

MAGAZINE FOR THE WELLINGTON FILIPINO COMMUNITY

# KABAYAN

Winter 2014 • Issue No. 6

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**No time for  
Filipino time**

**A passion  
for dance**

**THREE SPECIAL MUMS  
WARMING OUR HEARTS  
WITH THEIR STORIES**



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Hey kids!  
Colour in this  
picture!

No time for  
Filipino time  
on page 21

Illustration by:  
Mike Javier



# editorial

## Winter warmers

The “ber” months in the Philippines signal the coming of Christmas. Here in New Zealand, the “brr” months signal the coming of winter. And it has well and truly arrived in New Zealand. I am certainly not looking forward to the cold southerlies but I wouldn’t mind a light dusting of snow like we had a few years ago.

With Mother’s Day just gone, what else could warm a person’s heart in the cold winter nights other than a mother’s loving words? Ok, overly trite and wordy but hey, I had to put that in. We feature three extraordinary ladies on our cover at different stages of motherhood: Mommy Fe is a mother to 5, grandmother to 6 and great grandmother to 7. At the time of writing this, Tita Rose is expecting her first grandchild while Lei is a young mum coming to terms as her daughter battles cancer.

By virtue of being mums, they are already extraordinary. They each have their story to share with us, all different and yet the same. To say that they are strong emotionally is an understatement. They have had different challenges but it has been their nurturing and compassionate natures that have helped them overcome these.

With this theme for the magazine, we decided to do our first cover photo shoot with our featured mums. Windy Wellington certainly lived up to its blustery reputation on the day of the shoot. We spent a lot of time fixing our cover girls’ hair as well as putting on and taking off jackets as we all battled the wind. Thanks to Bernie Velasco for taking the pictures at the Parliament grounds, Johnny Celeste for shooting behind the scenes, Mary Velasco for helping out and little Lilah for joining us. For the handful of us on that day, her presence and sunny disposition certainly warmed our hearts.

**Meia**

## Hits and misses:

Noel Bautista’s article on Wellington nurse, Kristel Sevilla is a big hit! Fellow kababayan nurses who want to come to New Zealand have contacted Kristel for some tips and advice. Well done to Noel and Kristel!

On our story about the Tacloban kids, contributor Mayie Pagalilauan said that the trauma debrief activity was done in Brgy 56, San Jose, Tacloban not Brgy 5.

## Talk to us:

How do you think we are going? How can we make it better? Any story idea you’d like to see featured in the magazine? Email us on [kabayanmag@gmail.com](mailto:kabayanmag@gmail.com). We’d love to hear from you.

## editorial box

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## Dream big, Start small.

Let’s build our Filipino Community Hall in Wellington! Support the FilCom Centre Project.

To help, go to the Bulwagan Foundation Trust website [www.bulwagan.org.nz](http://www.bulwagan.org.nz) and check out the different fundraising programs

*(Adopt a Brick, Alkansya and pledges).*



## Mini-Santacruzán sa Wellington 2014

By: Alex Bayot



Photos by: Jon Bayot



Santacruzán is one of the most loved Philippine traditions held at the end of May. It re-enacts the discovery of the real cross of Jesus Christ by Helena, Queen of Constantinople and her son, Constantine the Great.

On 18 May 2014, a Santacruzán was held in Wellington. It was a small-scale version aimed at giving the Wellington Filipino community, especially the kids, the experience of the parade.

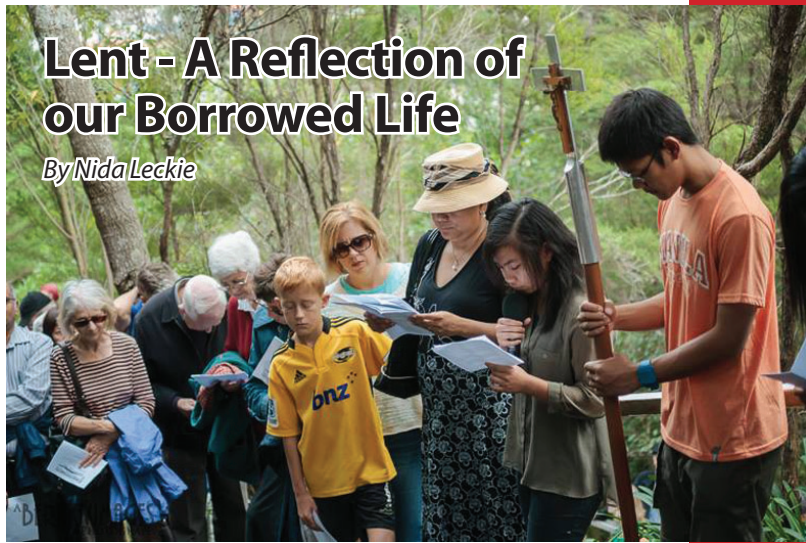
PinoyStop organised the event in cooperation with the Wellington Filipino Chaplaincy. The parade was held at the Sacred Heart Cathedral, Thorndon before the third Sunday Filipino mass.

A number of kids and teens showed up to participate (including myself), wearing stunning and colourful dresses and suits. All the girls wore sashes where the name of the queen they represented for example, Reyna Caridad (Queen of Charity), Luklukan ng Karunungan (Queen of Wisdom) and Reyna de los Flores (Queen of Flowers).

The playing of the traditional parade song, Dios te Salve Maria (Hail Mary), signalled the start of the parade. We were asked to slowly walk down the aisle of the church, one by one or in pairs. Proud parents and friends took the opportunity to take photos as we walked to the front of the church to offer flowers to the Virgin Mary. It was really fun. I hope next year a bigger and better Santacruzán will be organised here in Wellington for I understand now why they call it the "Queen of all festivals" in the Philippines.

## Lent - A Reflection of our Borrowed Life

By Nida Leckie



On 13 April 2014, the grim weather forecast of rain and blustery south easterlies did not dampen the spirits of the traditional Filipino Palm Sunday pilgrimage in Paraparaumu.

