

PRESIDENTIAL COMMUNICATIONS OPERATIONS OFFICE
News and Information Bureau

CABINET REPORT – THE NEW NORMAL
HOSTED BY PCOO SECRETARY MARTIN ANDANAR
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SEC. ANDANAR: Pilipinas, dalawang malawakang pagbabalik-tanaw at paggunita ang ginaganap sa ating bansa sa kabila ng pandemya natin ngayon. Bagaman limitado ang mga mass gatherings muna sa ngayon, nais pa rin nating ibahagi ang mga mahahalagang bagay ukol sa mga okasyong ito kahit sa pamamagitan man lang ng media.

Nitong Marso, sinimulan na natin ang ating mga quincentennial commemorations in the Philippines and this April, we begin recalling 500 years of Christianity in the Philippines at ito nga ang paksa ng ating programa ngayong gabi.

Bagaman magkahiwalay ang mga paghahanda ng dalawang okasyong ito, our quincentennial commemorations in the Philippines are led by government at ang 500 years of Christianity in the Philippines naman, pinangungunahan ng Simbahang Katolika.

May common ground tayo na magandang pag-usapan din at ang isa na nga dito ay ang pilgrimages – 500 years of Christianity in the Philippines pag-uusapan natin ngayong gabi.

Ito po ang inyong Communications Secretary martin Andanar, welcome to the Cabinet Report.

Welcome back to the Cabinet Report. Bago tayo magpatuloy sa topic mismo ng 500 years of Christianity, gaya ng ginagawa na natin nitong mga nakaraang linggo, pag-usapan muna natin sandali ang pagbabakuna.

[VTR]

SEC. ANDANAR: Nitong mga nakaraang araw, napag-uusapan na sa international media ang paksa ng pandaigdigang pamamahagi ng mga bakuna. Ibinalita ng Crux Magazine na nagku-cover sa Vatican na binanggit ito ni Pope Francis sa Easter Sunday urbi et orbi message niya. Sa report ng Crux sinabi ng Santo Papa na hinihikayat niya ang international community and I quote: “In a spirit of global responsibility to commit to overcoming delays in the distribution of vaccines and to facilitate their distribution especially in the poorest countries.”

Nitong Martes naman sa ITV News ng United Kingdom, isinulat ng kanilang editor na, and again I quote: “There are two types of countries in this world: those with COVID vaccines and those who have to wait.” At ibinahagi nila ang sinabi ni International Monetary Fund Chief Economist Gita Gopinath: “Countries can debate this as much as they want but we are seeing vaccine nationalism, explicitly and implicitly. We are seeing some countries who are way ahead in vaccinating the vast majority of their population even when the most vulnerable in a whole bunch of countries haven’t gotten a single shot. That is what needs to be fixed.”

Dagdag pa nila na sabi ni Ms. Gopinath na: “95 million people have entered the ranks of the extreme poor in the last 12 months – the majority in India and Sub-Saharan Africa.” Tunay na nakababahala ang ‘di pantay-pantay na pandaigdigang pamamahagi ng mga bakuna.

Sa analysis section ng Washington Post noong Sabado ay isang babala: “A study of Northeastern University in Boston concluded that monopolization of vaccine by wealthy nations -- what’s known as ‘vaccine nationalism’ -- could cause almost twice as many deaths as distributing them equally. One risk is allowing the SARS-CoV-2 virus to remain rampant in some parts of the world is that it will have more scope to develop dangerous variants which will inevitably make their way elsewhere and may not be neutralized by existing vaccines.”

Handa pong bumili ang mga bansa sa buong daigdig tulad natin. Ang problema nga lang ay kung walang supply na available para sa atin dahil inuuna muna ng ilang mayayamang bansa ang kanilang sarili.

Mga kaibigan sa ating pagbabalik, 500 years of Christianity in the Philippines. Keep it here, this is the Cabinet Report.

