



CONSULATE GENERAL OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
NEW YORK

PRESS RELEASE

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**Philippine Consulate in New York Leads
Filipino Christmas Tradition in the Big Apple**



The windows of the Philippine Center in New York are adorned with traditional parol and Christmas decor. (Photo by PCGNY)

17 December 2019, New York City – Filipino traditions of celebrating Christmas continue to warm the spirits of the Filipino-American community in New York and amaze the hundreds of thousands of Americans and tourists passing by the Philippine Center along the busy Fifth Avenue of Manhattan.

The glass windows of the Philippine Center are adorned with lights, sinamay, red poinsettia, and colorful parol from Pampanga. Giant LED screens continuously play scenes of Christmas celebrations and natural wonders all across the island,

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inviting passers-by to just pack a bag, book a flight, and celebrate Christmas the Filipino way, far from the biting winter cold. The display is an in-house joint undertaking of the Philippine Consulate, Department of Tourism- New York, and the Philippine Center.

The lobby is decorated with bright Christmas lights and colorful capiz parol from different provinces in the Philippines. Nine unique lanterns made by the Fil-Am community during the parol-making workshop organized by the Consulate and the Filipino School of New York and New Jersey last 23 November 2019 are also displayed, each representing unique Filipino values and aspirations: kapayapaan, pagkakaisa, pagmamahalan, pamilya, pakikipagkapwa-tao, kasaganahan, pagpapatawad, pasasalamat, and pananampalataya. Every night, one parol was lighted beginning on 5 December 2019 which is the start of the traditional Simbang Gabi sa Konsulado until all the parols were lighted during the culmination of the nine-day mass last 13 December 2019.

Simbang Gabi Sa Konsulado is a popular Filipino Christmas tradition in New York now on its 31st year. It is a solemn celebration that brings together different members of the Fil-Am community: priests, partner organizations, choirs, volunteers and Filipinos who want to experience Pasko away from home. This year, 84 Fil-Am organizations partnered with the Consulate in organizing the Simbang Gabi sa Konsulado. In the spirit of the season and in solidarity with our kababayan in Mindanao, the community earmarked the donations and contributions collected in the nine nights of the Simbang Gabi for the benefit of the victims of the earthquakes in the region.

Each Simbang Gabi was followed by a salu-salo where partner organizations and Filipino caterers served Filipino food like lumpia, pansit, lugaw, putobumbong, and kutsinta to the delight of the attendees. Free raffles added to the fun and spirit of camaraderie of the community.

Consul General Claro S. Cristobal thanked the community organization partners and the attendees of the Simbang Gabi, many of whom completed the nine masses. He said that the tradition did not only serve as venue for celebrating Christmas the Filipino way but also provided an opportunity for fellowship for Fil-Ams in the area.

With these colorful displays and meaningful celebrations at the Philippine Center, Pinoy Christmas tradition is alive and vibrant in the heart of the Big Apple.

The display runs until 6 January 2020 when the holiday season officially ends in the Philippines with the celebration of the Feast of the Three Kings. END.



Choir singing "Joy to the World" during the lighting of the first parol. (Photo by PCGNY)



Celebration of the first night of Simbang Gabi sa Konsulado. (Photo by PCGNY)

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Volunteers from our Filipino community reenact the “Panunuluyan.” (Photo by Ray M. Maranan)



Chargé d' affaires and Deputy Philippine Permanent Representative to the UN, Kira Christianne Azucena during the Offertory of the Simbang Gabi. (Photo by Ray M. Maranan)

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Consul General Claro S. Cristobal gives his closing remarks during the last night of the Simbang Gabi. (Photo by Ray M. Maranan)



Fil-Am community attending the last night of Simbang Gabi at the Kalayaan Hall of the Philippine Center. (Photo by Ray M. Maranan)

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