

Kalinga

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Misa de Gallo and Simbang Gabi

M*isa de Gallo* (or “Mass of the Rooster”) is a traditional Filipino Catholic celebration that lasts for nine consecutive days beginning December 16. Traditionally, it is held at dawn, but some parishes offer Christmas Novena Masses in the evenings, hence *Simbang Gabi* (Evening Mass).

Misa de Gallo traces its roots in Mexico when, in 1587, Fray Diego de Soria, prior of the convent of San Agustin Acolman, petitioned the Pope for permission to hold Christmastide Masses outdoors because the church could not accommodate the multitude that attended the dawn services.

It was in the 16th century when Pope Sixtus V decreed that these pre-dawn Masses be also held in the Philippines starting December 16. The decree was in keeping with the nine-day traditional festivals of Filipinos in celebrating auspicious occasions like harvesttime. It was also meant to give farmers a chance to hear Mass before setting out for the fields. Rural Filipinos were used to starting the day two hours before sunrise.

Church bells ring to call the faithful to *Misa de Gallo*. In some provinces, brass bands play traditional Christmas music and parish priests would go as far as knocking on the doors of every home to wake them up and invite them to come for Mass.

After the nine-day *Simbang Gabi* follows the *Misa de Aguinaldo* (or “Mass of the Gift”, referring to Jesus Christ who is God’s gift to mankind). This is held on midnight of December 24 to welcome the birth of the Saviour. In some churches, the *panunuluyan*, depicting Mary and Joseph’s efforts to find a suitable birthplace, is reenacted and the baby Jesus first makes his appearance in the manger of the *Belen*, the Nativity Scene.

PERMANENT CHURCH FOR 2005 PILIPINO MASSES

• Romy & Norma Manabat – *St. John Neumann Parish, St. Charles, IL*

Hurray! Fr. Mike Tierney approved our request of holding permanently our Pilipino Masses at his parish – St. Margaret Mary Church in Algonquin, Illinois, starting January 2005.

As majority of you are aware that every 4th Sunday of the month, the celebration of Pilipino Masses are held in different churches. Through flyers and word of mouth, attendance and participation from the Pilipino communities in the Fox Valley is improving. However, holding the Masses in different locations, created disorientation, difficulty, and confusion to many specially the newcomers.

Learning from experience & observation, and to continually improve attendance and participation, an Ad Hoc committee on Pilipino Mass was established. It was headed by Dr. Nap Abando of St. Mary of Woodstock with Al Aceron of St. Margaret Mary of Algonquin, Ruben Ruelo of St. Mary of Huntley and Romy Manabat of St. John Neumann of St. Charles. Fr. Pekto Vasquez is our spiritual director/adviser. The goal was to look for a permanent location of Pilipino Masses for 2005 and beyond.

On October 21, 2004, Ad Hoc committee met. To have a productive meeting, materials needed for presentation were prepared ahead of time. Just like any other meetings, differences of opinions and point of views were presented and discussed. In general, the meeting went well and smooth. Decision was rendered and action needed for implementation was established.

One of the presentation aids used in the analysis and evaluation process was a vicinity map, showing locations of all cluster



St. Margaret Mary Church, Algonquin, IL.

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parish churches in the Fox Valley area. The committee agreed that travel is measured by time and no longer by distance as used to be. As such, expressway and highways should be the center point of reference if a circle is to be inscribed for proximity evaluation purposes. I-90, Route 25, Route 31 and Randall Road were used for proximity evaluation purposes and the following churches were considered for further testing, analysis and determination of our needs.

- St. Thomas More in Elgin
- St Catherine of Siena in West Dundee
- St Margaret Mary in Algonquin
- St. Mary in Huntley

Another tool used in the analysis and evaluation process was the establishment of criteria with committee's agreed assigned numerical values based on the order of importance of each criterion. Also, as a basis for grading, on a scale of 1 to 10, each established criterion was weighted for each parish under consideration. The following criteria and assigned values are as follows:

- Church proximity to major expressways and highways 20 pts.
- Pastor's supportiveness to *Simbang Gabi* 35 pts.
- Population of parish's Fil-Am families 20 pts.
- Church Facility (capacity, handicap accessibility, social space) 15 pts.
- Amenities (sound & acoustic system, drop-of-area, etc.) 10 pts.