[VTR]

ARCHBISHOP VALLES: Since we are still in the Octave of Easter, let me greet everyone a most blessed and Happy Easter. And let me greet also everyone with the spirit of joy and gratitude, the spirit of our year-long celebration of our commemoration of the 500 years of Christianity in the Philippines or what is popularly bannered as 500 YOC. I should not forget to thank Secretary Andanar for giving me this opportunity to be here in this TV program, Cabinet Report.

Now, let me tell you that we are now in the very first days of this beautiful year-long quincentennial celebration. Why? We just launched or opened it last Easter Sunday, April 4. Why did we choose April 4, Easter Sunday as the opening day? It is because 1 of the 2 main events that happened 500 years ago that we are remembering this year was the first mass in the year 1521 and that was an Easter Mass. The other event that soon we will commemorate during these first days of our quincentennial celebration is the recalling of the first baptism celebrated on April 14, 1521 in Cebu.

Therefore this coming Wednesday, April 14, all eyes will be focused on Cebu as they have prepared special rites for this commemoration.

Brothers and sisters in this quincentennial celebration, we keep reminding ourselves with our beautiful theme, ‘Gifted to Give’. The activities that we have lined up since April 4, last Sunday and on April 14, this coming Wednesday and many other activities are supposed to inspire us to profoundly rediscover and reappraise our giftedness because of our Christian faith.

At the same time that we rediscover and reappraise our giftedness, we will also no doubt discover the impetus, the challenge that we are supposed to bring this gift to others, to witness in

deeds of charity, mercy and compassion to others within our country and even to peoples and lands beyond our borders.

Again let us remember that the Lord has been good to us and faithful to us as Filipinos and let us share this experience of God's goodness and faithfulness to others. We are indeed gifted to give. Maraming salamat po.

Q: Monsignor, naganap noong March 31 ang paggunita sa first Easter Mass. Tell us what the event must have been liked 500 years ago and what was it like commemorating it last month?

MSGR. PANTIN: Iyong feeling ko nga pagbisita doon sa Limasawa last March 31, na siguro parang ano din iyon, parang what happened 500 years ago. Kasi limited nga ang mga tao doon, there were only 500 visitors allowed in the island. So 500 years ago, sigurado ako na ang mga tao doon, lahat ng mga tao, parang kasi—parang nag-usyoso iyan sila kasi may gaganapin ngang celebration. Hindi nila alam kung anong misa. Kaya first time nilang makakita ng misa kaya siguro na-imagine ko lahat ng mga tao in that island were present there. And then of course si Rajah Humabon at saka Siagu nga, they were there present so they were also—it said that they even knelt down during the mass. So nandudoon, parang iyong solemnity at saka—500 years ago at saka itong ngayon, parang nakita ko na almost the same.

Q: Monsignor, ano po ang naobserbahan ninyo sa mga mananampalataya, the faithful who were there sa Limasawa habang ginugunita itong first Easter Sunday Mass sa bansa?

MSGR. PANTIN: There was really that air of thanksgiving, solemnity at saka kasi nandito tayo sa pandemic kaya hindi nga marami ang nandudoon. So the people who were there felt blessed that they were there. So nakita ko nga doon—kasi umuulan din during that time kaya maski umuulan they were there kasi nasa grounds iyong misa. So ang solemnity at saka iyong religiosity ng mga tao, mapi-feel mo talaga, that they were there to commemorate and event which happened 500 years ago and it's happening now once in a lifetime.

Kaya nakikita mo sa mga tao doon iyong ano talaga nila, the solemnity, iyong kuwan talaga ng mga tao na they were blessed to be there. So ang pagpasalamat parang nakikita mo talaga na nandudoon sa kanila iyong pananampalataya na pure pa rin kasi ito nga, we are living these times of pandemic so they were able to be there, to be present in that one. So it was a time, a moment of prayer and a thanksgiving for the people.

Q: You are the Secretary-General of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines. Being there in Limasawa personally, what was it like for you?

