



## GLIMPSE OF PENAFRANCIA DEVOTION IN AUSTRALIA

By Pines (Josie) Musa

### Penafrancia Celebration in the Philippines

It is customary that Penafrancia fiesta in the Philippines begins with a *traslacion* which means the transfer of the miraculous images of the Virgin and Divino Nostro to the Metropolitan Cathedral of Naga City for novena of prayers and Holy Masses. On the 8<sup>th</sup> day of the novena, a fluvial procession in the Naga River caps the Feast. The image of Our Lady is returned to her sanctuary, the Basilica of Penafrancia via the Naga River, on board a pagoda decorated with fresh flowers and colourful papers accompanied by musicians, the religious priest and seminarians. As the pagoda maneuvers, other bancas manned by boatmen and male devotees sail along with it until the landing site, where by tradition, the Archbishop of Nueva Caceres meets the Images and leads them to the Basilica of Penafrancia for a solemn concelebrated Pontifical Mass.



The Pagoda at Naga City River



Pilgrims at the Penafrancia Basilica, Naga City, Philippines

### Australian Devotees of Our Lady of Penafrancia (ADOLP) Beginnings

The Australian Devotees of Our Lady of Penafrancia (ADOLP) Inc. was incorporated in June 2006 thru the initiatives of Jun & Betty Relunia, Gerry & Josie Musa (Public Officer) and Neria & Tito Soliman. The main objective is to propagate the devotion to Ina under the guidance of the Basilica of Penafrancia and the Filipino Chaplaincy, Diocese of Parramatta. ADOLP has created a website in June 2006 to assist in the propagation of the devotion to Ina. The website is [www.australiandevoteespenafrancia.com](http://www.australiandevoteespenafrancia.com) (currently under development). The public devotion to Our Lady of Penafrancia started in Australia when the replica of Ina arrived in May 2006 from the Basilica of Penafrancia, Naga City, Philippines.

The first novena mass was held on 3 June 2006 at St Michael's Church, Blacktown after the blessings and acceptance of both the replica and propagation of the devotion by the Filipino Chaplaincy thru Father Bong Dublan. The priests who concelebrated in the Eucharistic celebration were Father Bong, Filipino Chaplain and Father Nonong Mallari from the Basilica of Penafrancia. The fellowship was attended by hundreds of devotees mostly Bicolanos. Guidelines on the propagation and devotion to Our Lady of Penafrancia was issued by the Filipino Chaplaincy and approved by Bishop Kevin Manning of the Diocese of Parramatta.

On 7<sup>th</sup> September 2006 (Birthday of Our Blessed Mother), the replica of Ina found a home at St Nicholas of Myra Church, High Street, Penrith. A novena mass was celebrated by Father Raning Creta, the new Filipino Chaplain. The new home of INA was made possible by Father Chris de Souza, Parish Priest of St Nicholas of Myra and Bishop Kevin Manning.

The first fiesta of Our Lady of Penafrancia was celebrated on 16 Sept 2006, the third Saturday of September. The fiesta was a simple and solemn celebration. The mass was concelebrated by Father Raning and Father Chris at St Nicholas of Myra. After the novena mass, a procession following the *andas* of Our Lady of Penafrancia was held around the church. Fellowship was held at the parish hall. There were hundreds of devotees who attended. There was no fluvial procession, as it was in the opinion of the Filipino Chaplain, not appropriate yet at that time.

Since then, a regular monthly novena mass is being held every 1<sup>st</sup> Saturday of the month at 11:00 am at St Nicholas of Myra, High Street, Penrith. In all novena masses and procession for Our Lady of Penafrancia, the banner of the Divino Nostro is also being honoured. Fellowship follows every novena and devotees share the Bicol and other Filipino food. ADOLP members are

making contributions to the Filipino Chaplaincy and religious groups like Couples for Christ. Three ADOLP members were installed as Acolytes on 2<sup>nd</sup> Feb 2007 by Bishop Kevin Manning. They were Gerry Musa, Nestor Montais and Jun Relunia.



The PAGODA at Nepean River & Consul General Maria Theresa Lazaro (center), with Aida Jamolin, Josie Musa, Neria Soliman & Mely Adan at the 2008 Penafrancia Fiesta

### **Highlights of ADOLP Activities 2006 -2013**

#### **Bicol Appeal for Typhoon Reming**

To support our brothers and sisters affected by Typhoon Reming which badly hit the Bicol Region in Dec 2006, the Bicol Appeal project was initiated and chaired by Gerry & Josie Musa. This fundraising was held at Pinoy Sentral Restaurant on 23 Dec 2006. ADOLP thru Jun Relunia and the 3SM of the Filipino Chaplaincy also did some caroling to help in the fundraising. Total amount raised and remitted to Legaspi City Diocese Social Action is \$ 7,100.00.

