

Pope apologizes to indigenous Canadians for wrongs at residential schools

VATICAN CITY -- (April 1, 2022)

Pope Francis on Friday made a historic apology to Indigenous peoples for the “deplorable” abuses they suffered in Canada’s Catholic-run residential schools and said he hoped to visit Canada in late July to deliver the apology in person to survivors of the church’s misguided missionary zeal.

Francis begged forgiveness during an audience with dozens of members of the Metis, Inuit and First Nations communities who came to Rome seeking a papal apology and a commitment from the Catholic Church to repair the damage. The first pope from the Americas said he hoped to visit Canada around the Feast of St. Anna, which falls on July 26.

More than 150,000 native children in Canada were forced to attend state-funded Christian schools from the 19th century until the 1970s in an effort to isolate them from the influence of their homes and culture. The aim was to Christianize and assimilate them into mainstream society, which previous Canadian governments considered superior.

The Canadian government has



Indigenous delegates from Canada's First Nations pose for a photo with Pope Francis during a meeting at the Vatican, March 31, 2022. Vatican Media/Handout via REUTERS

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The Philippines toppled one Marcos. Now his son may become president.

Ferdinand Marcos Jr. has spent his political career trying to rehabilitate the family name. As the front-runner in the upcoming election, he may finally succeed.

By Sui-Lee Wee and Camille Elemia
April 13, 2022 (New York Times)

MANILA — They bopped along to the beat of a martial law anthem updated into a pop tune. They cheered when an A-list celebrity proclaimed that the spirit of Ferdinand E. Marcos, the former dictator, was alive. And when Mr. Marcos’s son and namesake held up the peace sign made popular by his father a generation ago, the shrieking crowds mirrored it in return.

It is election season in the Philippines, and history is being rewritten, one campaign rally at a time.

Ferdinand Marcos Jr. has spent decades defending his family’s name against accusations of greed and corruption and downplaying the legacy of his father’s brutal rule. During his presidential campaign, he has portrayed himself as a unifier, while false narratives online reimagine his father’s regime as a “golden era” in the nation’s history.

Now, as patriarch of the



KNOCKING ON THE PALACE GATES: Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos, Jr. (second from right) enjoys a huge following among ardent loyalists, many of them hyperactive on social media. With his consistent messaging, Marcos Jr is about to pull off the unthinkable: a possible return through the ballot of his family to Malacanang, the seat of power in the Asian country once plundered by his father. Photo shows the Marcoses with President Rodrigo R. Duterte (centre) in the presidential palace. Image Credit: File / Presidential Communications Office

Marcos dynasty, Mr. Marcos is expected to be the first person to win the presidential election in the Philippines by a majority in more than three decades.

The race is being cast as a competition between those who remember the past and those who are accused of trying to distort it, the last chapter in a brazen attempt to absolve the Marcoses of wrongdoing and quash any effort to hold the family accountable. Five years of President Rodrigo Duterte — a strong Marcos ally known for his bloody war on drugs and for jailing his critics — may have presaged a Marcos family comeback.

“It will determine not just our future but our past,” said Maria Ressa, a journalist and Nobel Prize winner who is an outspoken critic of both Mr. Duterte and Mr. Marcos.

The Marcoses are accused of looting as much as \$10 billion from the government before fleeing to Hawaii in

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From the Editor's desk

Will the Philippines elect the right leader who will protect democracy and guide the country to recovery and prosperity?

Zenaida Ferry Kharroubi

On May 9th, the Philippines will be holding an important election which shall determine the fate of the country for the next six years as not only will the new president be elected but also other elected positions in both the national and local levels. A presidential election every six years is considered to be the most important as everytime there is a new president, people expect things to change for the better especially when the outgoing president has been the object of many criticisms among which are the unending drug war, the extra-judicial killings, threats and harassment to political critics and journalists and the prospect of reinstating capital punishment for a drug conviction. Added to these issues is the pandemic that is still here. Whoever will be elected must have the ability to deal with all these crises. But the big question is - will the voters have the ability to elect the right leader who will have the vision, the political will to do what is right and just for the welfare of the people?

The May 2022 elections is considered a crossroad, between re-establishing a democratic, lawful, respectful way of government or returning to the past of cronyism, trickery, strongman populist, autocratic style of leadership. As a writer notes:

"Filipinos will either choose to

dig themselves into a deeper hole or find a way out. The first step will be knowing the consequences of how they vote. Duterte out of power by 2022 will not change the landscape overnight. In fact, as one Supreme Court justice told me in confidence, he fears it might take a decade to repair the damage done." (Criselda Yabes, author of a book, Battle of Marawi).

There are only a few days left before election day and we urge voters to reflect on the issues facing the country and to learn from history in order not to repeat the mistakes of electing another president prone to be blinded by power that corrupts. An autocratic, populist, strongman style of leadership was proven to be bad for the country.

When Duterte was elected with a landslide victory, people believed that he would be the change needed to put the country in the right track. He is ending his presidency with a record of human rights abuses which has remained under investigation until now.

As far as Bongbong Marcos is concerned, we hope the proverb that says an apple does not fall far from the tree will not apply. If he becomes the president of the Philippines, will he vindicate the record of his father? But if he does not admit the need for vendication, what does this mean for the country? Only time will tell.

APPEAL BY THE NEPMCC 2022

NATIONAL ETHNIC PRESS AND MEDIA COUNCIL OF CANADA

Conseil national de la presse ethnique et des médias nationaux du Canada

To the Leaders of the U.S.A, Canada, the EU, Russia and Ukraine:

Dear Leaders:

Never before has humanity faced such overwhelming crises as we do now, with two nuclear superpowers in direct conflict with one another and on the brink of a nuclear war.

Crises involving the Covid-19 pandemic, as well as economic, environmental, energy, food, raw materials, institutions and values, in an overpopulated and congested world, never before have manifested themselves all at once as they do now!

And, instead of the UN and the superpower leaders sitting down at the same table to provide appropriate solutions, as John F. Kennedy and Nikita S. Khrushchev did during the Cuban missile crisis in 1962, today just the opposite is happening.