MSGR. PANTIN: I felt really very thankful, very blessed to be there. Kasi as the Secretary-General, parang I represented all of the bishops kasi hindi naman makarating ang karamihan ng mga obispo dahil nga sa ECQ nga so konti lang talaga nakapunta doon. So for me, I was very thankful, I felt blessed to be there kasi hindi mo maiisip na after 500 years makaka-attend ka ng ganiyan na celebration. Kaya para sa akin, you know, everyone were really—I remembered everyone especially those who asked for their prayers. I remembered them in my prayers kasi

feeling ko na blessed talaga ako that moment kasi I was there, at that very moment to celebrate after 500 years that first mass on Easter Sunday in March 31, 1521.

SEC. ANDANAR: Welcome back to the Cabinet Report. At mula naman sa Archdiocese of Cebu, kausapin natin ngayon ang kanilang Head para sa 500 Years of Christianity Committees, si Father Mhar Balili. Father Mhar, please tell us about the coming activities.

FATHER BALILI: Prior to April 14, we will have a Triduum celebration – meaning 3-day celebration prior to April 14. That means that on April 11 we will have a mass baptism of 100 children, that will be at Archdiocesan Shrine of Guadalupe. Then on April 12, another mass at 9 o'clock in the morning at the National Shrine of St. Joseph, we will have a confirmation of 100 delegates. And on April 13, we will have adult baptism to be held at the National Shrine of Our Lady of Rule in Lapu-Lapu, Mactan. So these are the liturgical celebrations that we have lined up during the Triduum.

And in the afternoon of the 3-day celebration, we will have motorcade of the image of Señor Sto. Niño and also the Jubilee Cross; in the evening, for 3 nights we will have cultural presentations. So these are the activities that would somehow drum up our preparation on April 14.

On April 14, we will have a reenactment of the first baptism that will take place in front of the Magellan's Cross. After which, the mass will be celebrated by no less than our Apostolic Nuncio of the Philippines, Archbishop Charles Brown. After which, we will have a cultural presentation in the evening at the pilgrim center of Sto. Niño del Basilica.

SEC. ANDANAR: Papaano naman po masusundan ng mga mananampalataya ang mga kaganapan diyan, Father?

FATHER BALILI: I would like to invite everyone to participate with us through online, through our live streaming – that would be 500 Years of Christianity-Archdiocese of Cebu.

SEC. ANDANAR: Father Mhar isang taon po ang selebrasyon, hanggang 2022 pa ito. Sana gumanda na ang sitwasyon at makapunta tayo diyan sa Cebu. Para sa gustong gumawa ng pilgrimage sa inyo, Father, ano po ang must see places diyan sa Archdiocese of Cebu?

FATHER BALILI: If things will be okay amidst all pandemic, please come to Cebu and celebrate with us. With the grace of the Holy Father, coming from the Holy Father through the Apostolic Penitentiary, we are given the privilege to have the so-called pilgrimage churches. We have 13 pilgrimage churches that is being scattered all around Cebu and of course we would like to highlight the Cebu Metropolitan Cathedral. These 13 churches have holy doors and attached with them would be the plenary indulgence. And of course, we also invite you to visit Sto. Niño del Basilica with the Magellan's Cross.

SEC. ANDANAR: Daghang salamat, Father Mhar Balili.

Pinag-uusapan pa rin po natin ang 500 years of Christianity, tutok lang sa The Cabinet Report.

[VTR]

SEC. ANDANAR: Nakatutok pa rin kayo sa The Cabinet Report. Sabay ng paggunita ng 500 years of Christianity ay ang kaganapan ng tatlong selebrasyon: Una, ang Year of Mission; ikalawa, ang Year of St. Joseph; at pangatlo, ang Year of the Family.

Upang ipaliwanag sa atin ang relevance ng mga selebrasyong ito, kausap po natin sa Bacolod City ang direktor ng St. John Paul II Institute for Studies on Marriage and Families for Southeast Asia, si Father Ronald Quijano. Father Ronald, please tell us about each celebration and why each is significant in the context of the commemoration of 500 Years of Christianity in the Philippines.