As worshippers from all over Wellington arrived, it was apparent that they longed for Filipino customs and traditions observed way back home. Starting with the Station of the Cross to commemorate Jesus' sufferings to save us from our sins, the procession slowly edged to the imposing shrine of our Lady of Kapiti located on a hill overlooking Kapiti's domain. It was here where the Palm Sunday Mass was held. Palm Sunday reminds us of the triumphal entry of Jesus to Jerusalem.

In his homily, Father Alex, the mass celebrant, reiterated that nothing compares to Jesus' pain and sacrifices. Denying ourselves of some of the pleasures and luxuries of everyday life should be taken with vigour and devotion to better deepen our spirituality. From the sorrow of death to the culmination of joy in Jesus' resurrection, may all our sacrifices be meaningful, not miserable.

Easter truly means love, forgiveness, compassion, peace and reconciliation.



Photos by: BernieVImages

Inay, Nanay, Inang, Mama, Mommy, Mummy, Mamang, Ima, Mader, Mummysy – we call her by different names. She is the “*ilaw ng tahanan*” (light of the home), your biggest fan and *pro bono* attorney at home (*tagapagtanggol*). She dishes out advice every once in a while – sometimes unsolicited but most times sought out.

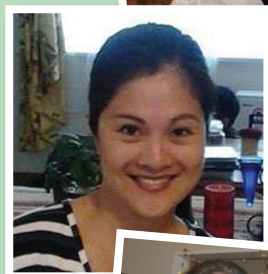
We asked the community:

## What is the biggest or most important lesson your mother taught you?



### Judith Mendoza

She's been long gone (15 years ago) but her words are marked in my heart and mind: You can never put a good person down. *Ano mang pagsubok, tumawag ka sa Diyos. Pag may buhay, may pag asa.* Be kind and strive to be happy. *Alisin ang inggit sa katawan kasi ang inggit ang papatay sa mga pangarap mo.*



### Ofie Coralde

The most important lesson my mother taught me which I pass on to my children is: The purpose of life is to be a good person!



### Divina Balauag (in picture, Divina's mum and dad)

I remember my mum nagging me every morning... Take a bath, put on nice clothes and powder/make-up before starting anything even if you are just washing clothes or feeding the dogs. Anyone who knows my Mum will understand.



### Bea Rubio

The wisest words my mum told me is that you should always be patient and listen to the people you love, no matter how angry we may be. :)



### Zenaída Savill

The biggest and most important lesson my mother has taught me is: “If a stray dog comes to your house, you will offer it food, how much more for another human being”. Always be hospitable to everybody! *Kia ora*



### Bebot Laroza

My mum is the gentlest, selfless, loving and caring mum to my sisters and me. She taught me the value of loyalty and family.

*From L-R: myself, Ate, Nining and Mama*



### Annie Robrigado

Not to look at a person's status or stature (or lack of) in life. People may be on top of the mountain one day. But their luck can change instantly. Life is like a wheel and they may find themselves on the bottom the next time around.

Kabayan interview with Fe Muriel

# Living in her 80s

## FULFILLED AND HAPPY

**How old are you Mommy Fe?**

I am 82 years old.

**How's your health?**

Fairly good for 82 compared to people younger than me with more health issues.

**What concerns/worries do you have?**

When my family members get sick.

**What keeps you busy?**

I love going to the market. I love cooking and do a lot of reading and writing to my friends and relatives.

**I heard you had a feeding program before. Tell us about it.**

When I used to visit my hometown in Ilocos, I would see kids sitting by the roadside at noon. They were waiting for the school's afternoon session to start. Instead of going home for lunch, they would just wait it out there because their homes were too far and there was no food to eat. I was burdened by this and I felt that the Lord was telling me, "Feed my lamb." When I retired from the service, I decided to use part of my savings to start a feeding program. Together with some friends and relatives who donated money to the cause, we were able to feed 90 primary school kids in up to 8 feeding centres every school day for 13 years.

**Wow! That's admirable. Why did you decide to take up that cause?**

I really wanted to reach out to the children. I wanted to teach them about the word of God and the love of God.

**What are your fears?**

My fear is getting very old and I can't do anything. I wouldn't want to be a burden to anyone.

**What makes you happy?**

It feels so good when I can share something with anyone to make them happy.

**What are you most proud of?**

I am proud of my children and their families. My children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren are all my treasure.

**Is there anything you regret in your life?**

No, nothing. I have been through a hard life but God has been my guide through it all. I am happy where I am.

**From what you've seen and experienced, what is man doing right?**

I admire people who do good things for children.

**What is man doing wrong?**

Racism is the worst lunacy of mankind. Hatred is the worst of all evil.

**What can we do better?**

We need God to guide us in everything we do.

**What are some of the most important lessons you've learned in your life? Any words of wisdom you'd like to share?**

I have learnt to listen and focus my thoughts in God who gives me the strength to go through life in this old age. Love in giving is very fulfilling. God has blessed me with great fortune and my great joy is sharing it with others.

**What do you want to be your legacy to your family and people whose lives you've touched?**

I would love my children and the people I touched in their lives to practise unselfish loving and giving to others. That is the legacy I want them to teach the next generation.

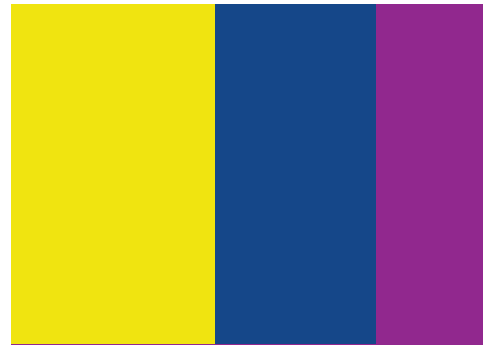


Photo by: Bernie VImages

**"If I ever won Lotto I'd spend most of it helping children in need."**

By: Leilani Avilla

# God's faithfulness... an Angel's Journey!

*This is an excerpt of Le's reflection during the Good Friday Seven Last Words service in Lower Hutt.*

## The 7th Last Word: "Father into thy hands I commend my spirit."

*(taken from Luke 23 verse 46)*

Father into thy hands I commend my spirit...these were the words I said when my only child, my precious Angel was diagnosed with leukaemia. Father into your hands, I commend Lilah...