President Putin, the autocratic leader of Russia, is responsible for attacking an independent country, Ukraine, and occupying parts of it forcefully, while causing unprecedented destruction, and wanton physical hardship and injuries, with widespread loss of human life. Putin's reasons are said to be to protect Russia's security from a constant expansion by NATO close to its border, and to protect Russian nationals leaving the eastern provinces of Ukraine from Ukrainian neo-fascist, para-military forces. We are not in a position to judge if Putin is right or wrong.

How have the Western democracies responded?

Instead of looking seriously at Russia's claims while exhausting every possible diplomatic solution, they have chosen to play tough and punitive: Biden of the USA hurling insults against President Putin, and the world's institutions are taking unprecedented economic and financial measures against Russia. The Leaders of the European Union, which is greatly impacted by the measures, decided to acquiesce to the USA, to interrupt diplomatic relations, to return more severely to the absurdity of the Cold War, and even with an embargo on Russian ships and aircraft. And geostrategic advisers on both sides, as well as the media, are talking about nuclear warfare, as if this would solve the accumulated problems of humanity, including health and lack of wealth!

More to the point, an embargo on a superpower such as Russia, which may be equivalent in population to a medium-sized nation but in territory is the largest country in the world, makes its greatest impact by impeding the average person's ability to make ends meet! Russia has the largest reserves of energy (oil, gas), ores, fertilizers, cereals and gold, which are currently missing from the international market and are pushing prices to unbelievable heights. Yet, markets in the West are in deficit and unable to cover the needs from other sources. As a result, the prices of all products, without exception, are on the rise with inflation, the reduction of growth comes next, people cannot meet their needs, and this spiral evolves upwards with no end in sight, because it is not possible in the foreseeable future to make up for the shortages.

Another very serious impact which the West, and in particular Europe, will be facing very soon is the lack of cereals due to the embargo on Russia. Around the Mediterranean (Syria, Iraq, Egypt, Libya) and in the countries of Central Africa, as the UN warns, a population of 250 million will be affected, resulting in famine, epidemics,



Thomas Saras, CEO & President National Ethnic Press & Media Council of Canada

deaths and, above all, a massive wave of refugees mainly to Europe and other destinations.

But then, we as ordinary citizens, see before us the specter of this complex crisis that requires immediate mobilization by the UN and the leaders of the superpowers. Instead, we see the UN rendered useless and unable to react to Russia's Veto, and we see the interruption of the personal contacts of the superpowers – as if it were a private matter – and their resolve to take this renewed confrontation into a more pointless, deadly and destructive war for the Ukrainian people. As a result, humanity is now in a period of frenzy, while the leaders of all western countries should be concerning themselves with the recession, an immediate ceasefire and the search for a political solution. Some Western leaders are sending weapons to Ukraine and the Russians are sending new troops to the battlefield in a very dangerous and spiraling escalation towards a Nuclear Holocaust and a real threat of World War III. If the West is pushing a desperate Putin into a corner by imposing embargo measure after embargo measure, what choice is he given but to "kick" his way out, leading to the total destruction of Ukraine and the rest of the world!

That being the case, we the peace-loving members of the NATIONAL ETHNIC PRESS AND MEDIA COUNCIL OF CANADA, representing and serving 103 linguistic and cultural communities, hereby:

Appeal, in the name of all Humanity, to the Leaders of the World, and state that:

As a matter of urgency, President Biden and President Putin should leave their personal animosities aside and sit down at the same table in order to end Ukraine's dangerous war and abolish all embargos against anyone, on both sides, which otherwise tend to divert the world onto pernicious paths of no return.

Because the war in Ukraine is part of a general confrontation between the West and East, the leaders of the superpowers (USA, EU, Russia, China, India, etc.) are jointly called upon to provide a solution to the current critical problems of humanity, which affect all peoples and bring the West into direct conflict with the countries of the East. This War in Ukraine, as everyone has seen, is not a solution but leads along a very dangerous path towards a Nuclear Holocaust. In 2022, countries, especially the strong ones, must solve their problems through Diplomacy alone and never exercise their super-power military muscle, which always leads to war and catastrophe! PEACE needs strong world leaders for Peace, not weak ones for War!

Thomas Saras, CEO & President

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The opinions expressed by the writers and columnists do not necessarily reflect that of the management of the North American Filipino Star nor its editors.

Federal budget 2022: Here are the highlights

CBC News · Posted: Apr 07, 2022

HOME-BUYING HELP

The budget promises to introduce tax-free savings accounts that would give first-time home buyers the chance to save up to \$40,000. Contributions would be tax-deductible and withdrawals to buy a first home would not be taxed. The program is expected to provide \$725 million in support over five years.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

The government is launching a new housing accelerator fund — worth \$4 billion over five years — to help municipalities speed up housing development. The goal is to create 100,000 new housing units in the next five years. The budget also extends the rapid housing initiative, pledging \$1.5 billion over two years to create at least 6,000 new housing units to help tackle homelessness.

DENTAL CARE

Moving on a commitment in its confidence and supply agreement with the NDP, the government is promising \$5.3 billion over five years and \$1.7 billion each year thereafter for a national dental care program. It will begin this year with children under 12 years old and expand to cover Canadians under 18 years old, seniors and people with disabilities in 2023. The program, which is to be fully implemented by 2025, is limited to families with incomes of less than \$90,000 a year. For those with an income of less than \$70,000, no co-payments will be required.

DEFENCE AND SECURITY

The budget boosts defence



Honourable Chrystia Freeland, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance presents the Federal Budget 2022, April 7, 2022 at the House of Commons while Prime Minister Justin Trudeau listens.

spending by \$8 billion over five years, bringing Canada's defence budget to a projected 1.5 per cent of GDP. That falls short of the two per cent of GDP NATO has called on member nations to spend — especially since Russia's war on Ukraine began — but the \$8 billion includes \$500 million in military aid to Ukraine. The budget also earmarks \$875 million over five years to combat rising threats to cybersecurity, and \$100 million over six years to strengthen leadership in the Canadian Armed Forces, modernize the military justice system and implement culture change in the CAF.

ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

To help meet Canada's climate change targets, the budget offers \$2.6 billion over five years to finance a new

investment tax credit for businesses that spend money on carbon capture, utilization and storage (CCUS). The government also plans to extend incentives and expand eligibility for a program to entice more Canadians to buy electric cars, vans, trucks and SUVs, which will cost \$1.7 billion over five years. The government also plans to impose a sales mandate to ensure that at least 20 per cent of new light-duty vehicle sales will be zero-emission vehicles (ZEVs) by 2026; that market share is supposed to rise to at least 60 per cent by 2030 and 100 per cent by 2035. The budget also commits \$3.8B to launch Canada's first strategy to develop exploitation of critical minerals used in everything from phones to airplanes.

