convent. It helps build a sense of community.

Apolonia Bonilla, 83, will join the *pasyon* in her church this Holy Thursday but will forego joining the procession the following day because of her age. Unlike in Hawaii, where the Station of the Cross is done within the church grounds, Philippine processions cover several kilometers from one station to the next. She has been singing with her sisters since she was a child.

Catholic devotees in Hawaii also visit other churches and

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COVER STORY

(from page 4, **PASSIONS...**)

join the *pasyon*. A convenient option for devotees who are sick or constrained by work obligations is to log on to the Online Visita Iglesia website which was started by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines in 2010 for overseas Filipino workers and those unable to travel. It has two route options: Manila and Bulacan.

Due to her bad back and weak knees, 74-year-old Patricia Sumuba watches Catholic mass on TFC and GMA, while Jeselie Abilla-Bagsican, because of work responsibilities, can only perform her own prayers and novenas at home during Holy Week.

"I used to join the processions and the Lenten rituals in the Philippines but I cannot do that now, mainly because of my health," Sumuba says.

Bagsican says she will make sure to attend Good Friday and Easter Sunday masses.

Marina Dasalla, 67, in one breath, runs through the Catholic traditions and rituals during the Lenten season. These are fasting, the Station of the Cross, the morning mass and novenas, the Washing of the Feet, the Seven Last Words, Visita Iglesia and the *Salubong* (Encounter). She was born a Catholic in the Philippines and has never stopped practicing even after she immigrated to Hawaii at the age of 24.

"The Lenten season is important to me because it is the tradition of the Catholic Church," she says. "I feel good when I do these things."

This year, she will miss the Seven Last Words because of a family event but will be active in everything else including daily prayers, novenas and the rosary, fasting and going to mass or vigil.

No Long Parades, No Mock Judas

In Hawaii, there are no long processions from town to town, no flagellants with bruised backs, no actual crucifixion, no mock Judas burned under a tree.

"The Stations of the Cross are done on the church grounds," says Mary Cachuela, 35, parish secretary of St. Joseph Church. "Although we

do not burn a representation of Judas on the tree, we still celebrate the *Salubong* at 5:30 in the morning. We get as many little girls as we can to be angels, wearing a white gown with angel wings, but it is not as big a production as in the Philippines."

The little girls are up in the balcony and wait until the image of Jesus and Mary meet. Joyful songs and music fill the air to celebrate the resurrection of Christ. This is Easter Sunday.

"A permit is needed if you hold a procession outside of the church, that's why we don't do it," says Father Manny Dela Cruz of St. Anthony Church. "Also, we do not want to rub against the cultural sensibilities of others, some people might not like it. This includes the Judas burning."

To the less devoted, this lack of spectacular rituals and a sense of Catholic community ingrained in the culture have dampened their participation.

"I still pray to God but I don't attend mass very often now," says Bea Garcia, 28, who has had a dramatic life change in Hawaii with a foreigner husband, a job and no family and friends. "In the Philippines, I had friends to go to Mass with and everyone was expected to participate. Here, you're not expected. It's okay not to go."

Some Catholics attend only twice a year during Christmas and Easter Sunday.

"Attendance at St. Joseph peaks from 20 percent to 25 percent during both holidays," says Cachuela. Multiply that with seven masses and the numbers of churchgoers shoot up to thousands compared to an average of only 600 per mass on any given Sunday.

"It's hard for people to attend regularly because they go to work. But what's great is that at least they find time to come twice a year. Both Christmas and Easter is the pinnacle of the Catholic faith. We usually open a second worship area to accommodate more people. I'm sure when they're ready to commit they would come back fully to the church."

"They are giving it their best shot given the circumstances here in America, which



are less open to Catholic culture," says Father Manny. "They are trying their best to practice their faith as a Catholic."

Others strengthened their faith after immigrating from the Philippines, like Eddie Lucero, 73, and his wife Teresa, 68, who found God again in the midst of overcoming problems and struggles.

"I became more devoted because whenever I encountered problems I always ran to God. I realized that I need him more," Teresa says. "My life has changed a lot ever since I came here."

This Holy Week, they are making the extra effort for more devotion, prayer and participation in church activities.

"I will take this time to repent of my sins before God and ask for his forgiveness," says Eddie. "Lent is about the passion and death of Christ, to remind us that we are saved by Jesus and that he died for us."

Essence of John 3:16

Non-Catholics and Christians participate in the Holy week celebrations differently than Catholics. Fasting is encouraged during the Holy Week to pray for the church, for the world and for personal breakthroughs. Its purpose is to press deeper to

God and to hear from Him.

Hope Chapel Kaneohe Bay is incorporating a Daniel's Fast, also called a partial fast, where only vegetables and whole grain foods are consumed. The fast allows church members to center themselves in what God is going to do in their lives. Other churches are similarly doing a collective fast ranging from three days to one week.

Other than the fast, nothing much happens corporately on the weekdays for Christian churches. On Easter weekend, Word of Life Church hosts a creative performance of Jesus' life, death and resurrection in all four of its Sunday services. Like Catholic masses, attendance shoots up to 25 percent more than regular Sundays with hundreds lining up at the doors.

Hope Chapel Kaneohe Bay has added two services to accommodate more people for its Easter celebration, giving people six time schedules to choose from on two days—Saturday and Sunday. This year's theme is about second chances.

New Hope Christian Church is celebrating its Easter service at the Neal Blaisdell arena with award winning recording artist Rachael Lampa and Splat Experience performance artist Marc Eckel. Thousands attend this event, some traveling all the way from Kahuku.

With less tradition and rituals in their churches, emphasis is put on the daily devotion and connection with God. Everyday is a reminder of Jesus' death and resurrection and humanity's salvation. The passion of Christ, his death on the cross and his resurrection, underscores God's love for us.

"As Christians, this recollection is not just a one time event," says Brian Akohashi, 49, youth pastor of Waikiki

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HAWAII-FILIPINO NEWS

Hirono, Hanabusa Introduce Bills to Reunify Filipino Vets, Families

U.S. Sen. Mazie Hirono has introduced a bill that would reunite Filipino World War II veterans with their families—her first legislation as a member of the Senate.

The bill could gain new life as the U.S. Senate drafts immigration reform legislation, which has been the priority of Hawaii's congressional delegation for many years. The bill underscores Hirono's immigration reform approach of bringing families together and assisting communities

whose voices aren't often heard in Washington.