A year ago, Lilah complained of tummy pains. Sometimes she would even scream at night because of the pain but she would only ask for manzanilla and a massage and she'd be ok. Nagpatuloy ang ganitong scene for around 3 weeks. We didn't know that it was an indication of something serious.

May 12 (Mother's Day), habang nasa church kami, Lilah just wanted to be with me. Ayaw bumaba, gusto niya lang nasa lap or karga ko. Monday, after work, my sister told me to bring Lilah to the doctor. Sabi niya, halos maghapon siyang matamlay at gusto lang karga na hindi normal para sa kaniya. Then I noticed that her hands and feet were pale. Natakot ako! Di na ako nakatulog magdamag. I felt something was wrong.

Tuesday, 14 May was the longest day of my life. We went to see a doctor at the Karori Medical Centre. She said that Lilah seemed ok, because Lilah was playing around and was so active that time. She said she might be anaemic that's why she's a bit pale. But she did ask us to go directly to Aotea Pathology for a blood test. She said I would need to ring them the next day for the result.

Lilah was so brave and easy to handle during the blood test. They even gave her a certificate of bravery for it. I fell asleep when we got home and woke up when I heard my phone ringing. It was one of the doctors from the Karori Medical Centre. He said I needed to bring Angel to the hospital. He said it was urgent! I asked him, "Why, what's the problem?" He refused to say anything and instead said that he would ring me again after 15 minutes because he needed to ring Wellington Hospital and let them know we were coming. I called my husband, Mike and my sister and told them

we needed to bring Lilah to the hospital.

I started crying! I knew something was wrong! I was so scared. Lilah saw me crying kaya umiyak na rin siya! I tried to explain to her that we needed to go to the hospital because she was sick.

A nurse met us at the hospital and led us to a room. On our way there, I saw three people looking at us. After a few minutes, they went into the room and talked to us about Lilah's condition. The doctor told us na may leukaemia ang anak ko.

Ang tanging nasa isip ko that time was, until when? Gaano katagal ko pa siya makakasama? Ang hirap tanggapin ng balitang iyon para sa akin lalo na't nag-iisang anak ko si Lilah. Inisip ko lahat ng hirap na pagdadaan niya, na makakalbo siya at mag sa-suffer siya ng sobra! I asked God bakit si Lilah? Bakit di na lang ako? Ang bata pa niya para magka-cancer.

Father, into your hands I commend my spirit...kaya ko kayang isabuhay ito?

Pagkatapos nito, nag blood transfusion si Lilah at nagpunta kami sa Christchurch kung saan naroon ang Children's Haematology and Oncology Centre. The next day, we were told that her Hemoglobin was only 28. The normal is around 100, the critical is between 70-80. Sinabi sa amin na yung 28 is not for living, na kung magcollapse siya, puede na siyang mamatay. That's why emergency kaagad ang case niya.

Nilagyan din siya ng port para sa blood tests at chemo treatment niya. The first time we entered the theater for her procedure, I was so scared. I didn't know what to expect. Then Lilah told me "Mum, Jesus is here." Then she told the nurses "God bless you".

I didn't know why she said that, but I knew indeed that Jesus was there to comfort me and for me to realize that Lilah was safe.

Umiiyak ako habang si Mike naman was trying to be strong. Takot na takot ako sa



Lilah told me "Mum, Jesus is here." Then she told the nurses "God bless you".



mga pagdadaan ng anak ko. Minsan kumanta si Lilah ng 'Count on me' ni Bruno Mars. As the song goes, "You can count on Me like 1 2 3, I'll be there!"... I felt God was talking to me. God wanted me to count on Him and surrender everything to Him. I cried while Lilah sang.

Over the next few weeks, she gained weight because of the steroids, Naging mainitin din ang ulo niya to the point na nananakit na siya! Nagkaroon din ng time na halos di siya makalakad dahil sa side effect ng gamot niya. Para siyang batang nag-aaral maglakad. I needed to carry her most of the time, and given her weight and my size, it was very hard for me.

But God is good. Everyday, I feel God's presence in our lives through our friends and people we've just met then. Dumating din ako sa point na halos magmakaawa ako sa mga tao para lang ipagdasal ang anak ko. Sa lahat ng makita ko na natutuwa kay Lilah, sinasabi ko agad ang condition niya dahil naniniwala ako na the more ang nakakaalam ng condition niya, the more ang magdadasal for her.

Every time I feel sad and worried, she will do something that will remind me that God is with us in this journey. There are times when we hear her singing "Come Holy Spirit" and "I Love You Lord".

She's always been very brave until she lost her hair. We were at the Wellington Hospital where she was confined because she had a fever. I was talking to the doctor when she called out crying and showed me the clump of hair in her hand. I cried too because that's the first time I saw her na takot na takot. It took me a while bago siya napatahan.

My fear na kutyain siya ng iba happened one Sunday nung mag-attend siya ng Children's liturgy/Sunday school. I was told that the kids were laughing dahil sa buhok at itsura niya. I was crying after the mass and I asked Lilah kung ok lang ba siya? She told me, "Mum, ok lang ako. Nag sorry naman sila sa akin eh." Then sabi niya maganda daw ang head niya at naging baby Lilah daw siya ulit dahil wala na siyang hair. Again, I felt God's presence when I heard those words from Lilah. Nawala lahat ng worries at takot ko.

Sa ngayon, araw araw siyang nag te-take ng chemo tablet niya, at ginagawa niya yun mag-isa. We are thankful sa ganitong attitude niya at di kami nahihirapan, truly it's a blessing from God. Nagpapasalamat din kami sa dami ng taong nagdarasal for her regardless of what religion or church they belong to. Her condition gave us the opportunity to touch other people's lives. Naging daan din ito for our family to be involved sa ibang charity work and organisations para makatulong sa iba.

Mahaba pa ang journey ni Lilah but I know God will continue to make his way to show us na mahal Niya si Lilah, that He's in control of everything at gagawin niya ang lahat for us once we surrender everything to him.