INDIGENOUS RECONCILIATION

The budget promises to spend an additional \$11 billion over six years to support Indigenous children, families and communities, including \$4 billion for housing over seven years. It pledges \$4 billion over six years to help ensure access for First Nations children to health, social and educational services through Jordan's Principle. Almost \$400 million over two years will go to improve infrastructure on reserves, including \$247 million for water and wastewater infrastructure. To address a key commitment on reconciliation, the budget sets aside \$210 million to help communities document, locate and memorialize burial sites at former residential schools. The money also will help the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation pay for a new building and assist with the "complete disclosure" of federal documents related to residential schools. The budget sets aside just over \$5 million over five years to allow the RCMP to assist in community-led investigations into burial sites at former residential schools.

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

In line with the government's diversity and inclusion agenda, the budget promises \$100 million over five years for a federal LGBTQ2 action plan, \$85 million more to support ongoing work on the anti-racism strategy and \$50 million to support Black-led and Black-serving community organizations. It also commits \$15 million to support local journalism in underserved communities and to help racialized and religious minority journalists present their experience and perspectives.



Anthony Housefather

MP - Mount Royal / Député - Mont-Royal

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From Page 1 Presidential elections

1986, when the peaceful “People Power” protests toppled the Marcos regime. The family returned to the country shortly after the death of the elder Mr. Marcos in 1989.

Despite the exile, the Marcos name never truly left the political establishment.

Mr. Marcos, known by his boyhood nickname, “Bongbong,” served as vice governor, governor and congressman in Ilocos Norte, the family stronghold, for most of the period between the 1980s and 2010. That year, he entered the national political scene when he was elected senator. Imelda Marcos, his 92-year-old mother, ran for president twice and lost in the 1990s.

Rehabilitating the family name has been a recurring theme. Over the decades, the Marcoses have sought to target young voters with no memory of martial law or the torture and killing of political prisoners. Fifty-six percent of the voting population in the Philippines is aged between 18 and 41, and most did not witness the atrocities of the Marcos regime — ideal circumstances for the spread of disinformation, opponents say.

In January, Twitter said it had removed more than 300 accounts promoting Mr. Marcos’s presidential bid for violating rules on spam and manipulation. The influential Roman Catholic Church in the Philippines said in a statement that it was appalled by the “historical revisionism” in the election, and “the attempt to delete or destroy our collective memory through the seeding of lies and false narratives.”

Mr. Marcos’s spokesman, Vic Rodriguez, said there was “no certainty” that the Twitter accounts belonged to his supporters.

Last week, Meta, Facebook’s parent company, said it had suspended more than 400 election-related accounts, pages and groups for violating its standards. The company cited a video on Mr. Marcos’s official Facebook page that falsely accused his election rival, Leni Robredo, who is vice president, of cheating in the 2016 vice-presidential race. (The president and vice president are elected separately in the Philippines.)

Several groups have sought to disqualify Mr. Marcos’s candidacy, pointing to a 1995 tax evasion conviction and the \$3.9 billion in estate taxes that his family still owes the government. Mr. Marcos, 64, has brushed off the attacks as “fake news,” and refused to participate in nearly all presidential debates.

Instead, Mr. Marcos has used social media to reach a captive audience online, reviewing viral TikTok dances and agreeing to makeovers.

At a rally in Las Piñas, Ella Mae Alipao, 15, said that she got most of her news about Mr. Marcos from TikTok and Facebook, and that she did not “believe much in books.” After Mr.



Six presidential candidates (left to right) labor leader Leody de Guzman, Sen. Panfilo Lacson, former Sen. Ferdinand Marcos, Jr., Manila Mayor Isko Moreno, Sen. Manny Pacquiao, and Vice-president Leni Robredo

Marcos’s father was ousted, Ms. Alipao said, “the Filipinos found out how good he was; that’s when they realized that they should have made him president for a longer time.”

Mr. Marcos has made similar comments: “I’m not going to vindicate my father’s name because his name doesn’t need vindication,” he said in 1995. “I am so confident that history will judge him well.”

In the 36 years since the father was ousted, many Filipinos have become disillusioned with the country’s democracy. Poverty is widespread, income inequality remains high and few people trust their

10,000 volunteers to wage a counteroffensive against the Marcos campaign by releasing videos on the economic devastation and human rights violations of the Marcos years.

“It’s probably too late,” he said.

The Marcoses have been remarkably adept at avoiding jail time. Mr. Marcos was sentenced to up to three years in prison in 1995 for tax-related convictions, but his sentence was overturned on appeal two years later, even though his conviction remained on the books. In 2018, his mother was sentenced to up to 11 years in prison for creating private



Ferdinand Marcos Jr. speaks to supporters at the Philippine Arena, Bulacan province, north of Manila, on Feb. 8, 2022 © AP

elected leaders. When Mr. Duterte came to power, he promised radical change, ushering in a new era of strongman politics that has been embraced by many across the country.

Mr. Duterte formed an alliance with the Marcoses early in his six-year presidential term. In 2016, he arranged for the father’s body to be moved to the Philippines’ equivalent of Arlington National Cemetery, despite protests. And it was not until Sara Duterte, Mr. Duterte’s daughter, made the surprise announcement that she would run for vice president instead of president that Mr. Marcos gained his large lead in the polls.

In recent weeks, the opposition has been working furiously to counter the false narratives online about the Marcoses. Sergio Osmena III, a former political prisoner, senator and a grandson of the fourth president of the Philippines, said he had hired

foundations to hide her unexplained wealth. She posted bail, and the Supreme Court is still reviewing her appeal.

The government has recovered just \$3.3 billion of the estimated \$10 billion that the Marcoses are accused of stealing, but \$2.4 billion in assets are still under litigation, with various groups tussling over them. Should Mr. Marcos win the presidency, many fear those proceedings, along with the \$3.9 billion in estate taxes, will be swept away, cementing the false idea that the Marcoses are innocent.