Grading the 4-selected churches, St. Thomas More of Elgin got the highest point. Followed by St Catherine of Siena in Dundee but both places cannot hold the *Misang Pilipino* for a variety of reasons. St. Mary of Huntley and St. Margaret of Algonquin were very close, score wise. Because of closeness of scores, further evaluation was conducted. After weighing the pros and cons presented, St. Margaret Mary of Algonquin got an edge over St. Mary of Huntley and finally chosen to be the permanent location for *Misang Pilipino* for 2005.

The Ad Hoc committee's conclusion and recommendation is to write and letter of request to Fr. Mike Tierney regarding the permanent use of his parish for the Pilipino Masses in 2005 starting in January. Al Aceron prepared the letter of request. It was clearly stated in the letter that, if request is approved, the parish guidelines regarding the use of church and facilities be strictly followed. All representatives of the Fox Valley cluster parishes signed the letter on November 21, 2004 and in a short while, the request was granted.

Now that we have a permanent church 2005 Pilipino Masses, let us all be mindful of our duties and responsibilities (condition attached on the approved letter) in the use of the church and facilities. Guidelines on church and facilities usage will be distributed to all cluster parishes through FVFACM.

Hurray! Wish granted and mission accomplished!

Kulturang PINOY

• Fr. Gerry Paderon (aka "fgerip")

Kumusta na mga kababayan! *fgerip* here! Kulturang Pinoy talks about our culture as a people! We have a rich heritage. Im only 37 years old and I have seen so much. I am not a sociologist or an anthropologist, I am just an ordinary, simple Filipino priest who happens to admire our Filipino ways! I have not been to all parts of the Philippines, but in those places that I've been to, I see some common stuff. And this common ground I believe makes us one people, in spirit and in heart!



It's Christmas time once more! Pasko na naman! Pasko is THE time of the year! The whole Philippines celebrate with a sense of joy and thanksgiving! I think, our celebration of Christmas is the happiest in the world! And our celebration starts very early. When the "ber" months arrive, it's Christmas time! You hear the first Christmas song on the radio 12:01 in the morning of September 1. That's the signal! Start counting, and it's Christmas! The next day, you will see houses with Christmas decors – Christmas lights, a plastic banner that says "Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year", or the face of Santa posted on the doors and looking at you!



Monitoban starts early! Name it you have it! At work, in school, within organizations and movements, or even among friends, gift giving makes Christmas even more exciting and meaningful! And if you are really so very active, you have to prepare more than ten gifts just for the *monitoban*. But your consolation is you will also receive as much!



Advent! Four weeks before Christmas. For most Filipinos, advent is actually a prelude to Pasko! it is part of our *Pasko* celebration! During this time, not only the physical and material but also the spiritual preparation for Christmas takes place! People start to fill the church. The number of people lining to confession swells and really multiplies! And I think it is a great thing! After all Christmas is Jesus' day. And true enough, we prepare not only tangible things, but

most especially our hearts, our souls, our selves! It is the time to forgive, be friends again and love and share! What a wonderful time of the year! Jesus once again is born in our hearts!



M*isa de Gallo!* Mass of the rooster is a nine-consecutive early morning Masses! Church bells ring at exactly three o'clock in the morning. It's a wake-up call to get ready and be in the church as early as possible or you will have to bring your own chair. December 16, the first day of the *Misa de Gallo* is a huge crowd! If you get to the church 30 or 15 minutes before four o'clock when the Mass normally starts, pretty sure you have to be in the patio and feels the early morning cool air! It's funny though, the crowd gets thinner and thinner the following days, but it will rebound on the 7th/8th day.



Most people really try to complete the *Misa de Gallo*. We believe that if we complete the nine days, our wishes will be granted! And in most cases, they are! *Misa de Gallo* is only done in the Philippines. It is an indulgent/privilege given by the Pope to the Filipinos long time ago in recognition of our religiosity! Actually, in those nine Masses, the principal prayers said by the priests are in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary. We honor Mary, the simple ordinary young woman chosen by God to be the Mother of His Son, Jesus!