At this stage, natanggap ko na ang condition ni Lilah, na offer ko na rin siya kay Lord at alam ko na rin ang sagot sa tanong ko kung bakit sa kaniya ibinigay ng Diyos ang sakit na ito at hindi sa akin ... kasi God has chosen Lilah for a special mission to inspire people for His greater glory.

Father, into your hands I commend my daughter, Lilah. I surrendered her life to you because I know Lilah is your little Angel and in You, nothing is impossible. Amen.

God has chosen Lilah for a special mission to inspire people for His greater glory.

Photo by: BernieVImages



# A FULL TIME MOTHER AND MORE

By: Johnny Celeste



Twenty-five years ago, the prospect of bringing up three young children in New Zealand must have seemed daunting to Rose. Coming

Steadfast and focused, Rose settled down into providing a healthy, happy and supportive home environment. With her husband in full-time employment, she was always the one welcoming her children home from school and attending to their needs, from providing afternoon tea to helping with their school work. She was very nurturing without spoiling her children, lovingly caring and being firm at the same time. She supported their school events, fundraisers and even extra-curricular activities like sports (swimming, soccer, rugby, cricket, biking) and music (lessons and performances). When her children got into serious swimming, she happily drove them to training, which started as early as 6 a.m. on most days. As their number one fan, she always watched their swim races and even got involved in the organisation and running of the meets. Her proficiency to maintain a good home environment led her to become a Barnardo's child caregiver, taking care of other people's children (babies, toddlers, and primary schoolers) in her own home.

to Wellington to join her husband who had been here for 10 months, she was leaving behind a prestigious job and promising career in Manila, the support of extended family, plus the comfort of having live-in domestic helpers and nannies for her children aged 7, 4 and 3. Yet, she remained focused on the vision that she and her husband had set as a priority and a main reason for coming to New Zealand: to enable their children to grow up in a society with predominantly good human values.

Bringing up children in a new country was not without its challenges. She was used to dry and wet seasons, but now she had to be prepared for four different ones. She had the sense to acquire winter clothing before leaving Manila. Autumn was about to end when Rose and her children arrived in Wellington. Three days later, winter introduced itself in a dusting of snow in Karori where they lived in a rented house. She took all the lifestyle and cultural challenges in stride, aided in part by the kind and helpful people she met in the neighbourhood, in school and in their church parish. A next-door couple even baby sat for her once in a while.

Her children grew up to be smart, happy, confident and morally upright – never had to be helped out of major troubled situations.

Adults now, two sons live in Christchurch and a daughter is in Auckland, married and expecting next month<sup>1</sup>. Needless to say, she has never stopped supporting them. They visit every now and then, and get in touch with her almost every day.

I, too, am blessed, because Rose de Leon Celeste is the mother of my children.



TOP: At Makara (left to right): Rose, Karl, Kris, Kristin

BOTTOM: A treasured memento from years ago - paper pyramid made by Kristin at age 9

Photo by: BernieVImages and Johnny Celeste

<sup>1</sup>This article was written in May 2014 when Rose was about to become a first time lola.

# OVERCOMING VIOLENCE AT HOME

*My mum, like many Filipino mums, takes a lot of different seats at the family table. She is a counsellor, a disciplinarian, a cheerleader, a confidant and friend, and a teacher. Over the years, she has instilled values within me that have served me well to this day: a sense of fairness, hard work, empathy for others and a sense of pride in myself.*

*With Mother's Day in May, I took a little extra time to think about my mum (a woman with a massive laugh and an even bigger heart, who is an exceptional cook, who has always been very forthright with her views and who has cared for me every day of my life) and all of the wonderful mothers I work with at Shakti Ethnic Women's Refuge Wellington.*

Whenever I feel down and when the stress of the day feels a little too much, my mum is the one I turn to. She's always the first to offer advice, she'll drop what she's doing to make sure I'm fed and warm and most important of all she'll reassure me that whatever is occupying my mind will pass.

Since starting a job with Shakti Ethnic Women's Refuge I have been feeling down with the state of the world a little more often.

Not because of the job itself or the people I work with (both of which I well and truly love) but because of the repeated patterns of violence I see perpetrated against women within migrant and refugee communities. Filipino communities are no exception.

Shakti Wellington, has its origins in The

Shakti Asian Women's Support Group founded by Farida Sultana and seven other ethnic women in Auckland in 1995. The support group was set up by ethnic women for ethnic women to overcome the barriers that come with migration and the intergenerational bonds of cultural oppression.

Over the years, Shakti has grown from the confines of one tiny room to a national organisation with several centres and a wide range of services for ethnic women experiencing domestic violence. This includes a 24-hour Crisis Line, a Women's Advocate for face-to-face support, counselling, temporary safehouse accommodation and a free legal and immigration service. These services are available in Auckland, Christchurch, Tauranga, Central North Island, Dunedin

and now in the greater Wellington area.

Besides seeking out tools and services to make them and their families self-reliant, the women who seek out Shakti's services serve to challenge the cultural acceptance of domestic violence within their communities, promote greater gender equity and bring about social change.

So on Mother's Day, I think not only of my mum's strength but all of the mums I work with everyday at Shakti. I admire their fortitude of character and their dedication to their children. Their willingness to create long-lasting change within their own communities and to stand up for a society free of violence is equally admirable. Every day they operate with a degree of bravery and selflessness that I cannot comprehend.



Just say No! There is no room for violence in our lives.

Photo from: <http://shakti-international.org/about-us-nz/>

**If you or someone you know is experiencing domestic violence there is always someone to talk to and someone who can help. You can call 0800 SHAKTI any time, day or night and someone will answer your call.**

# Kabayan turns One

On Monday, 7 April 2014, Kabayan contributors, sponsors, friends and family joined the Kabayan team celebrate the magazine's first birthday. The event was well attended with an art exhibition by Kris Ancog and some of the Tacloban kids' artworks that Mayie Pagalilauan brought back with her. Grill Republic provided the food. Didith and Meia talked about how Kabayan started and thanked the people who contributed and supported the team in this endeavour. The guests played the Kabayan trivia game (How well do you know your Kabayan?) and we closed the celebrations by auctioning off one of Kris' paintings. The proceeds will go towards the printing of the magazine's future issues. Munting Tinig children's ukulele choir and the Wellington Filipino Community Choir entertained all our guests.