Among some young voters, that view has already taken hold. “If he is a thief, how come he hasn’t been jailed?” asked Rjay Garcia, a 19-year-old rug salesman, at a recent rally in the city of Santa Rosa. Mr. Garcia said that he believed the cases against Mr. Marcos’s family were meant “to destroy his reputation,” and that he

had “never heard” of the People Power protests.

Even those with intimate memories of the country’s struggle for democracy may feel it is time to move on.

Benjamin Abalos Jr., Mr. Marcos’s campaign manager, led protests against the Marcos regime as a student council officer of the Ateneo Law School. He said he never talked about those days with his candidate. “Whatever justice was achieved in those 36 years, I think that’s already enough,” he said. “Perhaps now it’s about moving forward.”

Such attitudes could signal that a full rehabilitation of the Marcos name may soon be complete. The family now includes a governor, a senator, a mayor and a possible congressman. Mr. Marcos’s eldest son, Ferdinand Alexander, 28, is running for a congressional seat in Ilocos Norte, where his cousin, Matthew Marcos Manotoc, is governor.

Mr. Marcos has seized on his alliance with Ms. Duterte to present himself as a unifier who is ready to lead, but his political track record is mostly thin.

While in his six years in the Senate he helped pass laws on protecting older people and expanding emergency relief to children, nearly 70 percent of the 52 laws he pushed for were on designating holidays and festivals, renaming highways and reapportioning provinces and cities, a review by The New York Times found.

An investigation in 2015 found that his résumé on the Senate website had been embellished to include a bachelor of arts from the University of Oxford. The university later said he did not complete his degree, but obtained instead a special diploma in social studies. Mr. Marcos has denied misrepresenting his education.

Though Mr. Marcos is seen as the front-runner in the May 9 election, rallies for Ms. Robredo, the vice president, have drawn hundreds of thousands of young supporters in recent weeks. Hecklers have shouted “magnanakaw,” or “thief,” at Mr. Marcos’s motorcade, and the petitions to disqualify his candidacy are still under appeal, though experts say they are unlikely to succeed.

“The struggle of man against power is the struggle of memory against forgetting,” said Ms. Ressa, the journalist, recalling a quote from the author Milan Kundera. She described the election as a “microcosm of a global battle for facts.”

“If facts don’t win,” she said, “we’ll have a whole new history.”##

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Ontario Filipino-Canadian community celebrates international women's day

By: Tony A. San Juan, OCT Retired

The Filipino-Canadian community held its "International Women's Day" in Toronto, Ontario on April 3, 2022. Sponsored by Ms. Agnes P. Miranda of World Financial Group (WFG) and organized by the Philippine Independence Day Council (PIDC), the 8-hour event honoured 80 deserving women of distinction in Ontario, Canada. The historic occasion was held at the FV Foods Banquet Hall, Scarborough, Toronto with 150 dignitaries, special guests, and recipients in attendance.



PIDC and WFG I.W.D. Honouree, B. K. Jimenez with PhilConGen Orontes Castro, MP Salma Zahid, and Agnes Miranda.



PIDC Directors and Officers. L-R: Aris Elefano, Danny Orbillo, Suzy Llanera, Rory Elefano, Agnes Miranda, Ramon Estaris, Jean Pardo, and Melinda Manlapaz.

Distinctively, this was the first-ever event conducted "under one roof" to appreciate the many accomplishments and achievements "ng mga kababaihan" of Filipino women regarding their "individual leadership, valuable advocacy work, and significant contributions" to business, finance, medicine, media, entrepreneurship, education, social, civic, and political affairs, and specific interests in the Ontario landscape. The event honourees received their "Medallions" and "Certificates of Appreciation" from WFG and PIDC, respectively, as well as congratulatory scrolls from Federal Members of Parliament Marco Mendicino, and Shaun Chen.

Led by Ms. Agnes P. Miranda, WFG senior executive vice-chairman and Ramon Estaris, PIDC president, the other distinguished event guests who also gave inspirational and congratulatory remarks included Philippine Consul General Orontes Castro, Federal Members of Parliament Rechie Valdez, Salma Zahid & Ya'ara Saks, MPP candidates Paul Sagui & Mazhar Shafiq, and CMC-AO's Sid Ikeda & Mar-Mar Cho. WFG's Agnes Miranda, in her special address, "exhorted everyone coming to terms with characteristic reciprocal understanding, desirable unity, and full cooperation" among the strategic players and influencers "for a much better and more

productive Filipino Canadian community".

The occasion was jointly hosted by Danny Orbillo and Ramon Estaris who also both rendered popular songs. Among the notable recipients were Cecille Araneta, Wendy Arena, Carol Banez, Jenifer Camacho, Lilac Cana, Norma Carpio, Mar-Mar Cho, Paulina Corpuz, Corie Coutts, Tess Cusipag, Claire De la Gana, Donna Estaris, Marie Ikeda, B. K. Jimenez, Agnes Miranda, Ella Miranda, Gizele Mirasol, Mila Nabor, Michelle Ramos, Nita Redjik, Theresa Redula, Mary Ann San Juan, Christine Santos, Monina Serrano, Teresa Torralba, and Beverly Vergel. Other honourees were all the female officers of PIDC and other community women leaders & personalities. (A complete list of awardees is available at www.pidc.com).

Among the musical entertainers were Lilac Cana, Marivic Fuentes, Ryan Orlanda, Chyrell S. Ronquillo, and Zeny Zagala. The lively event was ably coordinated by the PIDC Board of Directors & Executive Officers composed of Aris Elefano, Rory Elefano, Suzy Llanera, Melinda Manlapaz, Danny Orbillo, and Jean Pardo. They were equally supported by Ben Corpuz, Tom Tan, Nanding Ticzon, and Al Tupe.

The celebration, as hopefully expected, was an enjoyable and memorable evening of good fun, food, & fellowship, sharing, mutual understanding, and wonderful revelry.

A taste of Manila street festival 2022 edition is back

By: Tony A. San Juan, OCT-Retired

It's back! Steam ahead! Yes. The ever-popular Toronto's "Taste of Manila" is set and ready to go. At a soft launch on April 10, 2022, the International Entertainment Company and the Taste Of Manila Inc. jointly announced the pag-babalik at pag-diriwangreturn and showing of the 9th

edition of the Taste of Manila Street Festival- "Tuloy ang Saya!" event, the pride of Filipino-Canadian communities in Canada. The much-admired free community affair is to be held on August 20 and 21, 2022(Saturday & Sunday) in the Little Manila area, from Bathurst Street corner Wilson Avenue up to Yorkdowns Drive, North York, Toronto.