"Immigration reform should reflect our values and these are the types of ideas I will be working to include in the final legislation," says Hirono. "The brave servicemen who are still with us, now in their eighties and nineties, should not have to wait any longer in order to be reunited with their children. As the Senate dives into immigration reform legislation, I will be working very closely with my



colleagues to include these types of ideas in the final proposal."

Thousands of Filipino veterans were granted citizenship in recognition of their service in World War II. Their children, however, were not granted citizenship. As a result, the veterans who came to the U.S. could only sponsor their children by filing a petition and "getting in line."

Hirono sits on the both the Senate Judiciary Committee and the Judiciary Subcommittee

on Immigration that will consider immigration reform legislation. The American Coalition of Filipino Veterans estimates that 20,000 sons and daughters of Filipino World War II veterans will directly benefit from Hirono's legislation. The group lauded her efforts.

"We applaud Sen. Hirono's great decision in reintroducing the Filipino Veterans Family Reunification bill," says Eric Lachica, Executive Director for the American Coalition of Filipino Veterans. "The bill will keep the approved immigration petitions and hopes of our Filipino American World War II

heroes alive."

U.S. Rep. Colleen Hanabusa introduced companion legislation in the House—H.R. 111 which exempts Filipino veterans' adult children from the worldwide and numerical limitations on immigrant visas.

"This measure is an important step toward fulfilling our obligations to these brave veterans, who fought bravely for our nation during World War II," says Hanabusa. "If we do not act, their families may miss precious time with them because of the frustrating length of immigration waiting lists."

Consul General Torres Visits U.S. Sen. Schatz, U.S. Rep. Gabbard

Julius D. Torres, Philippine Consul General to Honolulu, recently paid courtesy visits to the offices of U.S. Sen. Brian Schatz and U.S. Rep. Tulsi Gabbard.

During their meeting, Consul General Torres briefed Sen. Schatz on the highlights of the successful 23rd Trade Mission to the Philippines on February 1-11, 2013, which was organized by the Filipino Chamber of Commerce of Hawaii (FCCH).

Torres enlisted the support of Sen. Schatz on the passage of the Save Our Industries Act



L-R: Senator Brian Schatz, Consul General Julius Torres, and Ms. Kim Yoshimodo, Director for External Affairs, Office of Sen. Schatz

(SAVE Act) in the U.S. Senate. Schatz vowed to study the proposed bill and discuss the matter with his Senate colleagues. He is a member of the committees of Energy and Natural Resources; Commerce, Science and Trans-

portation; and Indian Affairs.

Prior to her election to Congress, Gabbard served as a member of the Honolulu City Council and the State House of Representatives. She is currently a military police company commander with the Hawaii Army National Guard and has served on two deployments to the Middle East. She also attended a girls-only missionary academy in Silang, Cavite for two years.

Rep. Gabbard serves on the U.S. House Committee on Homeland Security and its Subcommittee on Borders and

Maritime Security; and on the Committee on Foreign Affairs and its Subcommittee on Asia and Pacific Affairs.

During their meeting, she discussed issues that will benefit Filipinos in Hawaii, such as immigration reform, family reunification and veterans' affairs. Gabbard's office is also currently exploring the possibility of establishing a tourist visa waiver program for visitors to Hawaii, including Filipinos, similar to the Guam-CNMI Visa Waiver Program. The visa waiver program will enable Filipino tourists to visit their relatives in Hawaii and to also contribute to Hawaii's tourism industry.

Torres also briefed Gabbard about recent developments in the Philippine government's move to pursue arbitration proceedings over disputes in the West Philippine Sea through an Arbitral Tribunal under the United Nations Convention on the Law of Seas. He stressed that the Philippines is committed to arbitration and a peaceful form of dispute settlement that should be welcomed by all.

Both Schatz and Gabbard gave their assurances that they will work more closely with the Philippine government on issues that will mutually benefit the Philippines and Hawaii, and its people. (DFA)

State Orders Filipino-Owned Fish Import Business to Cease & Desist

Hawaii Commissioner of Securities Tung Chan issued a Preliminary Order to Cease and Desist against Noel P. Manuel and his fish importing business, CNE Enterprises, LLC for vio-

lating State securities laws.

The order alleges that Manuel solicited investors, including members of his church and extended family, to invest in CNE. Manuel allegedly told investors that their money was

urgently needed to move fish that was being held in customs or waiting in the Philippines. They were allegedly promised returns as high as 40 percent in one year.

Investors never received

the promised returns and some of their money was allegedly used for non-business expenses such as retail purchases, payments to golf courses, food, payments to Manuel's wife and cash withdrawals. The order also alleges other deceptive schemes to hide the fraud including using investments to pay returns to an earlier investor and issuing post-dated checks from an account that was closed before the checks could be cashed.

Chan alleges that Manuel was not properly registered to transact securities, sold unregistered securities in the form of investment contracts to 14 investors totaling \$330,240 and violated the State's anti-fraud provisions. The order seeks

total penalties of \$300,000 in addition to a permanent injunction against transacting securities in the state, rescission and restitution for investors.

State securities laws provide anti-fraud provisions and also require securities such as investment contracts, as well as individuals or entities soliciting or transacting securities, to be registered with the state.

Anyone who has been solicited by or transacted business with Noel P. Manuel or CNE Enterprises, LLC, or who may have information regarding this matter is urged to contact the State Securities Enforcement Branch at 586-2740 or via email at: seb@dcca.hawaii.gov.

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IMMIGRATION GUIDE



By Atty. Emmanuel
Samonte Tipon

Obama Gov't Sues Filipino Mothers of Aged-out Children to Bar Them from Coming to U.S. Sooner

While the Obama government on the one hand is coddling illegal aliens' children by giving them "amnesty" ("deferred action" kono), it is on the other hand fighting the legal alien mothers of aged-out children to prevent them from being re-united sooner. Masakit kuya Eddie.

Some people might find this governmental action reminiscent of Janus, a Roman god with one head but two faces, one looking forward and the other looking backward. Should not this be the time for the moms to fight back (through the political process and/or the press) rather than reminisce?

On January 25, 2013, the President's subordinates led by the USCIS Director, the DHS Secretary and others filed a petition for certiorari with the U.S. Supreme Court against Rosalina Cuellar De Osorio, Elizabeth Magpantay, Evelyn F. Santos, Maria Eloisa Liwag, Norma Uy, Ruth Uy, Teresita G. Costelo and Lorenzo P. Ong. Case No. 12-930.