Another exciting thing is what happens after the Mass. In the patio, you will find all sorts of Christmas delicacies – *bibingka*, *puto bumbong*, *arroz caldo* or *champuradong parirutong*, *kutsinta't puto*. It's eating time! After the *Misa*, it's *mesa*!!!!



S*imbang Gabi*. It's an anticipation of the early morning *Misa de Gallo*. The late Msgr. Pedrito Baldovino,



a good servant of God, told me that *Simbang Gabi* started during the Martial Law time. People, especially the young ones, can not go out onto the church early morning since it's prohibited to be in the streets from 10:00 p.m. till 5 or 6:00 a.m.! Hence, the *Simbang Gabi*! But it doesn't really matter whether it's done in the early mornings of December 16 till the 24th, or in an anticipated time from 15 – 23. What matters most is the spirit that calls us all to celebrate Christmas, that is, our gratitude and love to God for His Greatest Gift to us, His Son! At present, we have both, the *Simbang Gabi* and the *Misa de Gallo*!



And when Christmas gets nearer, when the kids are off from schools, caroling starts. A group of three or four kids with their hand made instruments of cans, pots and what have you, anything that produces sound, will serenade you with, "*Sa may bahay ang aming bati, merry Christmas na mawalhati . . . ang sanhi po ng pagparito, bibingi po ng aginaldo . . .*", "*We wish you a merry Christmas (3x) and a happy New Year!*", "*tenk yu, tenk yu . . .*" If you are a generous giver, they end up with, "*ang babait ninyo, tenk yu! Salamat po!*", but if not, then, it goes like this, "*ang babarat ninyo, Tenk yu!*" The funny thing is, when you give generously to one group, their barkada will follow! They'll mark you and they'll be there again the next evening! Great strategy huh!



After the Midnight Mass of the Nativity (actually it starts at ten in the evening of December 24), families gather together for the *Noche Buena*! Whatever is on the table is shared. Again, after the *Misa*, it's *mesa*! We love to eat, and eat with our family. It's a celebration of life!



On Christmas day, kids go to their *ninongs* and *ninangs* (baptismal and/or confirmation sponsors) for their *aguinaldo* (Christmas gifts)! When you're not home, and you think you're spared well, you are wrong! They will be back! You see, Christmas season for Filipinos lasts until the third week of January when we celebrate the feast of the *Santo Niño* (Holy Child)!



There are many more ways we Filipinos celebrate Christmas, very Filipino! Just like what that ad in the television says, "Wala niyan sa States." Or shall we say, "Dito lang 'yan sa Pinas!" Think of more and you'll enjoy the moment. It's like celebrating Pasko in the Philippines. I did, try it!

News REPORTS

BISHOP JESSE MERCADO'S VISIT

The Most Rev. Jesse Mercado, DD, Bishop of Paranaque, Philippines, spent two weeks of his vacation with the Filipino-Americans of Fox Valley Area. Bishop Mercado stayed with some friends in Huntley, right across the newly constructed St. Mary's Church. The bishop's intention was to have some rest and recreation, but when the Filipinos learned that he was staying in the area, they lost no time finding him something to do!



Bishop Mercado met with key clergymen of the Archdiocese of Chicago and Rockford and celebrated

Masses in different parishes of the Diocese during his brief stay. He was principal celebrant at the anticipated First Sunday of Easter Mass on November 27, 2004 in St. Thomas in Crystal Lake, and again and at the *Misang Pilipino* for the month of November, which was held in St. Mary's in Huntley on November 28, 2004.

Previous to his appointment as Auxiliary Bishop of Manila, Bishop Jesse Mercado was Rector of Holy Apostles Senior Seminary in Makati from 1988-1994 and Rector of *Pontificio Collegio Filipino* in Rome from 1994-1997. He was ordained a priest in 1977 and a bishop in 1997. He was appointed by Pope John Paul II in 2001 to head the newly created Diocese of Paranaque as its first residential bishop.