The official announcement was made at a gathering of some members of the Fil-Can media, the directors, and officers of both the International Entertainment Company and the Taste of Manila, Inc., and special guests at TopSilog Restaurant, Bathurst/ Wilson area, North York. Cecille Araneta, a business entrepreneur & promoter, heads the non-profit International Entertainment Company (IEC), and Rolando Mangante, a notable community leader, is the owner and CEO of Taste of Manila, Inc. (TOM, Inc.).

North York Ward 6 Councillor James Pasternak was the guest of honour and speaker at the one-hour conference. Pasternak reiterated his full support for the summer event

celebrating Filipino Canadian culture and heritage. He encouraged the leaders & members of the community and the event organizers as well to collaboratively engage and pursue anew a successful fest.

The 2-day festival will meaningfully showcase the best of Philippine cuisine, arts, music & entertainment, and commodity products. As the key festival organizer, the International Entertainment Company (IEC) is now doing its marketing and promotion drive by soliciting and accepting event sponsors and vendors. Interested parties are encouraged to contact Cecille Araneta at 437-227-2888 or Rolly Mangante at 416-845-4984. (Tony A. San Juan, OCT

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Fourth anniversary of proclamation of Heritage Month

By Jeannette Perignon, FHSM Secretary

March began with renewed optimism as the government announced that in-person gatherings may resume, with some restrictions, i.e. mandatory wearing of masks. The Filipino Heritage Society of Montreal (FHSM) is committed to continue its human connection, as well as its live-streaming format which has become a norm since the pandemic started.

Respecting that each of us need to move comfortably at our own pace, whether people are ready to join in person or not quite there yet, the FHSM went ahead in organizing an event to celebrate the 4th Anniversary of the proclamation of June as Filipino Heritage Month in the CDN-NDG borough – motioned by the former Councillor of Snowdon, Marvin Rotrand and seconded by former Councillor of Darlington, Lionel Perez. It was a resounding success and the Filipino community is grateful and proud to finally have a month dedicated to celebrating its heritage.

The celebration was held on March 16, 2022 at P'lengke – La Mesa, 4693 Van Horne, Montreal from 5:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. The evening was well attended, approximately 55 people present. It was a combination of celebrating the 4th Anniversary and the presentation of Certificates of Achievement for iPad and Tablet Users – Sixteen Seniors successfully completed the course, free of charge (funded through Employment and Social Development Canada – New Horizons for Seniors Program).

The guests enjoyed the “Meet and Greet” and social dancing from 5-6 p.m. and exactly at 7 p.m., as planned, the Host and Officer-in-Charge for the celebration, Jeannette Pérignon



Sixteen graduates/achievers: (Front left to right) Nancy Karidis, Rebecca Aguilar, Dolores Belandres, Sylvia Lemaire, Jeannette Pérignon, Evangeline Ruance, Elma Bulatao, Amelia Manon-og, Editha Fedalizo, Luzviminda Mazzone, Fely Bisares, Paul Imperial. (Back from left to right) Kimberly Gultia, Al Abdon, MP Sameer Zuberi, Pierrefonds-Dollard; Councilor Sonny Moroz, Snowdon, MP Anthony Housefather, Mount Royal; Ricardo Ribaya, Gloria Diggs, Valent Lloyd Hughes, Yvonne Apelo.

welcomed everyone and introduced the Keynote speaker, Mr. Sameer Zuberi, MP of Pierrefonds-Dollard. Mr. Zuberi's speech was inspiring and thought-provoking which has left a significant impact on the audience. It was followed by the reading of Marvin Rotrand's letter by Kim Gultia, FHSM's Director of Outreach Programs. (Marvin Rotrand was in Indonesia at the time.) Kim Gultia eloquently read the letter that everyone surprisingly paid full attention to the message. It was then followed by Editha Fedalizo, FHSM's Director of Communications who introduced Mr. Anthony Housefather, MP of Mont Royal who gave the Inspirational Speech. Mr. Housefather shared his thoughts,

expertise, and valuable information - touched on issues like COVID pandemic, false news from social media, etc. which the audience benefited from listening and learning ways to prevent being fooled by fake information.

Mr. Al Abdon, FHSM Chairman called the 16 Senior recipients one by one as Anthony Housefather, assisted by Minda Mazzone, FHSM Treasurer, handed the Certificates of Achievement. The Seniors' faces glowed with pride and joy as they received their nicely framed certificates. This was followed by photo ops. The sixteen proud recipients were: (alphabetically arranged) Rebecca Aguilar – Tablet and iPad; Yvonne Apelo – Tablet; Dolores

Belandres – Tablet and iPad; Gloria Biggs – Tablet; Fely Bisares – Tablet and iPad; Elma Bulatao – Tablet and iPad; Editha Fedalizo – iPad; Kim Gultia – Tablet; Paul Imperial – iPad; Nancy Karidis – Tablet and iPad; Sylvia Lemaire – iPad; Valent Lloyd-Hughes – Tablet; Amelia Manon-og – iPad; Jeannette Pérignon – Tablet and iPad; Ricardo Ribaya – iPad; Evangeline Ruance – Tablet.

As scheduled, the most-awaited moment – buffet dinner started at 7:30 p.m. and lasted till 8:15 p.m. Everyone seemed to have enjoyed the delicious meal. The presence of some community leaders were acknowledged by Mr. Al Abdon. Intermittent songs were rendered by Manny Rosello (“Yoyoy” of Montreal).

The “Pasaway Dancers” (Rebecca Aguilar, Dolores Belandres, Fely Bisares, Valent Lloyd-Hughes, Jeannette Pérignon, and Evangeline Ruance) graced the evening with their folkdance “Carinosa” and “Hustle” line dance.

Sonny Moroz, Councillor of Snowdon gave a brief but profound speech on how he takes his new job seriously, present and attentive to those in need of help, and supports the Filipino community. Stephanie Valenzuela, Councillor of Darlington – first female Filipino ever elected in Quebec – expressed her gratitude for the massive support she got from the Filipino community during the election and stated her determination to live up to the expectation of everyone – to be the voice of the people.