The Filipino mothers had won a case in the Court of Appeals (Ninth Circuit) holding that aged-out children of immigrants retained the original priority date of the immigrant parent from whom they derived their status. The government lost and wants the Supreme Court to review the decision.

The grounds of the petition are: (1) the Ninth Circuit incorrectly refused to grant Chevron deference to the Board of Immigration Appeals' interpretation of section 1153(h)(3) of the Immigration and Nationality Act, (2) the courts of appeals are split on the meaning of section 1153(h)(3), and (3) the Ninth Circuit's rule, if allowed to

stand, would have a substantial effect on the administration of the immigration laws and the availability of visas to other aliens.

The Obama administration does not want aged-out children of immigrants to retain the original priority date of the immigrant parent from whom they derived their status. It wants such children to use the priority date of the new petition filed by their immigrant parent, thus forcing them to wait for about 11 years (for Filipinos) or 20 years (for Mexicans) for a visa to become available. If the original priority date is used, a visa would immediately be available to such children.

Quota System

The Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) provides that U.S. Citizens (USC) and lawful permanent residents (LPR or green card holders) may file visa petitions for certain qualifying relatives but the total number of visas issued each year may not exceed 480,000, with the total for each foreign state not to exceed seven percent. INA establishes preference categories based on the relationship between the petitioner and their alien relatives, and limits the number of visas in each preference category.

These categories are:

- F1: Unmarried sons and daughters of USCs
- F2A: Spouses and children of LPRs.
- F2B: Unmarried sons and daughters of LPRs
- F3: Married sons and married daughters of USCs
- F4: Brothers and sisters of USCs

Under INA, the term "child" means an unmarried person under the age of 21, while the term "son" or "daughter" means a person who is 21 years or over.

What Is "Priority Date"?

A visa petition may in-

clude the spouse and/or children of the primary beneficiary, and they may receive "derivative visas" at the same time that the primary beneficiary receives a visa. "A spouse or child . . . shall . . . be entitled to the same status, and the same order of consideration provided in the respective subsection, if accompanying or following to join, the spouse or parent." 8 U.S.C. § 1153(d).

The date of a properly filed visa petition is usually the "priority date". Since there are limits of each visa category and a substantial backlog, it may be as long as 20 years before a petition's priority date becomes "current," meaning that a visa is available for the beneficiary.

Who Are "Aged-out" Children?

The primary beneficiary's child can only receive a derivative visa if such child is under 21 when the parent's priority date becomes current. If the derivative child is over 21 when the parent's priority date becomes current, such "child" may no longer be able to immigrate with their parent because the child has "aged-out" of visa eligibility. Upon obtaining immigrant status, the parent of the "aged-out" child usually files a new visa petition for the "son" or "daughter" under the F2B category.

Child Status Protection Act

In 2002, Congress enacted the Child Status Protection Act which provided in 8 U.S.C. § 1153(h)(3): "If the age of an alien is determined [under subsection (h)(1)] to be 21 years of age or older for the purposes of subsections (a)(2)(A) [children of LPRs] and (d) [derivative beneficiaries], the alien's petition shall automatically be converted to the appropriate category and the alien shall retain the original priority date issued upon receipt of the original petition."

Conflicting Court Decisions

Does 8 U.S.C. § 1153(h)(3) unambiguously grant relief to all aliens who qualify as "child" derivative beneficiaries at the time a visa petition is filed but age out of qualification by the time the visa becomes available to the primary beneficiary?

The U.S. Circuit Courts of Appeals are divided. The 5th (Texas-based) and 9th (California-based) Circuits said "YES." See *Khalid v. Holder*, 655 F.3d 363 (5th Cir. 2011) and *De Osorio v. Mayorkas*, No. 09-56786 (9th Cir. 2012). However, the 2nd Circuit (New York-based) said "NO". See *Li v. Renaud*, 654 F.3d 376 (2nd Cir. 2011).

COMMENT: The petitioners' argument that granting the mothers' wishes for early reunification would result in "reordering of the visa waiting lines" and "place a

tremendous administrative burden on the responsible agencies" is not a legal argument and has no place in the Supreme Court decision-making process. *Fiat justitia ruat caelum* ("Let justice be done though the heavens fall."). Why does not the USCIS complain when their boss suddenly orders them before the elections to grant "amnesty" to thousands of children of illegal aliens? Does this not impose a "tremendous administrative burden"?

(ATTY. TIPON has a Master of Laws degree from Yale Law School and a Bachelor of Laws degree from the University of the Philippines. Office: 800 Bethel St., Suite 402, Honolulu, HI 96813. Tel. (808) 225-2645. E-Mail: filam-law@yahoo.com. Websites: www.MilitaryandCriminalLaw.com, and www.ImmigrationServiceUSA.com. Listen to the most witty, interesting, and informative radio program in Hawaii on KNDI at 1270, AM dial every Thursday at 7:30 a.m., rebroadcast at www.iluko.com.

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FEATURE

Ho Ho's Chinese Restaurant a Good Bargain

By HFC Staff

On today's tough economy, finding a good culinary bargain can be challenging for local diners.

One well-known bargain that has attracted scores of locals since it first opened nearly 10 years ago in the Second City of Kapolei is Ho Ho Chinese Cuisine. According to manager James Ching, Ho Ho's affordable prices and delicious traditional Cantonese-style food is the winning combination that keeps customers coming back for more.

Ho Ho's dine-in buffet features over 30 different items. According to Ching, the buffet items that go quickest are the salt and pepper shrimp, mussel with black beans, crispy chicken wings, steamed fish fillet with ginger and green onions and snow crab legs.

Buffet price for lunch is

\$9.95 for adults and \$5.95 for children on Mondays through Fridays. The cost is \$11.95 for adults and \$6.95 for children on Saturdays and Sundays.

The cost for the dinner buffet is \$16.95 for adults and \$7.95 for children on Mondays through Thursdays. The cost is \$18.95 for adults and \$9.95 for children on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays.

Dine-in hours are 10:30 am to 9 pm Sundays through Thursdays, and 10:30 am to 10 pm Fridays and Saturdays. The lunch buffet is available from 10:30 am to 2:30 pm daily. The dinner buffet is from 5 pm to 9 pm daily.

Not in the mood for an all-you-can-eat buffet? Picky customers can also order *a la carte*. Ho Ho's menu includes a wide array of delicious Cantonese cuisine, such as beef or pork with twin mushroom, kau yuk and stir-fried fish fillet with vegetables, just to name a few.