FATHER RONALD QUIJANO: The whole umbrella is the 500 Years of Christianity in the Philippines, tapos there are three circles overlapping each other – the Year of Mission, Missio ad Gentes; the Year of St. Joseph; and the Year of the Family, Amoris Laetitia.

The perfect venue, the ‘locus’ of all these three important celebrations, like a living thread that unites them all, is the family. The family as the subject and object of evangelization. We noticed that through our family life, we manifest important, significant beliefs and practices. And these were partly imposed on us by our elders, of course, the missionaries, they have inculcated these on us. But these practices and beliefs evolved, developed and found new expressions actually.

SEC. ANDANAR: Perhaps the celebration that is quite significant is the Year of Mission. Not only does it bring us full circle, it also echoes the theme, “Gifted to give.” I think this also has a special meaning to Filipinos abroad. What are your thoughts on this, Father?

FATHER RONALD QUIJANO: Si Pope Francis has given pastoral priority for Filipinos. Have you noticed last year, there was this Simbang Gabi presided by Pope Francis in the Vatican with all the kababayans and with the presence of Cardinal Tagle. It was Gaudete Sunday, third of Sunday of Advent, joy. And he highlighted this beautiful practice of having Simbang Gabi o Misa Aguinaldo. We call it Misa Aguinaldo here in Ilonggo region – Mass of the Gifts. And he gave tribute to the Filipino Catholics about this. A long, evolving tradition for more than 400 years.

And then recently, during the Laetare Sunday, the fourth Sunday of Lent, again, he celebrated mass last March 14 sa St. Peter’s Basically with Cardinal Tagle. And there he made mention that Filipinos are spread everywhere; they are very diligent, hospitable, and the same time, have strong family ties. And wherever they are, they simply do not go in order to have a better life but they also indirectly transmit the faith.

SEC. ANDANAR: Thank you po, Father Ronald Quijano.

Sa ating pagbabalik, isang diskusyon tungkol sa pilgrimage tourism. Tutok lang sa The Cabinet Report.

[POPE FRANCIS’ MESSAGE]

SEC. ANDANAR: Nandito pa rin kayo sa Cabinet Report. Pag-uusapan natin ngayon ang paksa ng pilgrimages. Ang iilang bahagi ng mundo ay dinadagsa po ng mga mananampalataya ng kaniya-kaniyang relihiyon para sa mga pilgrimage, pagdalaw sa mga lugar na may espesyal na kahulugan dahil sa pananampalataya.

Puwede rin kaya ito sa Pilipinas? Kausapin natin ngayon si Father Eric Castro. Siya po ang president ng Association of Catholic Shrines and Pilgrimages of the Philippines. Father Eric, magandang gabi po sa inyo.

FATHER ERIC CASTRO: Magandang gabi po, Sec. Martin. Si Father Eric Castro po ito. Salamat po sa paanyaya ninyo.

SEC. ANDANAR: Father Eric, paki-define po muna para sa atin ang dalawang term na iyan – shrines and pilgrimages. Ano po ang shrine at ano naman po ang pilgrimage?

FATHER ERIC CASTRO: Iyong shrine po, technically, kapag tiningnan natin iyong Canon Law o iyong sa batas ng simbahan, ang sinasabi po ay ang shrine ay isang simbahan, puwedeng simbahan or any sacred place na through the local ordinary or the local bishop of the place ay dinedicate [dedicated] for special devotion ‘no, sa isang patron o sa isang patrona na dinadayo ng mga tao para sila ay manalangin at para kanilang maipahayag iyong kanilang debosyon. So it could be a church or any sacred place na dineklara ng isang obispo ‘no para puntahan ng mga deboto, ng mga magdadasal, magsisimba, mananalangin [garbled] lugar na iyon.