The Most Rev. Jesse Mercado, DD, Bishop of Parañaque, Philippines, was the main celebrant at the *Misang Pilipino* in St. Mary's Church in Huntley on November 28, 2004. Pictured with him are some of the concelebrating priests: (L-R) Fr. Noel Jacob, Fr. Pancho Seco, Fr. Seldon Coronado (*Oeconomus* of the Diocese of San Pablo, Philippines), Fr. Steve Knox (Pastor of St. Mary's), Bishop Mercado, Fr. Rodel Peji, Fr. Cesar Pajarillo, Jr, Fr. Dario Endiape, and Fr. Ariel Valencia.

Fox Valley Filipino-American Catholic Ministries Officer Profiles

ANOTHER NEW PRIEST IN THE DIOCESE

Fr. Gerry Paderon, a priest of the Diocese of Lucena, Philippines, arrived in our diocese on November 7, 2004. He is currently staying at St. Thomas the Apostle Rectory in Crystal Lake, IL and helps with their ministerial team. Fr. Gerry, as he is more popularly known, has been a priest for 10 years and has served his diocese as a seminary professor at Lucena's Diocesan College Seminary and as pastor in various parishes within his diocese. He has been to the U. S. a few times to visit his close relatives who are mostly living in the U. S. East Coast. Fr. Gerry will go to the Philippines in late January, and then come back to the U. S. a month later for his official appointment in the Diocese of Rockford.



ST. MARY'S IN FREEPORT TO HOLD FIRST 'SIMBANG GABI'

Fr. Burt Absalon, Assistant Principal at Aquin Catholic School in Freeport, and administrator of St. Mary's Church in the same town, is glad to announce to everyone that his church and its tiny, but faith-filled Filipino Community will host the parish's very first *Simbang Gabi* on December 18, 2004.

Beginning this issue, we will be featuring the different leaders of our Filipino-American Catholic communities in the diocese. The following are the key leaders in the Fox Valley area.

Ernie Domingo (President)

Ernie was born in Chicago, ILL to Alberto Domingo (Urdaneta, Pangasinan) and Engracia Florendo (Naguilan, La Union). He moved to the Philippines to study, and there he met and married Agnes. They have one daughter, Mary Catherine, in college. He is currently an IT Consultant on-site at a large insurance company in the NW suburbs. They live in Cary, IL for 14 years and are parishioners of SS. Peter and Paul Church.



Romy Manabat (Secretary)

Romy is a Registered Architect in Illinois and a partner in an Architectural/Engineering firm in Chicago. He is married to Norma for 34-years and a parishioner of St. John Neumann Parish in St. Charles for about 15-years. Both son (Ronald) and daughter (Nora) are married, and both live & work in San Francisco, California. Romy is now a proud grandfather (Dylan Manabat—1 year old) from his son. Currently, Romy is in his second year of the Formation Ministry, in the Diocese of Rockford.



Agnes Domingo (Treasurer)

Agnes was born in Manila, Philippines. Her father is the late Candelario Ticzon Eleosida from San Pablo, Laguna and Ibaan, Batangas. Her mother is the late Lydia Barrientos Eleosida from Villasis, Pangasinan. She is a Specialist in Worldwide Operations at a large insurance company in downtown Chicago. She is, also, an active officer of the Ilocanos of the Midwest. Agnes and her husband Ernie, are parishioners of SS. Peter and Paul Church in Cary, IL.



Letter from Bishop Jesse Mercado

Greetings of Peace from the Philippines!

Our plane arrived at 10:15 pm Phil. time last night at the NAIA. A bit tired but happy!

Just to send this thank you note to you and to the rest of the gang for the wonderful time we had together! Sana maunit!

Praying that all is well with you! A big typhoon is supposed to come & visit the whole of Luzon! Pls. pray it doesn't hit us at all! Many thanks again!

Best wishes to all our kababayans there!

