



## **P R E S S R E L E A S E**

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### **Simbang Gabi saKonsulado, Three Decades of Tradition for the Filipino-American Community in New York**



**Consul General Claro S. Cristobal and Mrs. Marilou Cristobal (5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> from L) joins Father Patrick Longalong (Center) and the community leaders in the Tri-State area in the traditional photo opportunity after the celebration of the Holy Mass.**

14 December 2018, New York - The Simbang Gabi saKonsulado held at the Kalayaan Hall of the Philippine Center from 6 to 14 December 2018 continued to attract significant attendance by Fil-Ams in the Tri-State area with the first and the last night participants overflowing to the lobby. The Simbang Gabi saKonsulado reaffirms the community's reconnection with Filipino culture and heritage through this unique Filipino Christmas tradition.

This year, more than 70 Filipino-American community organizations joined in co-sponsoring each night of the 9-day Christmas Masses. The presence of a number of younger generation Fil-Amseach night, with a group of them expressing interest to co-sponsor at the next year's Simbang Gabi saKonsulado, made the tradition even remarkable and vibrant.

For more information, visit [www.newyorkpcg.org](http://www.newyorkpcg.org) and [www.facebook.com/PHConsulateNY](https://www.facebook.com/PHConsulateNY)

Father Patrick Longalong, a Filipino-American priest based in the Diocese of Brooklyn and the spiritual director of the Simbang Gabi saKonsulado and coordinator of the Diocesan Filipino Ministry, officiated the opening of the Simbang Gabi. H.E The Most Reverend Bernadito C. Auza, Archbishop and Apostolic Nuncio, together with Father Charles of the Holy See Mission to the UN, concelebrated the last mass. Other Filipinopriests who celebrated during the nine nights were: Fr. Victor Arenas, Fr. Julian Jugadilla, Fr. Sebastian Bacatan, Fr. Adolfo Novia, Fr. Roy Regazpi and Fr. Jay Caganap. Choirs and cantors provided music throughout the nine day Novena Mass. On the final night, the JCI Philippine-New York members re-enacted the Nativity scene.

For the first time this year, a daily Parol Blessing and Lighting ceremony prior to the Mass were held the Lobby Center. The nine parols which were prepared by sponsoring organizations represented nine *"Diwa ng Pasko"* namely: *Kapayapaan, Pagkakaisa, Pagmamahalan, Pamilya, Pakikipagkapwa-tao, Kasaganaan, Pagpapatawad, Pasasalamat at Pananampalataya.*

A brief program filled with Christmas raffle and *Salu-salo* followed the Mass. An economy ticket to the Philippines provided by the Philippine Airlines was raffled during the last *salu-salo*. The co-sponsoring partners also handed the net collections from the Mass to HandangTumulong Foundation, Inc. (HTFI) amounting to US\$ 2,000.12 to be used to charitable projects. HTFI was the recipient chosen by the sponsoring organization this year.

In his welcome remarks during the first night, Consul General Claro S. Cristobal thanked all the officiating clergy, sponsoring organizations, volunteers, and participants for organizing the Simbang Gabi saKonsulado part of their calendar of activity every December.

Simbang Gabi saKonsulado started in 1986 and has been the venue of the Filipino community organizations to come together for the celebration of a Filipino Christmas in a nine-day evening mass. It is organized before the actual Simbang Gabi schedule in the parishes. END



**H.E. The Most Reverend Bernardito C. Auza, Archbishop and Apostolic Nuncio of the Holy See to the UN, blesses the Parol during the Parol Lighting of the ceremony on the final night of the Simbang Gabi. Archbishop Auza also con-celebrated the Holy Mass following the Lighting of the Parol and Rosary.**

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**(Top left photo) Fr. Julian Jagudilla blesses the Baby Jesus during the Turnover of Baby Jesus to the next day's sponsor, a daily ceremony during the 8 nights of Simbang Gabi. (Top right photo) The last night was opened by a re-enactment of the Nativity. (Bottom photo) Fr. Jay Caganap celebrates the Simbang Gabi saKonsulado which was held in the evening at the Philippine Center from 6 to 14 December 2018 had a significantly high attendance with first and last day having an overflow attendees.**

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