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SPEECH BY PRESIDENT FERDINAND R. MARCOS JR.
AT THE WREATH-LAYING CEREMONY MARCOS DAY CELEBRATION
[Delivered at the Marcos Monument in Batac City, Ilocos Norte | 11 September 2024]

Thank you very much, Governor Matty [*please agtugaw tayo, apo (please take your seats)*] for your kind introduction and your very memorable word.

I'd like to greet, of course, Senator Imee who has after a long time has managed to find time to -- in her campaign schedule, kampanya na eh --- in her campaign schedule to be with us here today; Ilocos Norte 2nd District Representative Angelo Marcos Barba; Ilocos Norte Vice Governor Cecilia Araneta-Marcos; Ilocos Norte 1st District Representative... Up to now, I will tell you the truth, hindi ko masanay-sanay na binabati ko 'yung anak ko na ano kasi... Pero talagang kailangan nang batiin dahil congressman na, so, First District Representative, Congressman Sandro Marcos; the Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, General Romeo Brawner Jr.; the officials, and employees, and residents of Batac led by Mayor [Albert] Chua; and of course, my greetings would not be complete without greeting our First Lady, First Lady Liza Araneta- Marcos; all of the officials who have come here, the mayors who have joined us, the barangay chairman na napakalakas ang palakpak kanina sa suggestion ni Senator Imee, at pag-usapan natin nang mabuti 'yan; we are also visited by our friends from Isabelita and from Cagayan, and we welcome them once again to Ilocos Norte, naimbag nga bigat kada kayo amin (good morning to all of you).

Kadagiti padak ken ay-ayatek nga Ilokano, naimbag nga bigat kada kayo amin. (To my fellow and beloved Ilocanos, good morning to all of you.)

I always look forward to coming to Ilocos Norte, not only because it is really our home but also in this special occasion when we commemorate the Marcos Day, which is the day of my father's birthday. And as we have seen, it is his 107th birthday.

So, it is inevitable when we celebrate his life, and we look back and we try to find --- I try to find and try to think what was it about my father. Ano ba talaga? What was his very important quality that brought him to the greatest heights of political office in the Philippines, but even more importantly to have --- allowed him to --- that made him, that guided him so that he could serve the people properly.

And I'm always reminded of what was engraved in the museleo when my father was still buried here. And those of you that have been to the mausoleum will remember that it was one single word --- Filipino. And that is the essence of my father.

And when I look back, and now that I am in this high office, and many things become --- many forces are impacting upon you and a decision has to be made and the guidance that I get once again is I always ask myself, what would my father do? What would be his advice? And I remember the mausoleum and I remember that it says, "Filipino."

And that is the essence of the man. He was a Filipino. He was an Ilocano first but his whole life was dedicated to the Filipino. His whole life was dedicated to the Philippines. *[applause]*

His first foray into public service after his university and his law school was as a soldier, as a soldier during the war where he was willing to make the ultimate sacrifice to defend his country and his people.

And we have seen and heard and read about the heroic deeds that I only now being realized by many of us. I will recount to you an experience that I had recently when I was in the United States and I was hosted by the director of the Central Intelligence Agency, the CIA.

At ang request ko sa kanila: "Can I see some of the records about my father when he was working with the OSS?"

The OSS was a predecessor of the CIA. And they allowed me. They took me to the records room and they started to show me many of the records, the reports that were given during the war that are still secret.

And I mean he was greater than even we realized. The things that he did, the things that --- the sacrifices that he made for the Philippines. And I asked CIA, "*Maaari ba pakopya ko, iuwi ko?*" "*Sorry, it is still classified.*"

And that was the depth of his service to the country. After the war, after liberation he then entered into politics. He became the second district representative of Ilocos Norte and he served for about 10 years before becoming senator and ultimately president.

And through that whole time, all that he did was to serve Filipinos. He sacrificed everything. Those of us, who are with his family know of that sacrifice. And we, in our own way, we have a feeling that we also sacrificed because we did not see my father. We did not see my mother. There were very busy doing their work and serving the Philippines and serving Filipinos.

And so when I looked back now at the life that I have led and I see what is the guiding principle that I can learn from my father when things are confusing, when things have become so complex. What is the essence of service that my father taught me? And that is very simple but not easy to achieve. But it is simple: be a Filipino, serve the Filipino, protect Filipinos and the Philippines.

And from that comes all of the important things that we can do, that guides us, that is a guiding principle.

So, although he was always described, especially in his younger days as the GI, the Great Ilocano. He superseded that. And, of course, he loved Ilocos. He loved Batac. He loved Sarrat. He loved all of you who were with him through all of the trials and tribulations that he went to.

But then he... I supposed he saw the essence as well of Ilocanos. We are essentially --- we are Ilocanos but we are here in the Philippines. And the greatest service that he could do was to serve the entire country of the Philippines.

So, if we are to continue on this important legacy that he has left us, what again will be our guide? How again do we know what is the right path to make it better for the Philippines? To make life better for all Filipinos. To make sure that the Philippines is protected. That the Philippines is

secure. That the Philippines is going to flourish. That the Philippines takes its place in the community of nations in the world.

And I have followed that credo from the very beginning of my term and I will continue to follow that credo. Be a good Filipino. Be a Filipino that loves your countrymen. Be a Filipino that loves your country and do everything and sacrifice everything to achieve that purpose, to achieve that goal that you become a good Filipino and you leave the Philippines a better place than you found it.

That is my continuing guide. *[applause]* That is the credo that we should live by. And for that, I will be eternally grateful to my dad for the lessons that he taught us, for the values that imbued in our very souls. And that has served us all well.

And so as we go through our daily lives, let us always remember that in the end, we do what we do. All that we do, we do for Filipinos. All that we do we do for the Philippines.

Let us be together in that. Let us continue that legacy of love of country. Let us continue that legacy of love of your kababayans. And I think that if we do that, that we will always be led in the right direction.

Happy Birthday, Dad! Naimbag nga panagkasangay (happy birthday) and thank you for all that you have given us. *[applause]*

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