In the Lord's love,

+Most Rev. Jesse Mercado, DD

* * *

Steve Ray's open letter to the Filipino Catholics

We stepped into the church and it was old and a bit dark. Mass had just begun and we sat toward the front. We didn't know what to expect here in Istanbul, Turkey. I guess we expected it to be a somber Mass but quiet and somber it was not – I thought I heard angels joyously singing behind me. The voices were rich, melodic and beautiful. What I discovered as I spun around to look did not surprise me because I had seen and heard the same thing in other churches around the world. It was not a choir of angels with feathered wings and halos but a group of delightful Filipino Catholics with smiles of delight and joy on their faces as they worshiped God and sang His praises. I had seen this many times before in Rome, in Israel, in the United States and other countries.

Filipinos have special traits and they are beautifully expressed as I gazed at the happy throng giving thanks to God. What are the special traits which characterize these happy people? I will share a few that I have noticed – personal observations – as I have traveled around the world, including visits to the Philippines.

First, there is a sense of community, of family. These Filipino Christians did not sit apart from each other in different isles. They sat together, closely. They didn't just sing quietly, mumbling, or simply mouthing the words. No, they raised their voices in harmony together as though they enjoyed the sense of unity and communion among them. They are family even if they are not related.

Second, they have an inner peace and joy which is rare in the world today. When most of the world's citizens are worried and fretful, I have found Filipinos to have joy and peace – a deep sense of God's love that overshadows them. They have problems too, and many in the Philippines have less material goods than others in the world, yet there is still a sense of happy trust in God and love of neighbor.

Third, there is a love for God and for his Son Jesus that is almost synonymous with the word Filipino. There is also something that Filipinos are famous for around the world – their love for the Blessed Mother. Among the many Filipinos I have met, the affectionate title for Mary I always hear from their lips is "Mama Mary". For these gentle folks Mary is not just a theological idea, a historical person, or a statue in a church – Mary is the mother of their Lord and their mother as well, their "mama."

The Philippines is a Catholic nation – the only such nation in Asia – and this wonderful country exports missionaries around the world. They are not hired to be missionaries, not official workers of the church. No, they are workers and educators, doctors, nurses and housekeepers that go to other lands and travel to the far reaches of the earth, and everywhere they go they take the joyous gospel of Jesus with them. They make a somber Mass joyful when they burst into song. They convict the pagan of sin as they always keep the love of Jesus and the Eucharist central in their lives.

My hope and prayer, while I am here in the Philippines sharing my conversion story from Baptist Protestantism to Roman Catholicism, is that the Filipino people will continue to keep these precious qualities. I pray that they will continue loving their families, loving the Catholic Church, reading the Bible, loving Jesus, His Mother and the Eucharist. As many other religions and sects try to persuade them to leave the Church, may God give them wisdom to defend the Catholic faith. As the world tempts them to sin and seek only money and fame and power, may God grant them the serenity to always remember that obedience to Christ and love for God is far more important than all the riches the world can offer.

May the wonderful Filipino people continue to be a light of the Gospel to the whole world!

Happy and blessed Sunday!

Love, joy, and peace,

Brenda

* * *

St. John Neuman helping St. Mary's in Freeport

I just want to thank everyone of you for the "priceless" job you contributed to our bayanihan project. Good job! The community of the faithful at St. Mary's were very much appreciative of what we were doing and have done. Needless to say, Fr. Burt made an announcement in the congregation at his 4:00 p.m. mass (Christ the King-celebration), that his friends from St. John

Neumann were busy the whole day doing general cleaning and painting in the basement as well as the on-going renovation work of the rectory's living room.

Since time is no longer the essence, we could resume work after the holidays. With God's given talent to all of us, I believe we can accomplish our goal early part of next year. Of course, this is based on the assumption that the same group is willing and able to extend further assistance to Fr. Burt's needs.

So far, Phase I of our mission is accomplished. Phase II as planned could easily be accomplished by spring of 2005.

Once again, thank you very much for a job well done! It's another milestone in our life for the year 2004. Have all of you a HAPPY THANKSGIVING.

Romy & Norma Manabat

Please Join Fr. Cesar C. Pajarillo, Jr., Fr. Ariel Valencia, and Fr. Joel Lopez on a Pilgrimage to different shrines of Southern and Central Italy from August 2-11, 2005.