Editha Fedalizo gave the closing remarks and the people continued to dance until 10:00 p.m. - leaving with big smiles – evidence of a successful 4th Anniversary and Recognition Awards Celebration!

From Page 1 Pope apologizes

admitted that physical and sexual abuse was rampant at the schools, with students beaten for speaking their native languages. That legacy of that abuse and isolation from family has been cited by Indigenous leaders as a root cause of the epidemic rates of alcohol and drug addiction now on Canadian reservations.

After hearing their stories all week, Francis told the Indigenous groups that the colonial project ripped children from their families, cutting off their roots, traditions and culture and provoking inter-generational trauma that is still being felt today. He said it was a “counter-witness” to the same Gospel that the residential school system purported to uphold.

“For the deplorable conduct of those members of the Catholic Church, I ask forgiveness of the Lord,” Francis said. “And I want to tell you from my heart, that I am greatly pained. And I unite myself with the Canadian bishops in apologizing.”

The trip to Rome by the Indigenous leaders, elders and survivors was years in the making but gained momentum last year after the discovery of hundreds of unmarked graves outside

some of the residential schools in Canada. The three groups met separately with Francis over several hours this week, telling him their stories, culminating with Friday's audience.

The president of the Metis National Council, Cassidy Caron, said the Metis elder sitting next to her burst into tears upon hearing what she said was a long-overdue apology.

“The pope's words today were historic, to be sure. They were necessary, and I appreciate them deeply,” Caron told reporters in St. Peter's Square. “And I now look forward to the pope's visit to Canada, where he can offer those sincere words of apology directly to our survivors and their families, whose acceptance and healing ultimately matters most.”

First Nations' Chief Gerald Antoine echoed the sentiment, saying Francis recognized the cultural “genocide” that had been inflicted on Indigenous peoples.

“Today is a day that we've been waiting for. And certainly one that will be uplifted in our history,” he said. “It's a historical first step, however, only a first step.”

He and other delegates said there was far more for the church to do on the path of reconciliation, but that for now Indigenous leaders insisted on

being involved in organizing the papal visit to make sure Francis stops in places that hold spiritual importance to their people.

Natan Obed, president of the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, thanked Francis for addressing all the issues the Indigenous delegations had brought to him. “And he did so in a way that really showed his empathy towards the Indigenous people of Canada,” he said.

Nearly three-quarters of Canada's 130 residential schools were run by Catholic missionary congregations.

Last May, the Tk'emlups te Secwepemc Nation announced the discovery of 215 gravesites near Kamloops, British Columbia, that were found using ground-penetrating radar. It was Canada's largest Indigenous residential school and the discovery of the graves was the first of numerous, similar grim sites across the country.

Even before the grave sites were discovered, Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission specifically called for a papal apology to be delivered on Canadian soil for the church's role in the abuses.

In addition, as part of a settlement of a lawsuit involving the Canadian government, churches and the approximately 90,000 surviving

students, Canada paid reparations that amounted to billions of dollars being transferred to Indigenous communities. The Catholic Church, for its part, has paid over \$50 million and now intends to add \$30 million more over the next five years.

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, meanwhile, acknowledged Francis' apology and said he looked forward to having him deliver it in person in Canada.

“This apology would not have happened without the long advocacy of survivors who journeyed to tell their truths directly to the institution responsible and who recounted and relived their painful memories,” he said. “Today's apology is a step forward in acknowledging the truth of our past in order to right historical wrongs, but there is still work to be done.”

Francis said he felt shame for the role that Catholic educators had played in the harm, “in the abuse and disrespect for your identity, your culture and even your spiritual values,” he said. “It is evident that the contents of the faith cannot be transmitted in a way that is extraneous to the faith itself.”

“It is chilling to think of determined efforts to instill a sense of

See Page 7 Pope apologizes

Guy Lafleur to be honoured in national funeral May 3

Service will be held at Marie-Reine-du-Monde Cathedral in downtown Montreal, after two days of visitations
CBC News · Posted: Apr 24, 2022

Quebec Premier François Legault has confirmed a national funeral will be held for Guy Lafleur, the Montreal Canadiens superstar and



Guy Lafleur in Canadiens jersey No. 10 (Photo by Richard Wolowicz/Getty Image)



NHL legend Guy Lafleur arrives at the first-ever hockey game played at the newly-inaugurated Videotron Centre, Saturday, September 12, 2015 in Quebec City. Montreal Canadiens legend Lafleur underwent heart surgery on Thursday, the NHL club has confirmed. THE CANADIAN PRESS/Jacques Boissinot

hockey Hall of Famer who died at the age of 70 on Friday.

Legault tweeted the decision Sunday morning, saying Lafleur's family had agreed to the Quebec government's proposal.

The service will be held at 11 a.m. May 3 at the Marie-Reine-du-Monde Cathedral in downtown Montreal.

Visitations will be held at the Bell Centre May 1 from 12 p.m. to 8 p.m. and May 2 from 10:30 a.m. to 3

the church." But he did not apologize.

The Argentine pope is no stranger to offering apologies for his own errors and for what he himself has termed the "crimes" of the institutional church. Most significantly, during a 2015 visit to Bolivia, he apologized for the sins, crimes and offenses committed by the church against Indigenous peoples during the colonial-era conquest of the Americas.

He made clear those same colonial crimes occurred far more recently in Canada at the Catholic-run residential schools.

"Your identity and culture has been wounded, many families separated, many children have become victims of this homogenization action, supported by the idea that progress occurs through ideological colonization, according to programs studied at the table rather than respecting the lives of peoples," he said.##

p.m., when the Montreal Canadiens legend will be laid in a chapel of rest.

Lafleur, who led the Canadiens to four straight Stanley Cup titles in the 1970s and is still the all-time points leader for the Habs, passed away at the age of 70. He had struggled with health conditions, including a recurrence of lung cancer in October of 2020.

The announcement of a national funeral for Lafleur follows similar honours for fellow Canadiens

icons, Maurice Richard and Jean Béliveau, in 2000 and 2014 respectively.

Number 10 'in our collective memory'

Legault held a news conference after Lafleur's death Friday, announcing the government was in discussions with the family about a national funeral.