#### **Dinner Dance Events and Induction of Officers**

Dinner Dance & induction of officers fund raising was held annually to help defray the cost for the celebration of the Feast of Our Lady of Penafrancia. The 2007 induction dinner dance was held at Corregidor Restaurant, Rooty Hill and ADOLP officers were also inducted by Consul General Maria Teresa Lazaro. The officers are Jun Relunia, President, Gerry Musa, Vice President, Internal Affairs, Neria Soliman, Vice President, External Affairs, Josie Musa, Secretary and Public Officer, Norma Evans, Treasurer, Ding Alano, Auditor, Nestor Montais, PRO, Leon Decena, Jr, Ex-Officio Member, Sol Andres, Ex Officio Member. Spiritual Advisers- Fr. Raning Creta, Filipino Chaplain, Diocese of Parramatta, Monsignor Romulo Vergara, Rector, Basilica of Penafrancia and Father Chris De Souza, Parish Priest, St Nicholas of Myra. During the dinner dance fund raising events, the officers usually danced the Pantomina, a traditional Bicol dance.

#### **Visit of Archbishop Legaspi & Priests of the Basilica de Penafrancia**

In the middle of 2007, ADOLP was blessed for the visit of Mngr. Vergara, Arch. Legaspi of the Basilica of Penafrancia and the Archdiocese of Caceres respectively, plus 15 Priests in the delegation. ADOLP Inc. hosted a Dinner Meeting at the Korean Restaurant, Parramatta with the team of Mngr. Vergara and the Vicar of Diocese of Caceres.

#### **Nepean River Cruise at Nepean Belle**

A river cruise at the Nepean River on 18 May 2008 was also organized by ADOLP which was a big success supported by community groups and devotees all over Sydney. The Penrith's *Nepean Belle* former owners, John and Helen Wakeling, were very much impressed with the significance of the fluvial procession that they personally offered their new family boat to be the "pagoda" for the river procession for the last 7 years. Also giving support to the fund-raising were representatives from Bicol Inc, the APO (Alpha Phi Omega), the Philippine Community Council, the clergy and various ethnic associations.



Devotees, community leaders & supporters of the Nepean River Cruise organized by ADOLP

#### **Penafrancia Pilgrimage & First International Pilgrims Congress**

More than 60 pilgrims from Australia join the 2010 pilgrimage and attended the first International Pilgrims Congress at the Basilica de Penafrancia. This pilgrimage event was in collaboration with the Philippine Consulate & Philippine Tourism which was coordinated by Josie Musa. The pilgrims were met at Legaspi Airport by Bicol Tourism Regional Director, Dr. Maria "Nene: Ravanilla, who prepared a traditional breakfast for the pilgrims. Mayor Rosal also provided a tour of the City of

Legaspi. Misibis Resort was also visited before the pilgrims proceeded to Naga City for the Feast Day & Congress. Resolutions at the congress were passed for the future of the Devotion around the world. A Bicolano priest, Fr. Michael Gimena and Deacon Leon Decena were with the pilgrims for the whole duration of the pilgrimage & congress.



ADOLP pilgrims at the 1<sup>st</sup> International Pilgrims Congress in Naga City & in Albay with Bicol Tourism Regional Director, Dr. "Nene" Ravanilla.

### Welcome Dinner for Bicol Priests Following World Youth Day in Sydney

A welcome dinner following the July 2008 World Youth Day in Sydney was organized by ADOLP to welcome the Bicol Priests headed by Archbishop Lucilo Quiambao and Bishop Bong Bylon of Masbate. The event initiated by Gerry & Josie Musa was held at Pinoy Sentral Restaurant owned by a Bicolano from Guinobatan, Albay, Mr. Orly Jaucian. Over 200 devotees & friends supported the event which garnered a substantial amount donated to the poor parishes of Bicol Region, Philippines.



The Bicol Priests with the Devotees at the Welcome Dinner



Devotees of INA at Tench Reserve, Penrith

### Flores de Mayo Celebration

ADOLP and Philippine Language & Cultural Association of Australia (PLCAA) jointly celebrate an annual Flores de Mayo which started in 2013. Children were invited to join the procession of flowers to honour INA in a solemn Mass held in May.



Flower offerings to INA by children during the 2014 Flores de Mayo



Children with Flowers at the Flores de Mayo celebration with INA

On 20 September 2014, ADOLP invites everyone to the Penafancia Feast Concelebrated Mass at 9:30 AM, St. Nicholas of Myra Church, High St., Penrith, Fluvial Procession at Nepean River, Factory Road (Tench Reserve) Penrith at 12:00 PM. Before the FEAST, TRIDUUM Novena MASSES will be celebrated in three different Parishes as follows:

- First Triduum- 30 August, 11:00 AM, Mary Immaculate Church, 125 Barnier Drive, Quakers Hill
- Second Triduum - 6 September, 11:00 AM, St Patricks Cathedral, 1 Marish Place, Parramatta
- Third Triduum - 13 September, 11:00 AM, St. Michael Church, 58 Orwell St., Blacktown

---Ends---13 August 2014