Kaya nga po iyong mga shrine, pinupuntahan ito ng mga tao galing sa ibang dating pilgrims. So iyong pilgrimage, ito could be personal ‘no, iyong iba mag-isa nagpupunta doon sa shrine; iyong iba naman ay may mga kasama – it’s a group pilgrimage na ginagawa nila. So galing sa salitang pilgrim o peregrino ‘no sa Kastila, sila ay naglalakbay ‘no, iyon ang ibig sabihin talaga ng pilgrim. So iyong pilgrimages, ito ay iyong mga paglalakbay na ginagawa sa mga banal na lugar.

SEC. ANDANAR: Dito po sa atin, ilan po ang mga shrines? At anu-ano po ang pilgrimages na puwedeng gawin sa Pilipinas?

FATHER ERIC CASTRO: Eighty iyong registered sa association, pero may iba pa pong mga shrines na hindi, sabihin nating hindi nari-register doon sa aming association pero na-declare sa kanilang diocese o sa kanilang probinsiya bilang isang shrine.

So siguro po kung dadaanan lang natin nang mabilisan kasi marami pong masyado, iyong mga kilala ‘no na mga shrines. For example, if you go to the north, ang dinadayo ng mga tao diyan, Our Lady of Manaoag sa Pangasinan. Kung mas north pa nang kaunti, sa Cagayan Valley, Our Lady of Piat – talagang kung taga-doon ka sa area na iyan, diyan dumadagsa ang mga pilgrims, ang mga deboto. Sa Balanga, Bataan, napakaganda ng kanilang mga simbahan diyan at mga shrine, mayroon din po silang mga pilgrimages na ginagawa sa mga simbahan nila dito. Mga simbahan itinataga ng mga Dominican missionaries, Augustinian missionaries na ilang daang taon na rin po iyong mga simbahan na iyon.

Dito sa Kamaynilaan, siyempre kilalang-kilala natin ang Quiapo Church dahil sa Black Nazarene; ang Baclaran Church because of Our Lady of Perpetual Help. Kapag ganitong magma-Mayo na po, alam natin, bata pa tayo ay kinakanta na iyong “Tayo na sa Antipolo” ‘no. Kasi pagdating ng Mayo, naglalakad man o may sasakyan, aakyat ng Antipolo ang mga tao.

Go to the Bicol Region, nandiyan po ang Peñafrancia ‘no, napakalaking okasyon din iyan at kapistahan kapag dumadagsa ang mga deboto sa Peñafrancia.

Sa Cebu ‘no, kapag panahon ng Sinulog, kapag January, iyang Sto. Niño Basically sa Cebu ay dinadagsa. At sa buong Visayas region, lahat ng may mga dioceses na may Sto. Niño po na patron, nandiyan ang Ati-Atihan, pinupuntahan din iyan ng mga pilgrims o ng mga turista.

Sa Mindanao, iyong Divine Mercy sa Cagayan de Oro. Iyon lang po so far iyong mga medyo mabibigay natin na mga kilalang mga pinupuntahan na mga shrines.

SEC. ANDANAR: Isang inaasahan ng ilang mga tourism-related establishment natin sa bansa ay ang turismong may kinalaman sa paggunita ngayon ng 500 Years of Christianity sa Pilipinas. I am sure na nakapag-pilgrimage of faith related travel na kayo sa ibang bansa. Puwede rin kaya ito sa atin para sa mga local pilgrim tourists natin?

FATHER ERIC CASTRO: Yes, Secretary. Alam ninyo po nabanggit ko na kanina for example ‘no, I would like to make a very good example of the diocese of Balanga in Bataan. The bishop there po is Bishop Ruperto Santos. Alam ninyo, in-organize nila talaga iyong mga pilgrimage routes ‘no. Mayroon silang 15 churches and three shrines na kapag nag-signify ka na gusto mong mag-pilgrimage sa Balanga, Bataan, they’re ready ‘no. You can either coordinate with the diocese ‘no, doon sa office ng bishop, or doon sa provincial tourism center. Nagkaugnay iyong simbahan at iyong provincial tourism center, so mayroon silang tinatawag na Via Dominicana, iyan po iyong pupuntahan nila. Seven churches along the national road of Balanga, Bataan kung saan madadaan mo iyong pitong simbahan na itinatag ng mga Dominican missionaries.