You might be wondering why we decided to hold the Kabayan party on a Monday night. Well, exactly a year ago, we released our first issue at the Filipino mass. Kabayan has shown how vibrant our community really is, how involved we are in different initiatives and how big your hearts really are when many of our kababayan at home needed our help. We learned together about the hardships and the frustrations as well as the successes of our kababayan. The stories about Christmas and summer in the Philippines, the Pinoy food and teleserye made us more homesick than ever. So let's reminisce and celebrate together. After all, we are all Kabayan.

See you next year!





by: Judith Balares Salamat

# A Taste of Natong, A Touch of Bikol

A true Bikolana shares a well-guarded family recipe for cooking Natong.



**TOP: The cooked natong/laing: Spicy hot and simply delicious! Better make sure you've got lots of rice on the side.**

**BOTTOM: This is where natong starts: big broad heart-shaped taro leaves.**

### Key Ingredients to cook Natong:

Kakang Gata (Coconut cream)  
Gata (Coconut milk)  
Slices of pork  
Tinapa (smoked fish) flakes  
Balaw/bagoong alamang (shrimp paste)  
Tanglad (lemongrass)  
Onion  
Garlic  
Ginger  
Natong (taro) leaves and soft stalks  
Green and red sili (chilli pepper)

Journey with me through my beloved Bikol, a region in southern Luzon. This region is noted for, well, aside from the Blessed Virgin of Penafrancia and the famous JMR (Jesse M. Robredo), its *maharang/maanghang* na Bikol express and the creamy *laing*, which we commonly call *natong* and in Rinconada, my mother tongue, as *katnga*. How would I remember my mother in both literal and figurative aspects without reminiscing and reliving the memories of my tongue, now that I'm miles and miles away from her? May I proffer you with the *laing* first and perhaps, serve Bikol express later?

I grew up with coconut trees around our backyard, my parents' organic vegetable gardens and Indian mangoes from our *kaniogan* (coconut plantation). I practically learned how to cook *natong/laing* from my mother at around the age of nine.

So what should we use for cooking *natong*? Aside from the usual coconut milk and coconut cream mixture from the coconut meat I had personally grated with a horse-like native implement (no electric grater yet), I had to use various ingredients such as, slices of pork — the fatter, the better (oh, cholesterol!) — flakes of *tinapa* (smoked fish), *balaw* (our *bagoong alamang* nowadays), all the native spice-ingredients like *tanglad* (lemongrass harvested right from our backyard), the staple onion-garlic-ginger combination, and not to forget, the most important of all, the *natong* leaves and soft stalks, and the green-red sili to go with this recipe.

I had to harvest the *natong* leaves and sili from our very own plantation.

With all these ingredients completed, I had to take note of particular procedures that went with the recipe. I had to pour coconut milk into a *kawali* (a version of a wok) and put the ingredients mentioned into the coconut milk except for the flaked *natong* leaves. I would then slowly toss the mixture over a low fire until it had fully simmered. I would drop the *natong* leaves little by

little into the mixture. Once the *natong* leaves were already into the mixture, I had to take note of a very important pointer: prevent the mixture from being turned too often and too soon. How to do this? First tossing, when the mixture after the *natong* leaves and stalks have been soaked with the coconut milk. Second tossing, before the coconut cream was poured onto the mixture. Third tossing, one last time when the coconut cream was cooked and all other ingredients properly blended. You break this rule and you end up literally scratching your throat after you eat it.

Some say that people from other regions can cook "*natong*" well, but others say the Bikolanos' version is creamier (true or not?). One other pointer I learned from my mother about this: to make *natong* recipe really creamy, this coconut-milk and cream-based recipe needed painstaking patience and dedication. Cook the mixture over a low fire, patiently waiting for the coconut milk to nearly dry up before pouring the coconut cream into the mixture. Never pour the coconut cream together with the coconut milk. Then, once the mixture has produced a bit of a lardy-oily kind of appearance, then, it was the right time to finally say, "*Luto na ini!*" (It's finally cooked). Of course, despite the addition of "*balaw*" (*bagoong*) in it, it needed to have its 'just right' taste — not bland, not salty. The creaminess of the mixture, too, had to prevail, and no single ingredient had to overwhelm the other. The spices used only had to enhance the taste of the pork, the *tinapa*, and the *balaw*, not to have their individual aftertastes. Then, the recipe would not be complete without the taste of sili in the overall *natong*.

I'm cooking *natong* this weekend. I have all the ingredients from the flea market and the Asian shop. What an appropriate moment to fondly remember my late mother particularly on her death anniversary! But Ma, sorry, I'll use canned coconut cream and milk and packed *natong* leaves...

# Fun and Excitement

By: Weng Echano

## My Mother's Home Town: Kalibo, Aklan

Going home to the province for a dose of the simple yet contented life in the company of family is often one of our most cherished childhood memories.

Visiting my mother's hometown when I was growing up made me realise the beauty and uniqueness of being a Filipino. Although I grew up in Manila, I spent my holidays in Aklan together with my grandparents, uncles, aunties, cousins, second cousins, neighbours and friends. It was an awesome experience.

One of the highlights of my holiday was walking to the beach for more than an hour with my relatives and friends. I didn't mind the walk because on the way there, we would pass a forest, pick raw mangoes, drink coconut juice and chew sugarcane stalks and sucked the juice out of it. Yup, life was simple. Life was good.

At the beach, my cousins taught me how to catch fish, shrimps and prawns with small nets. That was not easy. Although I did not catch anything, I enjoyed eating them. The food was simple but fresh and nutritious.

I learned to climb trees. My cousins told me to climb a tree and not look down. Easy to say but hard to do. With their encouragement and my persistence, I did it! That skill was pretty useful especially when we went to the 'suba' or river. Together with my cousins, we climbed up a tree near the riverbank and jumped into the river. That was fun!