Party Time

Ho Ho can accommodate parties of up to 200 guests but customers are encouraged to book ahead for large parties. Ho Ho hosts about 10-12 big parties each month, ranging from 160 to 200 guests. Customers are allowed to bring their own beverages (soda, beer and wine), pupus, dessert and even entertainment, including live bands, dee jays and magicians.

A weekend lunch buffet party for 160 guests is \$2,000 and \$2,400 for 200 guests. Set-up can start as early as 9:30 am and end at 3 pm.

For a weekend dinner buffet party, the cost for 160 guests is \$3,950 and \$4,500



for 200 guests. Parties can start as early as 4 pm for set up and finish at 10 pm.

"Be sure to book your next party at Ho Ho," says Ching. "We are the perfect place for birthdays, graduations, weddings, retirement parties, baby showers and any occasion."

Want Some Dim Sum?

While the buffet gets most customers' attention, Ho Ho's dim sum is also equally appealing and available for take-out as early as 6 am. Classic dim sum dishes include shrimp dumpling, siu mai and half moon with pork,

dried shrimp and shiitake mushroom.

Customers can also order from a wide assortment of manapua, including the original char siu manapua, as well as baked teriyaki chicken manapua, baked hot dog manapua and baked ham & cheese manapua.

Customers who prefer more substantial dishes can also order char sui, roast pork and roast duck by the pound. If you have a sweet tooth, Ho Ho's offers rice cake and jin dui with red bean, coconut or pork. Ho Ho's also has traditional desserts such as custard pie, pumpkin pie, coconut custard pie and custard/pumpkin pie. Customers are advised to place their orders for pies at least one day in advance.

"We have a lot of returning customers," Ching says. "All of our items are also made fresh. We also have a wide selection at affordable prices."

Ho Ho Chinese Cuisine is located at the Kapolei Marketplace. To inquire about reservations or for upcoming specials, call 692-9880.

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OPINION

Re-enfranchising OFWs

WITH DUE RESPECT
by Artemio V. Panganiban
Saturday, March 9, 2013

I am glad the Commission on Elections (Comelec) re-enfranchised 238,557 overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) and professionals. Earlier this year, it deleted their names from the National Registry of Overseas Absentee Voters for their failure to vote during the last two consecutive elections held in 2007 and 2010. But on March 5, the poll body interpreted the law more liberally, reversed its earlier decision, and allowed our overseas kababayan to remain on the voters' list.

Inadequate notice. This welcome reversal was the result of a Comelec hearing last March 1. Ted Laguatan, an eminent Filipino lawyer with extensive practice in San Francisco, California, explained that the Comelec unwittingly wasted—without adequate notice and due process—the hard work put forth by the Global Filipino Diaspora Council (GFDC), which relentlessly campaigned for absentee voting during the last 10 years.

While the Comelec published a notice in two local newspapers and in its website warning that overseas Fil-

ipinos who failed to vote during the last two consecutive elections would be delisted unless they filed a formal “manifestation” of their intent to vote in the 2013 elections, such notice was miserably inadequate, so Laguatan argued.

Most overseas Filipinos had very little access to these means of communications and were thus unaware of their imminent disenfranchisement. Due to the inadequate notice, only 29—yes, only 29—overseas Filipinos filed the required manifestations and were thus retained in the list of qualified voters for the 2013 elections.

Other valid reasons. Apart from inadequate notice, there are many reasons why OFWs could not vote during the last two elections. For example, sea-based workers who remitted \$4.8 billion to the national treasury last year were out at sea most of the time, sailing on the vessels they were serving. Naturally, they could not vote, as required by the Comelec, in the “original ports” they registered in.

So, also, many Filipinos who are permanent residents of the United States—the green-card holders—were hesitant to vote because they were required by the Comelec to execute an affidavit of their “intent to return” to the Philippines within three years from

voting, otherwise their voting registration would be rejected.

Note that by executing such affidavits, they risked not just the revocation of their green cards and permanent residency but also possible prosecution and harsh penalties. Moreover, by voting in two consecutive elections, they would be providing incriminating evidence that they were still abroad and did not return home as they vowed in their affidavits.

Saving the economy. During the same hearing last March 1, another Fil-American lawyer based in San Francisco, Rodel Rodis, reminded Comelec Chair Sixto Brillantes Jr. of his promise during a session of the poll body on Sept. 29, 2011. His promise was that the names of those who did not vote in two consecutive elections would not be cancelled, but would just be moved “to a separate list so that if they come to vote in the May 2013 elections, they would be allowed to vote provided their names were on the separate list.”

I humbly join this advocacy to liberalize the registration and voting requirements for our overseas Filipino vot-

ers. The ordinary rules made for locally based electors should not be strictly applied to them because they live in harsh environments that prevent them from adhering to election regulations applicable to locals.

Our OFWs toil diligently in foreign shores, braving loneliness, illness, family separation and extreme weather. In the process, they collectively remitted last year a total of \$21.4 billion, up 6.3 percent from the \$20.1 billion sent in 2011. They are the single biggest source of foreign currency for our country. Their relatives here used these remittances to buy homes, appliances, motor vehicles, food items, clothing and toys, thereby keeping our vibrant economy the envy of the world.

In the words of Bangko Sentral Governor Amando Tetangco Jr., “The resilience of overseas Filipino remittances continues to support the country’s economic growth and development.”

The top remitters are the Filipinos based in the United States, who sent over \$9 billion, constituting 42.6 percent of the total, followed by those in Canada, 9.2 percent; Saudi Arabia, 8.1 percent; United Kingdom, 5 percent; Japan, 4.7 percent; United Arab Emirates, 4.5 percent; and Singa-

pore, 4.1 percent.

Since Filipinos in the United States contribute by far the largest overseas remittances, we who benefit directly and indirectly from them should be more attentive to their plea. The least the Comelec can do is to construe election laws liberally in their favor.

For its part, our Supreme Court has liberally interpreted election laws for US-based Filipinos. For instance, *Macalintal vs Comelec* (July 10, 2003) held that though physically absent, green-card holders never lost their “domicile of origin” and should thus be allowed to vote, and *Nicolas vs. Comelec* (Aug. 4, 2006) ruled that dual citizens are not required “to actually establish residence and physically stay in the Philippines first before they can exercise their right to vote.”

Again, congratulations to the GFDC and its gutsy leaders led by Loida Nicolas Lewis, chair; Rodel Rodis, president; Lolita Farmer, VP Australia; Gene Alcantara, VP Europe; Daisy Mandap, VP China and Hong Kong; Celia Lamkin of Northern Marianas, secretary; and Laguatan, legal counsel. It has 27 board members from all over the globe.