"I think it's a whole people who are in mourning and it's normal that they can bid their farewells to Guy Lafleur," Legault said.

"Number 10 will be in our collective memory, always."

Legault said the government has also opened an online book of condolences on the Quebec.ca website, so all Quebecers who wish to share a message in honour of Lafleur can do so. The registry will then be passed on to his family.

Sunday, the Montreal Canadiens said it would be honouring Lafleur at its game this evening. All of the team's players will be wearing a Number 10 patch on their jerseys and participate in a ceremony celebrating Lafleur and his accomplishments.

The Canadiens also created an online book of condolences, inviting people to share their memories of the hockey icon.

From Page 6 Pope apologizes

inferiority, to rob people of their cultural identity, to sever their roots, and to consider all the personal and social effects that this continues to entail: unresolved traumas that have become inter-generational traumas," he said.

After the papal apology, the audience continued with joyous performances of Indigenous prayers by drummers, dancers and fiddlers that Francis watched, applauded and gave a thumbs up to. The delegates then presented him with gifts, including snowshoes. Francis, for his part, returned a First Nations cradle that the delegation had left with him overnight as he pondered his apology.

Francis' apology went far beyond what Pope Benedict XVI had offered in 2009 when an Assembly of First Nations delegation visited. At the time, Benedict only expressed his "sorrow at the anguish caused by the deplorable conduct of some members of

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PERSONALITY of the Month

By Fely Rosales Cariño



Reverend Orlan Racacho

It is with great honor that I present to you our Personality of the Month, Retired Mental Health Advocate and Minister of the Gospel, Pastor Orlan Racacho. And what a personality! Based on his voluminous achievements, one might dub him 'the man who never sleeps'! How else to explain all those things he accomplished? His staggering profile easily leaves one in awe. Without further ado, let's meet him.

Pastor Orlan hails from Santa Catalina, Ilocos Sur. The Gorospe-Racacho clan was quite popular in the town. His grandpa was the Chief of Police when he was a young boy. He is related to Shirley Gorospe, a former beauty queen and a Philippine movie star from the 50s to the 60s. He is also cousin to radio personality Lito Gorospe, former spokesperson of the late President Ferdinand Marcos. His family were fishing pioneers in Aparri, Cagayan and were involved with the cargo trucking business that moved essential products from Cagayan to Ilocos and vice versa.

Born and raised by a very religious family, he was expected to be a priest. In his elementary days, he was trained as an altar boy. By providence, things took a different turn in 1953 when he started reading the Bible, God's Holy Word. This inspired him to a deeper understanding of "The One" who became flesh and dwelt among us as we beheld the glory of the begotten Son of the Father, Jesus Christ, in whom we have redemption through His blood (Ephesians 1:7) so that we might be for the praise of His glory (Ephesians 1:12).

Pastor Orlan migrated to Canada in 1965 and married that same year to his longtime fiancé of eight years, the late Lucy Racacho (nee Bermejo), undoubtedly the love of his life. Lucy practiced nursing for 33 years at the Santa Cabrini Hospital in Montreal and retired early in 1997. She succumbed to Parkinson after 10 challenging years and passed away on December 27, 2017. They have two children, Lemuel and Lorraine Grace. Dr. Lemuel Racacho, Ph.D. is the Clinical Molecular Geneticist at the Alberta Children's Hospital in Calgary and Professor at the University of Calgary. In 2015, armed with a deep love of the Lord and a Good Samaritan spirit, he led a

medical charity mission to Cambodia. And Pastor Orlan's daughter, Lorraine Grace Racacho Matezos is a successful real estate broker in California. 2015 was a very good year as Pastor Orlan and Lucy celebrated their 50th Golden Wedding Anniversary on July 4.

According to their proud Lolo, their four grandchildren Leah Marie (18), Chloe Michelle (16), Olivia Nikki (14) and Noah James (12) are doing very well in school and have written a touching letter: "We miss Lola very much, but we praise and thank the Lord for her love and the spiritual legacy she left us especially about prayer and the love of Christ. Lola Lucy will remain in our hearts forever. Lola, see you in glory land, in the Eastern Gate of Heaven, our eternal home." Pastor Orlan's tears flow as he reads this heartfelt letter, which he sometimes read at the graveyard of Lola Lucy.

Reverend Racacho's passion for mental health advocacy started when he was a psychology student leader at the Far Eastern University (FEU). He was also an active youth church leader and one of the Most Outstanding Campus Personalities and admired student leaders at FEU. He was also the overall president of the Human Relations Clubs of all the universities in the Greater Manila and suburbs. And a most noteworthy endeavor was his pilot project at the Philippine Mental Hospital in Mandaluyong, Rizal entitled "Literacy Survey & Letter Writing projects (first of its kind!).

As a young mental health advocate, Pastor Orlan conducted a vigorous mental health program of education and information through seminars and workshops all over Mountain Province and La Union in cooperation with the Department of Education and Department of Health with the theme: "Mental Health is Everybody's Concern." He was active with the Baguio Jaycees and gained more experience in community volunteer work. He had good relations with the local media, resulting in favorable media coverage for all his mental community programs.

Pastor Orlan worked at the Douglas Hospital (formerly known as Verdun Protestant Hospital) as Director of Behavioral and Recreational Therapy. He

received his psychotherapy training at the Adler Institute of Psychoanalysis in Chicago. He then ventured into the import-export business under the trade name that bears the initials of his wife Lucy Bermejo Racacho (LUBERA).

In 1965, he was an official delegate of the First Baptist Church of Manila to the International Council of Christian Churches (ICCC) in Geneva, but due to his new job at the Douglas Hospital as well as their wedding plans, he opted not to attend. He was very much involved with the ICCC as Chairman of Asian Missions. The ICCC, founded in 1948, worked to expose the World Council of Churches with its anti-Israel propaganda and unbiblical ecumenical agenda as one of its objectives.

Between his business and deaconship at People's Church of Montreal, he found time to serve in various community and civic endeavors that started in 1965 with the Montreal Board of Trade and Canada Jaycees in preparation for the Montreal Expo 67 Jaycees International Congress and served as Chairman of the Welcoming Committee. He was the first Filipino wholesale trader at the National Trade Shows in Montreal and Toronto with showrooms at the Place Bonaventure and the Toronto CN National Exhibition.