I remember the first time I attended the 'Baile' or dance, sort of like an outdoor disco. Young people from far away villages would attend the dance in an area fenced off by the organisers. It was a bit quirky too.

I once saw a young lady who was chosen that night and every young man who would like to dance with her had to put coins/money in front of her. Sadly, my cousin told me that they don't have a 'Baile' anymore.

If you happen to be in Aklan in January, you need to join the Ati-Atihan festival. It is one of the famous festivals in Kalibo. Being young then, I knew very little about this fiesta. All I knew was that I was glad to see and feel the buzz in town. There were many people in groups all dressed up, dancing to the beat of the drums.

Our family get together and attend mass together on Sundays. I liked the food after the mass – spit roasted pig, *nilaga*, *paksiw* and *adobong manok*. These were a great hit with everyone!

Travel northwest to the island of Boracay and you'll surely enjoy the powdery-white sand beaches there. That's what I heard because I've never been there myself. (I better add that to my bucket list.)

These experiences shaped and enriched my life. Holidays weren't just holidays. I learnt about my heritage. I developed close ties with my family and friends. I strengthened my faith in God. I learnt life skills and enjoyed the simple pleasures of life.

My life journey continues on, here in New Zealand with excitement, challenges and positivity. There are more places to see, more experiences to share with my own family.



FROM TOP: **Pook eco-park in New Buswang, Kalibo, Aklan** where some of my mother's relatives live. Photo by: Weng Echano, **Hala bira!** Ati-atihan is Kalibo's most popular festival. <http://www.kalibo.gov.ph/site-page/ati-atihan-festival>, **The Mangrove Reforestation Project in New Buswang, Kalibo, Aklan** is a big success for the environment and eco-tourism. <http://www.kalibo.gov.ph/site-page/must-visit>

## Relay for Life: Remember, Celebrate and Fight Back

By Gus Umali

On March 22-23 2014, I joined fellow St Patrick's College Wellington students and people from other schools and groups in a community event to raise funds and awareness for cancer patients.

'Relay for Life' is an international event ran by various Cancer Awareness organisations. The Wellington event at Frank Kitts Park was organised by New Zealand's Cancer Society and urged communities and schools to participate in order to "Remember, Celebrate and Fight Back." It is "an inspiring community event that gives everyone a chance to celebrate cancer survivors and caregivers; remember loved ones lost to cancer; and fight back by raising awareness and funds to support the work of the Cancer Society."

I have a personal advocacy to fight cancer because I have family and friends who have succumbed to, are suffering from or have survived cancer.

This event was an opportune time for me to remember my mum's father, as well as my friend and classmate, Nick Linney, who passed away last year due to cancer. The St Pat's Team Schnick was named after him. Team Schnick was led by the SPC Young Vinnies of St Pats of which I am currently the Vice President. I raised over \$600 of the \$19,000 solicited by the college.

Through this event, the college spirit was greatly emphasised, coming second in the overall count of laps.

My family and I are also firm supporters of efforts at research



to combat the disease and assist support groups. For one, I have a three-year-old goddaughter who is currently challenged with leukaemia, and a godmother who has multiple myeloma. I am aware of the support they are receiving from various groups, both public and private, as they battle cancer. In my little way, I am blessed to be able to participate in their fight.

The event was also a time for my family and I to celebrate, with thanksgiving, for people we know who survived the disease - my friend's mum, my aunt's mum, my father's friend. All of them are living witnesses of the support needed by people who are suffering from the "Big C".

I thank God that so many people invested their time, talent and treasure to be stewards of life.



# Sailing the Seven Seas

By *Matilde Tayawa-Figuracion*

"Kabayan?" This was the single question that connected us to a group of Filipino seafarers manning the ship M/V Murooran that was moored at the Wellington seaport in March 2014.

It was a Sunday. Clark and I were a little bit early for the 10.30 am mass at the Sacred Heart Cathedral in Thorndon. Outside the Cathedral, there were a number of Filipino-looking individuals waiting for the mass to start. We approached them and asked if they were Filipinos. Yes, they were; all twenty-two of them are Filipinos, the entire crew of the cargo ship. Master Roy Namoc was the ship's captain.

It was their first time in Wellington. Living up to our hospitable nature, after the mass, my sister, Miriam, Ate Josie Godinez (of the Sacred Heart Cathedral's Chaplaincy), Clark and I toured them around Wellington, drove them up the Mt. Victoria Look-out and provided them with information on where to go and what to do. Clark also took some of them to experience the nightlife in Wellington.

The next day, Monday, they invited us for a tour and dinner at their ship, followed by a fellowship and karaoke night with the crew and officers (they had a karaoke machine in the ship of course!). Led by the captain himself, Master Roy Namoc kicked off the sing-along session (mind you he has a nice soothing voice too). The atmosphere inside the officers' mess hall was very happy and convivial. "*Ganito po kami dito, masayang pamilya dahil lahat po kami ay Pilipino*" (We are like this, a happy family because the entire crew is Filipino), said Cadet Carlo Adrian Gayoba, one of the crew members. Master Roy Namoc also welcomed an all-Filipino crew. He said it was easier for him to command the crew because everyone speaks the same language, has the same culture and the crew members are very young, with his third officer Karl John Lizardo only in his early 20's. "*Mas hindi nakaka-homesick kasi parang nasa Pilipinas ka lang din,*" (You don't feel homesick because it is as if we are in the Philippines) he says with a smile. According to Trade Union Congress of the Philippines (TUCP) Secretary General and former Senator Ernesto Herrera, "a growing number of European and Asian shipping firms is (sic) disbanding their multinational crews, and replacing them wholesale with all-Filipino personnel that are younger and more able."

Filipinos are known for being world class seafarers. In fact, the Philippines, says POEA, has been the world's leading supplier



TOP: Fun time with Murooran officers and crew  
BOTTOM: Kabayan welcomed at the captain's quarters

of seafarers since 1987, making it the manning capital of the world. Go to any ship, be they cruise ships, cargo or tanker ships, you will almost always see and meet a Filipino seaman. This is testament to the quality of service they provide. Add to that their ability to speak and communicate in English.