Mayroon silang Via Augustiniana. Ito naman po iyong three churches na tinatag ng mga Augustinian friars. So matatandang mga simbahan na rin po at nakaayos iyong ruta. Talagang pagdating mo, they will guide you. Mayroon silang mga guide na magpapaliwanag sa historical significance ng mga simbahan na iyon sa buong probinsiya ng Bataan.

So if Balanga, Bataan was able to do it, I think other dioceses, provinces can also do that. Iyon bang magku-coordinate ang tourism center ng probinsiya at iyong simbahan para kapag may darating na mga pilgrims, magagabayan po nila at mapupuntahan iyong mga simbahan na ito kagaya nang ginagawa ng mga pilgrims sa ibang mga bansa.

SEC. ANDANAR: Okay. Father, nakausap din po ng Cabinet Report ang ating Department of Tourism tungkol sa pilgrimage tourism. Let us roll the video:

[VTR]

SEC. ANDANAR: Thank you so much, Father Eric Castro for your time. Mayroon ba kayong nais ipahayag o ipaalala sa ating mga kababayan? Please go ahead.

FATHER ERIC CASTRO: Okay. Maraming salamat po, Sec.

Siguro po dahil panahon ng pandemic ngayon ‘no, medyo mahirap mag-travel, mahirap gawin iyong pilgrimage na gusto natin lalo na’t 500 years ng Christianity sa ating bansa. At ang mga dioceses po, ang mga probinsiya ay nag-declare ng mga jubilee churches kung saan makakatanggap kayo ng plenary indulgence. So bawat diocese, bawat probinsiya, may mga nakatalaga na jubilee churches. Sana po kahit doon man lang sa pinakamalapit sa inyo ay mapuntahan po natin, mabisita natin itong mga jubilee churches na ito para makatanggap ng biyaya ng plenary indulgence.

Kung hindi man po, iyong mga senior citizens, iyong mga may sakit at hindi talaga makakalabas, ang sabi po ng Catholic Bishops Conference, you may receive the plenary indulgence and do a virtual pilgrimage. Mayroon pong mga simbahan at mga shrine na may mga online o naka-live stream na mga misa at considered silang jubilee churches, so you can do a virtual or online pilgrimage. Sa ganoong paraan ay nakiisa pa rin po tayo sa pagdiriwang ng 500 Years of Christianity.

Iyon lamang po. Maraming salamat po kay Sec. Andanar at sa lahat po ng mga nanunood sa atin ngayon.

SEC. ANDANAR: Thank you so much, Father Eric Castro. And please stay safe, Sir, dahil delikado pa rin ang COVID-19.

FATHER ERIC CASTRO: Kayo rin po, Sec. Maraming salamat po.

SEC. ANDANAR: Pilipinas, sa communications, hulog ng langit ang mga milestones. Mga okasyon ng paggunita sa mga mahahalagang pangyayari sa kasaysayan. Hindi ko po lugar ang magsalita tungkol sa usapin ng pananampalataya. Pero sa aking pananaw, angkop din na tingnan natin ang mga pagkakataong dala sa ating paggunita ng 500 years of Christianity in the Philippines. Ako ay naniniwala na may potensiyal nga ang pilgrimage tourism.

For many Filipino Christians, this may be another way to see and rediscover the Philippines, plus this could also be a competitive tourism advantage dahil kung isipin natin, sa bahaging ito ng mundo, tayo nga ay talaga namang namumukod tangi bilang isang predominantly Christian country na may napakarami at napakagandang mga simbahan, religious shrines and pilgrimage sites.

Para sa Cabinet Report, ito po si Communication Secretary Martin Andanar. Mabuhay ang Pilipinas! Mabuhay ang Pilipino!

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