(www.inquirer.net)

COVER STORY (from page 5, PASSIONS...)

Baptist Church. “Everyday, you connect with God so your relationship with Him grows stronger.”

Waikiki Baptist Church holds an Easter sunrise service at 6:30 am to remember Christ’s resurrection and God’s love but there is nothing extra-special beyond that, Akohashi says. “I practice being right with God everyday, not just one point in time.”

“People are really looking for a right relationship with God and they think they need to earn it through good works, self-flagellation or going through crucifixion,” says Glenn Racoma, pastor of Hope Chapel Kalihi. “Their hearts are probably right with God but it isn’t necessary to do that. There is only one sacrifice that can satisfy God—the sacrifice of Jesus.”

Like Akohashi, Racoma

says it’s about having a daily relationship with Jesus. He and his wife Veronica celebrate Easter with an evening dinner with the family after attending a church service.

“We take the opportunity to invite more people to church because this is the time when their hearts are open to receive,” says Veronica. “For my part, I try to eat more vegetarian dishes and just spend more time with the Lord by praying and reading the Bible more. I focus my mind and heart on him and try to listen to what God wants me to do.”

Celebrating ‘Salubong’ in Hawaii

The Filipino Community Center (FilCom) is hosting a Salubong Easter presentation which celebrates the resurrection of Jesus. The event is planned for

Sunday, March 31, 2013 from 4 pm to 7 pm and will feature the choral group Himig at Indak, musical group Banda Kawayan and other performers.

The free event fosters a sense of community and also includes fun, entertainment, delicious food and games. Everyone is invited to join.

Although the line is sometimes blurred between religious beliefs, culture and tradition, more Filipinos here and in the Philippines are experiencing and practicing their faith on a personal level. Ultimately, they know that it is their life they must account for, not their religion.

After all, when Jesus died for humanity, he died for each one. For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but receive eternal life.

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HAWAII-FILIPINO NEWS

Hawaii Bids a Fond Aloha to Deputy Consul General Cortes and Family

by Maita Milallos

After six and a half years of service, his tour of duty has finally come to an end.

At a send-off luncheon organized by the Philippine Celebrations Coordinating Committee of Hawaii (PCCCH) on March 17, 2013, some 300 guests bid a fond farewell to Paul Raymund Cortes, the deputy consul general who is popularly known for his singing talents at community events. Accompanied by his wife and three children, Cortes made his final round of saying his goodbyes to the Filipino-American community.

“Six and a half years is a lot of time to build so many friendships, a lot of time to see everyone grow a little bit older, a little bit wiser,” Cortes said. “It is a lot of time to serenade community events. Thank you for welcoming my family and me. It has been a wonderful six and a half years. We will not forget Hawaii and the Filipino community here.”

Cortes said his family appreciates the community’s sacrifices and the love that exists between overseas Filipinos and their motherland.

“We have learned a lot from the community and how much sacrifices you have made in order to come and stay here,” he said. “You have been here 10 to 15 years and some have not even gone home but that does not mean they love their country less. This is exactly what I want to show my kids that the Filipinos in this community make our fellow Filipinos back home proud.”

Based on the 2010 U.S. Census, Filipinos make up the second largest racial group in Hawaii behind Caucasians. Since 2000, Hawaii’s Filipino population has risen from 170,635 to 197,497—an increase of 15.7 percent.

These Filipinos come to the islands for various reasons ranging from work, marriage, family reunification and educational and business opportu-



nities. They are generally known to send money to relatives in the Philippines. There is no accurate count of how much money is sent from Hawaii but a January 2006 Star Bulletin report placed it at an estimated \$100 million a year.

Accolades

In her remarks, PCCCH Chair Bernadette Fajardo expressed her sadness in saying goodbye.

“Paul and his family have been very good to us and we will definitely miss them,” she said. “I am not going to say goodbye because we hope that we will see them again. We will pray that the good Lord will continue to be with them, that He may bless them with good health and long life.”

Philippine Consul General Julius Torres also offered a few words of appreciation to his outgoing second-in-command.

“Aside from singing, Paul is also a very good writer and a very good officer. We will definitely miss him at the Consulate,” he said.

Cortes’ singing ability led Dr. Belinda Aquino, professor emeritus at the University of Hawaii-Manoa and founder of the Center for Philippine Studies at the School of Pacific and Asian Studies to proclaim that the man of the hour is indeed multi-talented.

“I cannot remember a time in my 40 years in Hawaii that somebody like him has served as second in command at the Consulate,” Dr. Aquino said. “Trained as a computer expert, Paul is also gifted in singing. To use a term in economics, his talents in computer and singing are value added in his

profession, good combinations for a diplomat.”

Special presentations were given by U.S. Sen. Mazie Hirono, U.S. Rep. Colleen Hanabusa, Gov. Neil Abercrombie, State Sen. Donna Mercado Kim (represented by State Sen. Will Espero), State Rep. John Mizuno (represented by State Rep. Romy Cachola), Honolulu Mayor Kirk Caldwell, City Councilmember Joey Manahan and the PCCCH.

Sen. Espero reflected on the bond formed between Cortes and his family and Hawaii’s Filipino community.

“Paul and his family have certainly become part of our community,” he said. “He has developed many friendships and with his melodic voice has become a favorite at many of our events. Together with his wife and children, they have become a part of the Hawaii ohana.”

Also in attendance were Maria A.F. Etrata, Bennette Misalucha, Homer Rabara, Raymund Liongson and Leo Gozar.

Highlights of Accomplishments

The Philippine Consulate in Honolulu has jurisdiction in all the islands of the State of Hawaii as well as parts of American Samoa and French Polynesia. It conducts outreach programs to provide consular services for passports, visas, legal and notarial as well as civil registration with dual citizenships. But aside from these regular consular activities, the consulate performs other services.

In an e-mail interview last March 17, Cortes wrote that the Consulate has conducted



Paul Cortes with Consul General Torres and the PCCCH members

regular visits to the Halawa Correctional Facility and the Oahu Community Correctional Facility to determine the conditions of detained Filipinos and to ensure that humane treatment is observed and due process is accorded them. Per a 2010 report by the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, there were a total of 107 Filipinos in jail over drug charges. This does not cover other kinds of crimes committed by Filipinos.