The Filipino seamen are a major segment of overseas Filipino workers who contribute billions of US dollars to the Philippine economy through remittances back home. Not only do they fuel the Philippine economy, they also contribute to the world's seaborne trade. The secretary-general of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) described Filipino seamen as sailors who were "unsung heroes" of an "unsung industry", namely the shipping industry that carried "most of the world trade in goods".

I salute you all. *Mabuhay kayo kabayan!*

<http://planetphilippines.com/migration/filipino-seamen-still-rule-the-seas-for-now/#sthash.9oQufpg2.dpuf>

Business Monitor, 2010

Taken from the recent show, *Magkabilaan*, at the PETA Theatre, Quezon City, Philippines on April 25, 2014  
Photo by Jory Rivera



## Live to dance!

By: Meia Lopez



Work hard and you can achieve anything.



Pangalay apatong performance taken in Schoten, Belgium at the Festival Van Schoten, World Festival of Folklore, July 1991

Photo by our Belgian host.



A dance lesson for Filifest dancers.

I could hear her voice through the closed door. "So what do you need to plant a seed?"

Hmmm ... I hesitated and wondered if I was in the right place. It was her voice all right but she was supposed to be teaching ballet not science and not on a Saturday morning.

I opened the door and caught her talking to a group of attentive 6 to 7 year-old girls in blue leotards. One by one, they eagerly answered: "dirt", "seed", "pot", "sunlight", "water". Doing well so far until someone piped in "gloves!". Of course! That made a group of mums in the back of the room chuckle under their breath.

It made the teacher smile. Gina Reid – dancer, choreographer and teacher.

I have seen Gina dance before and I knew dancing came naturally for her. I didn't know that she was a trained and qualified secondary school Maths teacher and a resource teacher for deaf and hearing impaired students in New Zealand, Scotland and the Philippines. Being naturally talented in Maths has its advantage in dancing, "Maths and dancing go together. If you can see the pattern, you can get the combination."

Hailing from Daraga, Albay, Gina grew up in a family of teachers. "My mum, my aunts and

my grandmother were all teachers.

But we're also quite musical. My father played the drums and sang in a band." She was in her school's dance troupe and... even attended the town baile with her aunts.

Gina's dance experience is long and varied. She's done folk, ballet, contemporary, jazz and commercial dance. If you've heard of Tony Fabella's and Eddie Elejar's Manila Metropolis Ballet (MMB) and Fabella/Elejar Dancers (FEDS), chances are you've seen her dance before. However it is folk dancing that's truly special for her.

She was a scholar at the Philippine Normal College (PNC) then, studying to be a Maths teacher when she joined the Baranggay Folk Dance Troupe. Under the tutelage of Dr Paz-Cielo Belmonte (Mommy Bel as she fondly calls her), Gina learned the true art of traditional Philippine folk dance. Baranggay prides itself with upholding the authenticity of the dances they perform so the dancers learned not just the technical aspects of the dance but its history and context as well. She danced with the company for 17 years and toured with them throughout the Philippines, Europe, the Americas and Asia. In her first year of international tours alone, she went to

Germany, Japan and San Francisco, USA. She says, "It was a good opportunity to see many places for free (sponsored by the Philippine government) doing something I really enjoyed."

Now, she wants to pay it forward. She is currently studying to be a registered dance teacher from the Royal Academy of Dance in London and is very keen on sharing her skills and knowledge to others. Gina teaches ballet to young kids and is one of the choreographers of Filifest, a Wellington-based Philippine folk dance group. The qualities required to be a dancer go beyond the ear and rhythm for music, and graceful movements that we see on stage. With her training and experience with Baranggay, she teaches her dancers a bit more than the dance itself. (She was teaching the little ballerinas a planting dance hence the science lesson on planting.) It is a holistic approach with the dancers learning life lessons as well. Being respectful, honest, trustworthy, hard-working, organised and independent all add up to develop professionalism. A dancer would also need discipline, commitment to dance and

I was tempted to say "gloves"? But the answer is Passion and she's got plenty of that.

# KATIPUNAN

## THE SECRET SOCIETY

By Kristel Sevilla

If you were living back in 1892, what would you be doing while the Philippines was under the Spanish rule, when all your rights were being stripped off, your relatives were being treated as slaves, your sister was being abused, and when people were being punished for crimes they didn't commit? Would you be a Katipunero, a bystander wishing for independence or probably a writer who used a pen to fight for freedom? Would you be scared, would you fight or would you betray your country?

The execution of the three priests: Gomez, Burgos and Zamora, the propaganda movement, and Rizal's arrest were some of the key factors that led to the Katipunan's foundation. On 7 July 1892, upon hearing the news of Rizal's arrest and deportation to Dapitan, Andres Bonifacio and other notable individuals founded the revolutionary society *Kataastaasan Kagalanggalang na Katipunan ng mga Anak ng Bayan* (Highest and Most Respectable Society of the Sons of the People) or simply Katipunan in a house in Azcarraga Street (now Claro M. Recto Avenue).

Aiming to unite the Filipino people to reclaim its liberty and freedom against the Spanish government through revolution, and establish a nation after the country's independence, the members of the secret society were urged to observe the concept of *Kapatiran* (brotherhood).

To be a member of the Katipunan, a current member had to recruit two new members who do not know each other. This system called *Sistemang Patatsulok* (triangle system) was initiated by Andres Bonifacio. Upon recruiting two new members, Teodoro Plata and Ladislao

Diwa, each of them recruited new members and so on. An initiation rite was conducted, including signing a new member's name in blood from one's own left arm while swearing to defend the aims of the Katipunan in the name of God and country.

Females were allowed to join a year after Katipunan's foundation; most of the women who joined were the sisters and wives of current members. Among them was Gregoria de Jesus, who became the *lakambini* (muse) of the Katipunan.

Gregoria de Jesus, Bonifacio's wife, also made the first flag of the revolution – the red flag showing the acronym of the secret organization KKK. The female members of the organisation served a major role; they hid the Katipunan's important documents and secret papers. Whenever the group held a secret meeting in a certain household, the women do merry making and dancing in the living room to cease suspicion from the *guardia civil* (civil guards).