Shrines to be visited include the Cave of the Archangel Michael, the Basilica of St. Nicholas (Bari), the Shrine of Padre Pio (San Giovanni Rotondo), Basilica of St. Francis and other shrines in Assisi, as well as different churches and basilicas in Rome. There will be an opportunity to visit *Castel Gandolfo* and participate in one of the audiences of the Holy Father. First class accommodation and limited number of participants only. Reservation has to be made before January 10, 2005. For more information, please contact Fr. Cesar C. Pajarillo, Jr. at (815) 455-5400 x403 or email him at fr.cesarpajarillo@stthomaschurch.com.

Fox Valley Simbang Gabi 2004 Schedule

DATE	LOCATION	CELEBRANT	TIME
December 15, 2004	St. Thomas More Church	Bishop Thomas Doran, DD	6:30 PM
December 16, 2004	St. Mary's Church	Fr. Burt Absalon	7:00 PM
December 17, 2004	Sts. Peter & Paul 's Church	Fr. Cesar Pajarillo, Jr.	7:00 PM
December 18, 2004	St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church	Fr. Noel Jacob	7:00 PM
December 18, 2004	St. Mary's Church (Freeport)	Fr. Burt Absalon	5:30 PM
December 19, 2004	St. John Newmann	Fr. Joel Lopez	6:00 PM
December 20, 2004	Church of the Holy Apostles	Fr. Pancho Seco	7:00 PM
December 21, 2004	St. Margaret Mary Church	Fr. Moises Apostol	6:30 PM
December 22, 2004	St. Mary's Church	Fr. Mario Ronelo Meude	7:00 PM
December 23, 2004	St. Thomas the Apostle Church	Rev. Msgr. Dan Hermes, HP	7:00 PM

Rockford Simbang Gabi 2004 Schedule

DATE	LOCATION	CELEBRANT	TIME
December 15, 2004	Holy Family Parish	Fr. Les Echevia	6:30 P. M.
December 16, 2004	St. Peter Cathedral	Fr. Cesar Pajarillo	6:30 P. M.
December 17, 2004	St. Bernadette Parish	Fr. Butch Meude	6:30 P. M.
December 18, 2004	St. Patrick Parish	Fr. Brian Geary	6:30 P. M.
December 19, 2004	St. Edward Parish	Fr. Moises Apostol	6:30 P. M.
December 20, 2004	St. James Parish	Fr. William Antillon	6:30 P. M.
December 21, 2004	St. Patrick Parish	Fr. Noel Jacob	6:30 P. M.
December 22, 2004	St. Rita Parish	Fr. Ariel Valencia	6:30 P. M.
December 23, 2004	St. Bridget Parish	Fr. Joel Lopez	6:30 P. M.

If you are interested to contribute articles or any comments, please contact **Father Cesar Pajarillo** at **815-455-5400 ext 403** or **Ernie Domingo** at **847-516-8826**. If you are interested in placing an ad in the Kalinga Newsletter, please email your request to kalinga_ads@sbcglobal.net.

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Announcements:

Our Mother of Perpetual Help Novena Devotions every Tuesday evening at St. Margaret Mary Church in Algonquin. The rosary prayer starts at 7:30 pm, immediately followed by the novena prayer and concluded with a celebration of the Holy Mass.



Fox Valley Filipino-American Catholic Ministry (FVFCM) Meeting is held every 3rd Sunday of the month. There will be no meeting for the month of December due to *Simbang Gabi*. The next meeting is scheduled in January. We will contact the coordinators for specific place and time.

Misang Pilipino – We will not celebrate a Misang Pilipino in December due to *Simbang Gabi*. For the 2005 calendar year, our *Misang Pilipino* will be permanently held at **St. Margaret Mary Church in Algonquin** every fourth Sunday of the month.

Elections of Officers: Everyone is warmly invited to attend the closing *Simbang Gabi* Mass for the Rockford Metropolitan Area Filipino-American Ministry which will be held in St. Bridget's Church, Loves Park, IL. on December 23, 2004 at 6:30 PM. It will be followed by a general election of officers for the year 2005-2006.

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