The Consulate has also been in regular coordination with Filipino fishermen aboard U.S.-owned fishing vessels docked in Honolulu to determine their consular needs or resolve complaints regarding their employers. In a September 2012 report by the Philippine Department of Foreign Affairs, it indicated that these fishermen do not have entry visas to the U.S. because they are not allowed to fly directly to Hawaii to board their fishing vessels. Instead, they have to go around Kiribati

from Manila in order to board their respective boats.

Besides outreach activities, Cortes has also kept the community informed of current political and socio-cultural developments in the Philippines.

“Throughout his tenure, he was proactive in educating and promoting socio-cultural activities in the Filipino-American community in Hawaii through the events he organized,” said Dr. Aquino. “For instance, there was a forum last year that brought together the Consulate, working professionals, specialists from the academic circle and community residents to discuss the Philippine-Chinese maritime issues. I was one of the resource persons in that forum together with Consul General Torres, Jun Colmenares and Federico Magdalena.”

Carolyn Weygan Hildebrand, president of the University of the Philippines

(continued on page 12)





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HAWAII-FILIPINO NEWS (from page 11, HAWAII...)

Alumni Association, remembered the time they invited him to one of the gatherings of the alumni association. After glancing at the feast on the table she recounted,

"Paul said something to us that resonated to me the most. He told us to remember the poor, disadvantaged and those who were having a hard time and who were not as privileged as us. It was his first message as the consul."

Back to Manila

Per regulations of the Philippine Department of Foreign Affairs, all foreign service officers who have finished their tours of duty are required to serve in Manila for two years before their next posts.

For Cortes, however, there is more to look forward to. During the luncheon ceremony, Consul General Torres announced,

"I am very happy for him because he is going back to the Philippines at a critical juncture in his career. He is now a career minister, one rank below ambassador level. I am sure that in his two years in Manila he will be able to get the rank of chief of mission, making him eligible to be posted as ambassador. There are very few ambassadors in our service who get to that position at a very young age."

Brief Background

Cortes was born on October 20, 1967 in Baguio City. He attended Ateneo de Manila for high school and college where he earned his degree in computer science in 1988. He has graduate units in information systems and public management from the University of the Philippines.

The "lure of traveling, meeting new friends and representing the country in an international or global setting" interested him and in 1996 Paul entered the foreign service with the rank of Foreign Service Officer Class IV. He became the director of ceremonials at the Office of Protocol in Manila the following year.

From 1998 to 2004, Cortes served as Third Secretary and Vice Consul at the Philippine Embassy in Budapest, Hungary with concurrent accreditation to the Slovak Republic, Poland, Serbia, Montenegro and Bosnia Herzegovina.

While serving his post, he was promoted to Foreign Service Officer Class III in 1999. Four years later, he was designated as Second Secretary and Consul and was again promoted to Foreign Service Officer Class II.

After his six-year tour of duty in Hungary, he returned to the main office in Manila and took the helm of the Office of European Affairs as director from 2004-2006. In 2006, he was promoted to Foreign Service Officer Class I.

Cortes initially wanted his next posting to be in Switzerland, Sweden or Chicago but the only opening available at that time was the consulate in Honolulu. So in 2006, he packed his belongings and moved his family to Hawaii where he served as consul until 2009 and deputy consul general in 2010. Those six and a half years were the happiest years in his life.

After Hawaii, Cortes is expected to serve in Manila for two years before he gets posted again. He is now eligible for the rank of Minister Counselor after passing the career ministers' examination in 2008.

PHILIPPINE NEWS

**Gov't Asks for Sobriety Amid
 Protests vs. Policies of State
 Universities**

from www.philstar.com
 Tuesday, March 19, 2013

MANILA, Philippines (Xinhua) - The government called today for sobriety in the wake of violent protest actions on tuition policies by some state universities and colleges (SUCs) which reportedly was the reason why a first year college student committed suicide.

Presidential Spokesperson Edwin Lacierda, in a news briefing, said that it was "unfortunate" that Kristel Tejada, a freshman student of state-run University of the Philippines (UP), committed suicide on March 15.

Tejada killed herself by drinking a poisonous substance after she failed to enroll for the second semester following her failure to pay her student loan during the previous semester.

The incident prompted students in other SUCs to conduct protest actions, some by burning classroom equipment.

"Understandably, it is a painful experience but it has to be resolved through sobriety and studying the policies within their school system," Lacierda said.

He added that the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) has already ordered UP and other SUCs to look into their policies as well.

LEGAL NOTES

Evolving Policy on Drug Inadmissibility



By Reuben S. Seguritan

Many people think that for drug use to be a bar to admissibility in the United States, a person must first be convicted of a crime. However, many visa applicants with no arrest or no criminal conviction were still denied an immigrant visa because of their admission of a one-time experimentation with drugs in their younger years.

The “admission” usually occurs at the applicant’s medical examination. The medical examination is required of everyone who immigrates to the U.S. and is conducted by an authorized panel physician, who usually forwards the re-

sults of the exam directly to the Embassy or consulate

Some of the questions asked by the panel physician will be about the applicant’s history of substance use. Under the regulations, controlled substances include marijuana and shabu or methamphetamine.

A visa applicant knows, or should know, that lying or knowingly providing wrong information in order to get a visa is a serious offense that could lead not only to denial but also to a finding of visa fraud.

As a result, the applicant casually admits his past drug use, especially since the use was only an experimentation that took place many years ago, probably when he was still a minor. He might also be thinking that anyway he is speaking with a doctor and not a consular officer.

Later at the consular inter-

view, however, he is refused a visa. He finds out that he faces a lifetime ban from the U.S., although a waiver may be possible. Many applicants, much to their shock, have found themselves in exactly this harsh situation.

How would a single experimental drug use result in a lifetime ban? U.S. immigration law makes a person inadmissible if has been convicted of, or admits having committed acts which constitute the essential elements of a violation of any law or regulation of the U.S., any of the States, or any foreign country, relating to a controlled substance.

In the 2002 case of *Pazcoguin v. Radcliffe*, a federal appeals court found a Philippine national excludable from the U.S. for having admitted to drug use which was a crime under Philippine law. In that case, the foreign national during his psychiatric exami-

nation admitted to using marijuana until he was 21 years old. He had been issued an immigrant visa but was denied admission at the port of entry.

However, many things have changed since that case was decided. For instance, unlike the old law the new Philippine drug law only imposes rehabilitation as a penalty for a first-time offender for the crime of drug use. Furthermore, the Administrative Appeals Office (AAO), in deciding appeals of waiver denials, has stated that it is not bound by the *Pazcoguin* decision.