The first president of Katipunan was Deodato Arellano, who served as the organisation's leader from 1892 to February 1893. Ramon Basa became the next leader while Andres Bonifacio was the last, claiming the word *Supremo*. Bonifacio, being the founder and organiser of the Katipunan has ignited the flames of the first Filipino revolution against Spain. Within the caves of Morong (now Rizal province) He wrote the words *Viva La Independencia* (Long Live (Philippine) Independence). Another notable person was Emilio Jacinto, the so-called brains of the *Katipunan*. He wrote the *Kartilya* (primer) which embodied the organisation's teachings and ideals. These



**TOP: Limang Piso (P5.00) from 1978 showing the picture of Andres Bonifacio, founder of the Katipunan and a painting depicting their initiation rite**

<http://www.banknotes.com/PH153.JPG>

**BOTTOM: Labour of love – one of the first Katipunan flags was sewn by Benita Rodriguez and Gregoria de Jesus (Bonifacio's Wife)**

[http://www.watawat.net/flags\\_and\\_symbols\\_of\\_the\\_katipunan\\_-\\_1.html](http://www.watawat.net/flags_and_symbols_of_the_katipunan_-_1.html)

ideals were wholeheartedly followed by its members and later on flourished and surfaced among Filipinos.

Spanish Government suspicions with the evident sense of justice, freedom and brotherhood among the Filipinos led to the secret society's discovery. This was confirmed by one of its member Teodoro Patino, who confessed the existence of the secret society to Father Mariano Gil, leading to the first Philippine revolution.

Sources:

Francisco Zulueta and Abriel Nebres. *Philippine History and Government Through The Years*. Navotas Press. 2007.  
 Virgilio Almario, et al. *100 Events That Shaped the Philippines*. Adarna House Inc. 1999.  
[www.wikipedia.org/wiki/katipunan](http://www.wikipedia.org/wiki/katipunan)

# BON VOYAGE FR ELMER IBARRA

By: Annie Robrigado



It has been six years. Fr. Elmer started his New Zealand journey in 2008 and since then has been always a kind, funny and willing pastoral leader to the faithful, particularly the youth. Now that God has called him to embark on another journey, Fr Elmo has bid his Wellington friends farewell, and a Hasta la vista, amigos. No goodbyes; just see you later, mate, as is the Kiwi way. The Pinoy way was to send him off with food and laughter, gifts and stories galore of what they remember about Fr Elmer and the way they had met him the first time. For Filipinos, *despedidas* are another reason to gather together and eat, drink and be merry, and to laugh at and with each other.



You are a jolly good fellow, Fr Elmer, also known as DJ Elmo on radio. You will be sorely missed, not only for being a parish priest at St Patrick's, Wainuiomata, or being spiritual advisor to the Youth for Christ ministry, or being readily available for celebrating mass for the Filipino chaplaincy. You will also be missed for your homilies, your words of wisdom, your stories that made us laugh and think that priesthood can be fun. We wish you the best in your new role as Director for Vocation at the Sydney house of the SVD.

It sounds quite important, and so it is. But as you said, it's all work and no prestige. Well, with your outlook in life and your sunny personality, it will help make the medicine go down and vocations may increase. God willing.



By: Noel Bautista

# Sorry, I'm late

I have been lucky enough to be invited four times to functions at either the Philippine Embassy in Wellington or at *Ang Bahay*, the official residence of the Philippine Ambassador to New Zealand. These were four different events, with different *kababayan* in attendance, diverse weather conditions and number of people attending.

The singular common denominator at the four occasions? Each event started on the dot, regardless of how many among the invited had arrived, with the Ambassador herself among the earliest attendees. No "Filipino Time" observed here, obviously.

Parallel to their Government's efforts, OFWs are doing their best to be exemplars not only of efficiency, honesty and cheer, but are also becoming quite reliable in punctuality, which as you know Filipinos are not always famous for.

According to research done by [retiredinsamar.com](http://retiredinsamar.com), Filipino time finds its origins in the colonial tradition requiring *indios* to attend parties only after all the Spanish masters and lords had been seated. Accommodating or even feeding Pinoy guests was definitely not a priority, and over the next few decades this set-up solidified into the institution known as 'Filipino time'. In so many words, to be late was to be fashionable.

But the modern milieu abhors a vacuum, particularly where it is caused by waiting for someone who should be there, no matter how important that someone may be. Life nowadays is divided into slices of neatly scheduled hours, minutes and

seconds, all spent doing worthwhile endeavours. Wilfully breaching these schedules shows a general disrespect for the time of everyone else, while believing that one is not bound by rules of courtesy followed by all others.

How many times have we heard overseas guests arrive at the appointed time in our beloved homeland, only to be made waiting for 10, 15 and upwards of 30 minutes by our *kababayan*, who act like as if being late was the most natural thing in the world? Or how events are held up by an embarrassing amount of time because the guest of honour was fashionably late?

Ask a random number of expats or *dayuhan* married to Pinay wives and a strong majority will give you at least one anecdote concerning 'Filipino time.' When everyone else scorns the appointed time on the invitation, almost like the latter is an RSVP if you will be inexplicably early, you can expect almost no one to be there on time. Pinoys are early in discount sales, opening day premieres and A-list concerts, but not to parties. Sadly, if you want people to attend your affair at a certain time, it is practical to schedule it an hour earlier. Only in the Philippines.

But there might still be hope for us. Remember all those events I mentioned at the Embassy and at *Ang Bahay*? Because each started on time, each also ended promptly, with enough space for all of us to catch the late-edition news. 'Filipino time' won't last forever, as long as we keep fighting. *Sugod, mga kapatid!*

# upcoming events

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**fun zone**

Hey kids! Colour in this picture!  
Illustration by: Mike Javier

**BAKIT  
LATE  
KA NA  
UMUWI?!?**



**POSSIBLE PALUSOTS:**

- a) Traffic sa Edsa
- b) Traffic sa Ortigas
- c) Traffic sa Libis
- d) Overtime sa Trabaho
- e) Client Call
- f) May ka-date at kailangan pa ihatid sa Pangasinan



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