



ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH IN THE STATE OF HAWAII
DIOCESE OF HONOLULU
WITNESS TO JESUS

December 3, 2019

Dear Fathers and parishioners,

Our Filipino brothers and sisters are looking forward to the celebration of the “500 Years of Christianity in the Philippines” in the Year 2021. The Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines in a Pastoral Letter on the *Era of New Evangelization* said: “We look forward with gratitude and joy to March 2021, the fifth centenary of the coming of Christianity to our beloved land – Philippines. We remember with thanksgiving the first Mass celebrated in Limasawa Island on Easter Sunday March 31 that same blessed year. We remember the baptism of Rajah Humabon who was given his Christian name Carlos and his wife Hara Amihan who was baptized Juana in 1521. Our eyes gaze on the Santo Nino de Cebu, the oldest religious icon in the Philippines, gift of Ferdinand Magellan to the first Filipino Catholics that same year.”

In Hawaii, a great majority of immigrants here are Filipinos, who brought with them their tradition, culture and most importantly, their faith. And so, I am calling for our participation in that great jubilee, but our celebration will be done locally in our islands. And we will call them: “500 Years of Christianity in the Philippines – Hawaii celebration.”

The “500 Years of Christianity in the Philippines – Hawaii celebration” is meant to be inclusive and not an exclusive celebration among our Filipino brethren. So, to inform our faith communities in the different islands of this celebration, I am encouraging those who have *Misa de Gallo* or *Simbang Gabi* this year 2019 to follow the suggested homily themes, based on the 9-Year Spiritual Journey of New Evangelization implemented in the Philippines. This year’s *Misa de Gallo* or *Simbang Gabi* 2019 homily themes are our way of responding to the call of the Spirit for a New Evangelization and let us find ways to integrate the 9-Pastoral Priorities of the Church in the Philippines¹ into the pastoral life of our respective parishes and ministries in the Diocese of Honolulu. For those parishes without *Misa de Gallo* or *Simbang Gabi*, I also encourage that this news be disseminated through publication in parish bulletins and announcements.

I look forward to a grand celebration sometime in Easter 2021 at the Cathedral Basilica of Our Lady of Peace. I am also planning to lead a Pilgrimage to the Philippines in 2021 for us to understand and appreciate even more the gift of faith of our Filipino brethren.

With joy and gratitude, let us give glory to God for the gift of faith that we share together and let us continue to be instruments of God’s blessing to one another.

Sincerely Yours in Christ,

Most Rev. Larry Silva
Bishop of Honolulu

¹ The 9-Pastoral Priorities of the Church in the Philippines: (1) Integral Faith Formation: Toward Maturity in Christ. (2) The Laity: Choose to be Brave, Called to be Saints and Sent Forth as Heroes. (3) The Poor: The Gaze of the Crucified Lord. (4) The Eucharist and the Family: Missionary Disciples of the Eucharist. (5) The Parish as a Communion of Communities: A Pilgrim Community. (6) The Clergy and Religious: Renewed Servant-Leaders for the New Evangelization. (7) Youth in Mission: Beloved, Gifted, Empowered. (8) Ecumenism and Inter-Religious Dialogue: Unity in Diversity. (9) *Missio Ad Gentes* (Mission to the Nations): Graciously Gifted to Give.