The cases decided by the AAO involved applicants from the Philippines who were found inadmissible for admitting to past drug use during their medical examinations and whose waiver applications were subsequently denied.

The AAO followed a

precedential ruling of the Board of Immigration Appeal and said that to be a valid admission of a crime for immigration purposes, the alien must be given adequate definition of a crime, including all essential elements, and it must be explained in understandable terms.

In those cases, the AAO said, the admission during the medical examination did not meet the legal standard for it to give rise to the applicant’s inadmissibility. Since the applicants have not made any other sworn statement or admission and they were not charged with or convicted of any drug related crime, the AAO ordered the processing of their visa applications.

REUBEN S. SEGURITAN has been practicing law for over 30 years. For further information, you may call him at (212) 695 5281 or log on to his website at www.seguritan.com

PHILIPPINE NEWS

Filipino Labor Is Worth Hiring – PNoy

by Delon Porcalla
Wednesday, March 13, 2013

MANILA, Philippines - President Aquino made a pitch for Filipino workers before potential investors yesterday, saying their creativity, dedication and loyalty are worth investing in.

In a speech to keynote the Philippine Investment Forum 2013 at the Manila Peninsula in Makati City, the President cited the success of the business process outsourcing industry in which Filipinos have excelled and brought the country “to great heights in such a short time.”

“Given the opportunity, they will do the same for you, whatever industry you may be

involved in,” Aquino said.

Aquino said the intrinsic characteristics of Filipino workers are what investors want from their work force.

The President also called on investors to partner with the government in expanding their businesses in the country. He said the country is in a better position to offer more and meet their needs.

He said potential investors could invest in agriculture, the source of income for some 12.1-million Filipinos; tourism, with the target 56-million tourist arrivals by 2016; and infrastructure, which is seen to support agriculture and tourism through the development of road networks, ports, and airports.

“Whether in these three



President Noy Noynoy Aquino

sectors or in others...we know that, here, hard work, innovation, and creativity are re-

warded with success,” he said.

The President said new investments would create thousands of jobs that will put food on the tables, send children to school and meet family expenses.

“Together, we will be empowering them; giving them greater power to contribute to economic growth and opportunities to uplift their lives and even the lives of their fellow Filipinos,” Aquino said.

The President also noted since he assumed office, he

has been devoted to weeding out graft and corruption to level the playing field and “ensure that integrity, transparency, and accountability characterize our actions.”

He cited efforts to reform the judiciary, streamline the process of setting up business in the country and ensure the strict implementation of bidding and procurement laws.

“We are also investing heavily in our countrymen – empowering them to take stock of their lives and to realize their potential,” Aquino said. (www.philstar.com)

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PHILIPPINE LANGUAGE



DAYASADAS
By Pacita Saludes

Naselebraran Ti 43 (Uppat A Pulo Ket Tallo A Tawen Ti GUMIL HAWAII)

naikari a mangsuray no agiray dagiti gandat- naiwayat ti maika uppat a pulo ket tallo a panagtawenna ita a 2013.

Adu ti naisagana a nagpal-abasan ti sardam idi Enero 19, 2013 iti August Ahrens School a nakaangayan ti selebrasion. Adda BUCANEGAN a nagakeman da Salvador Ubaldo ken Albina Gamponia. Maipanggep iti baro a naigameren ti biag iti Hawaii ken balasang a sangsangpetna manipud Filipinas.

Naiparang pay ti ababa a Drama "Uray lakay NO LANDING a sinurat ken indiruha ni Pacita Saludes a nanglinglingay kadagiti nagbuya.

Koronasion

Nabalangatan met ti Mrs. GUMIL HAWAII 2013-ni JO-JELYN GUZMAN CABULERA iti daytoy met la a rabii ti Enero 19, 2013 iti August Ahrens School. Insaad ni Lindsey Ramolete ti koronana. Ni Lindsey ti Miss GUMIL HAWAII 2012.

Kas iti naaramid iti Piesta ti Kailokuan, nakoronaan met

dagiti reyna iti Annak ti Kailokuan iti America a naisangrat a tumulong kadagiti aktibidades ti parambak. Mrs. AKA 2013 ni MRS. EVANGELINE BURCENA, MISS AKA-ELIZABETH SUBIA DUMLAO, ti MISS TEEN ni KALEN JADE OLEGARIO. Dagitoy dagiti nabuya a nabalangatan iti entablado (makita ida iti ladawan).

Dagitil Ballaigi Ti Puli (Triumphs of Race)

Na -launched iti daytoy a

rabii ti BARO a libro ti ANNAK TI KAILOKUAN ti BALLAIGI TI PULI compiled by Annak ti Kailokuan iti America nga inrusat ti pondador ti AKA ni Pacita Cabulera Saludes. Linaonna dagiti naballaigian a rusat dagiti Pilipino a dimteng iti Hawaii. Daytoy ti Bunga dagiti Mannurat a makaibaud kadagiti Aramid ken pas-pasamak iti pagilian ken ayan a Komonidad.

Dagitoy met ti bunga kinaregget nga itutulung dag-

iti mabalangatan a reyna. Isuda ti talged ken tumultulong dagiti rusat ken proyekto ti organisasion a kas iti pananglibro kadagiti sinurat maipapan kadagiti Filipinos a mangitantandudo ti FILIPINO ken mangitantan-ay ti PULI iti AMERICA.

Babaen ti panagdanggay ti AKA ken dagiti Mannurat iti Hawaii maitungpal dagiti proyekto a panagilibro. Maiwarwaras ti kopia dagiti Libro kadagiti libraria idiy Ilukos ken kasta met ditoy America.

MAINLAND NEWS

Nicolas-Lewis Supports Philippine Congressional Candidate

Loida Nicolas-Lewis—a successful businesswoman, philanthropist and civic leader—has formally endorsed Atty. Ma. Leonor “Leni” Gerona-Robredo for Congress in the 3rd District of Camarines Sur in the Philippines.

Robredo is the widow of former Philippine Secretary of

the Interior Jesse Robredo, who passed away last August. Mrs. Robredo is seeking to restore her late husband’s beloved practices in the provinces when he was mayor of its capital, Naga City, for six terms. Mrs. Robredo is challenged to compete against the long-standing Villafuerte dynasty in the region.



Loida Nicolas-Lewis with Leni Robredo

Nicolas-Lewis, who also serves as the national chair of the US Pinoys for Good Governance (USP4GG), has successfully campaigned for President Benigno S. Aquino III in 2010. She cites many of Mrs. Robredo’s leadership qualities as reasons why she is backing the popular Liberal Party candidate.

“She has integrity and a code of ethics to do what is right for the people,” says Nicolas-Lewis, a native of Bicol. “She is an achiever and a servant-leader. Instead of working for big corporations or powerful law firms, she chose to be a community organizer.”

Should Mrs. Robredo win the election, which is scheduled for May 13, 2013, she become hopes to duplicate her late husband’s success as mayor of Naga City. During his 19 years run as mayor, Naga City was cited by CNN’s

AsiaNow as one of the Most Improved Cities in Asia, with a much lower incidence of poverty and lack of education than the rest of Camarines Sur, which the Villafuerte family has run for over 25 years.

“I call on my fellow Overseas Filipinos to support Leni Robredo for Congress,” says Nicolas-Lewis. “Jesse Robredo did it for Naga City—Leni can surely do it for Camarines Sur.”

Since overseas absentee voters cannot vote for representatives, Nicolas-Lewis is asking Filipinos all over the world ask their kababayans who live in the Third District of Camarines Sur to vote for Mrs. Robredo. Supporters are also asked to send their campaign donations to: Loida Lewis ITF Leni Robredo, P.O. Box 1080, New York, NY 10028 USA.

Please visit www.lenirobredo.ph for more details on Mrs. Robredo’s campaign.

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OUR LADY OF MANAOAG FIESTA • April 17, 2013 • Saint Jude Catholic Church, Kapolei, HI • Contact: Fil Castillo 386-0775 email: filcastillo@hawaiiantel.net; Fred Martinez 358-8049 email: fmar10nez@yahoo.com

NINE (9) DAY NOVENA FOR OUR LADY OF MANAOAG BEFORE THE FIESTA • April 18-26, 2013, 7:00 PM daily except on Wed April 24, 2013 will be 5:00 PM • Saint Jude Catholic Church, Kapolei, HI • Contact: Fil Castillo 386-0775; Fred Martinez 358-8049

CAGAYAN VALLEY ASSOCIATION INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS & ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS BALL • May 18, 2013, 6 PM • FilCom Center • Contact: Dolly Ortal - 422-1667 or 225-9997

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PHILIPPINE NEWS

SC Stops RH for 120 Days

by Edu Punay
Wednesday, March 20, 2013

MANILA, Philippines - The Supreme Court (SC) temporarily stopped the executive branch yesterday from implementing the controversial Republic Act No. 10354 or the Reproductive Health (RH) Law.

Justices voted 10-5 to issue a status quo ante order enjoining the Palace and concerned agencies from implementing the law.

The order will be in effect for 120 days. Oral arguments on the consolidated petitions will be on June 18.

Despite strong opposition from the Catholic Church, which espouses only natural family planning methods, Congress passed the RH law last Dec. 19. President Aquino signed the law two days later.

The Department of Health (DOH) approved the implementing rules and regulations (IRR) for the law last week. It was scheduled for implementation beginning March 31.

Catholic leaders consider the law an attack on the Church's core values. The government and even certain Catholic groups say it will help couples choose to space childbirth, plan the size of their families and promote women's reproductive health.

The Philippines has a population of 94 million and has one of the highest birth rates in Asia.

Those who voted for the issuance of the SC order were Associate Justices Presbitero Velasco Jr., Teresita Leonardo-De Castro, Arturo Brion,

Diosdado Peralta, Lucas Bersamin, Roberto Abad, Martin Villarama Jr., Jose Perez, Jose Mendoza, and Bienvenido Reyes, according to SC spokesman Theodore Te.

On the other hand, Chief Justice Ma. Lourdes Sereno dissented to-

gether with Senior Associate Justice Antonio Carpio and Associate Justices Mariano del Castillo, Estela Perlas-Bernabe and Marvic Leonen.

Sereno, Bernabe and Leonen are appointees of President Aquino.

Irreparable violations

A member of the high court explained to The STAR that majority of the justices saw the need to issue the order "so as to prevent irreparable violations of constitutional rights raised in the petitions, especially if in the end these are established."

The magistrate pointed out that the order is "preliminary" and the possibility of the high court ruling in favor of the legality of the law still remains.

The SQA order was directed at Executive Secretary Pacquito Ochoa Jr., Budget Secretary Florencio Abad, Education Secretary Armin Luistro, Health Secretary Enrique Ona and Interior Secretary Mar Roxas, who were all named respondents in the case.

The consolidated petitions were filed as early as January by couple James and Lovely-Ann Imbong, non-profit group Alliance for the Family

Foundation Philippines Inc. (ALFI), Serve Life Cagayan de Oro City, Task Force for Family and Life Visayas Inc., lawyer Expedito Bugarin,

Eduardo Olaguer of the Catholic Xybrspace Apostolate of the Philippines, former Sen. Francisco "Kit" Tatad and his wife Ma. Fenny and a group of doctors represented by lawyer Howard Calleja.

The petitioners argued that the RH law "negates and frustrates the fundamental ideals and aspirations of the sovereign Filipino people as enshrined in the Constitution."

They cited Article II Section 12 of the Constitution, which states: "The State recognizes the sanctity of family life and shall protect and

strengthen the family as a basic autonomous social institution. It shall equally protect the life of the mother and the life of the unborn from conception. The natural and primary right and duty of parents in the rearing of the youth for civic efficiency and the development of moral character shall receive the support of government."

Petitioners said at least 11 provisions in RA 10354, which allow couples to choose to suppress life, violate this constitutional provision.

They added that the new law violates constitutional freedom of religion and expression of those who will continue to oppose it and also creates doubtful or spurious rights called reproductive health rights.

Former Akbayan Rep. Risa Hontiveros, an administration senatorial candidate, sought intervention to the case also last January and asked the high court to dismiss six petitions questioning the constitutionality of the RH Law.

Gov't to defend law

Presidential spokesman Edwin Lacierda said they will observe the SQA order issued by the SC but they are confident that the government will be able to defend the merits of the RH Law.

Speaker Feliciano Belmonte Jr. also said the House of Representatives will respect the order but he remains optimistic that the matter will be resolved soon.

"This (order) is well within the high court's power and just a temporary setback," Belmonte said in a statement. "I am hopeful the main issues will be deliberated on so that these can be resolved as soon as possible."

Albay Rep. Edcel Lagman, the principal author of the RH measure in the House, described the order as only a temporary delay to enable the SC to fully assess the merits and demerits of the pending petitions challenging the law. (www.philstar.com)

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