In 1968, he invited former Philippine Ambassador to Washington Salvador Lopez as guest of the Philippine Week at Man and His World (M&HW) and Mayor Jean Drapeau who came to announce the coming opening of the Philippine Embassy in Ottawa at Place des Nations, to the jubilant celebration of the Montreal Filipino community. Pastor Orlan served as Vice Chairman of the Quebec Ethnic Folk Arts Council (QEFAC). The hoisting of the Philippine flag for the first time on Canadian soil was decidedly breathtaking and marked a milestone for the Filipino community in Montreal and Canada.

In the 70s, Pastor Orlan sponsored the 'Balikbayan Roadshow' in cooperation with the Philippine Department of Tourism which brought to Montreal and Toronto some of the finest and talented Philippine artists headed by Asia's Queen of Songs, Pilita Corales, with Mercy Molina, Apo King, Bert Marcelo, Elizabeth Ramsey, Gilopez Kabayao, among many others. A warm welcome awaited them at Place Des Arts with standing ovations! Another interesting event was the 1976 Montreal Olympics where Pastor Orlan served as Vice-Consul, appointed by former Philippine Ambassador Dr. Privado Jimenez to assist the Philippine Delegation.

Pastor Orlan was a two-time past President of FAMAS and two-year term Past National Chairman, United Council of Filipino Associations in Canada. In the 70s he was very much involved with the Multiculturalism program of the Federal Government during the Pierre Elliot Trudeau era and served as a member of the Canadian Consultative Commission on Citizenship, Immigration & Multiculturalism. The former Philippine Ambassador to Canada, Dr. Privado Jimenez, nominated Pastor Orlan for his prestigious "Silver Jubilee Medal Award" on the occasion of the ascension of Her Majesty, the Queen to the throne in 1977. Together with other national ethnic leaders, he was presented to the Queen at a luncheon event at the Confederation Hall, Parliament Hill in Ottawa.

In 1977, he spearheaded a very successful nationwide telethon fund campaign for the benefit of the Mindanao

earthquake-tsunami disaster with the help of the Canadian Red Cross. This was done with the cooperation of CFCF TV and Radio Station, at the old address on Ogilvy Avenue, hosted by then news anchor John Robertson.

As an entrepreneur in the 80s, through his own company Lubera Enterprise, he exported above-ground swimming pools to the Philippines. And at one time, he was the Keynote Speaker at the weekly luncheon meeting of the Export-Import Association of the Philippines at the Navy Club located near the Rizal Monument at Luneta Park. In the 80s and 90s, he traveled extensively with his family to the Caribbean, Asia, and the Middle East with a total of 26 countries! Due to his love for tennis, the family often brought their tennis gears and outfits. Being an avid tennis player for over 20 years, not to mention regularly playing interclub competitive tournaments at their indoor tennis club in the South Shore, must be a testament to his physical fitness!

And Pastor Orlan's awards are many! In 1993, he received a colorful Plaque of Recognition, presented to him and his wife, by the Israel Ministry of Tourism in Jerusalem for their successful church group tours to Israel, "The Twelve Tribes of Israel". He also received a distinguished award from the CFMB Ethnic Radio Station as the first Filipino radio producer in Montreal. In 2013, he was awarded the FAMAS Golden Jubilee Award. And in 2019, he was recognized, along with other distinguished Filipino community leaders, as one of the Most Outstanding Filipino in Canada, America, and the Philippines. He was very thankful to Mme. Norma Flores Vohra who nominated him. There were other commendations as well. (One could almost say he's won the Oscars many times over!).

In 2001, Pastor Orlan graduated from the renowned Moody Bible Institute in Chicago, and that same year was ordained and conferred the title, "Reverend" by four ordained senior pastors of the Island Baptist Church in Honolulu, Hawaii. That same year by the grace of the Lord, along with his late beloved wife Lucy and their prayer partners, he organized the Fellowship Bible Baptist Church and held services at the basement of their home in Brossard until they moved downtown where they eventually purchased a synagogue building at the current address, 3737 Van Horne Avenue, Montreal.

In all his endeavours, I would guess that the closest to his heart would be his passion for Israel which started with his Christian belief, citing shared Judeo-Christian values due to "perceived commonalities described in the New Testament epistles, especially in the life and work of the Apostle Paul", as he says. He is a prayer partner and supporter of "Friends of Zion Museum" in Jerusalem and the Jerusalem Prayer Team and the International Fellowship of Christians and Jews.

He also highlighted the "Open Doors Philippine Monument" at the Rishon LeZion Holocaust memorial near Tel Aviv. The monument with its 3-door architectural design (by Filipino artist Luis Junyee Yee, Jr.) and inaugurated in 2009 was made of the Philippine 'narra' wood and was featured in the joint printing of a commemorative Philippine and Israel stamps. Its significance? The first door represents the Philippines rescue of over 1200 Jews from the Holocaust that made

See Page 18 Reverend Orlan

500 Years of Christianity: A Legacy of Faith and Service

By: Alvin Dahan Veloso

Fervent, devoted, religious, and deeply spiritual are some of the defining traits of the Filipino Catholic image that Ferdinand Magellan and the early missionaries had gifted to Filipinos five hundred years ago.

Philippine Christianity evolved from the Spanish culture, customs and traditions shaped to some degree by indigenous beliefs and practices.

Religion is intertwined with the lives of Filipinos whose love for celebrations is centered mostly on Christmas, Holy Week, Sufferings of Christ, Sto. Niño, Devotions to the Blessed Mother, Feast of Saints, and Memorials for the Dead. Filipinos believe in the redeeming value of prayers that generates hope.

Before Christianity, Islam, Buddhism and the indigenous beliefs had been part of the cultural mix in Southeast Asia; but adversities notwithstanding, the zeal of the missionaries had powered them to victory of the cross.

Magellan sowed the seeds of Christianity on March 16, 1521 with the baptism of Rajah Humabon, his wife and followers. Unfortunately, his life was cut short by Lapu-Lapu, the archrival of Rajah Humabon.

The annual sinulog festivity, especially in Cebu, is a reminder of the introduction of Christianity, symbolized by the gift-giving of the Santo Niño statue to Queen Juana, baptism and the planting of the cross by Magellan, as token of friendship.

When Miguel Lopez de Legaspi arrived in 1565 from New Spain (Mexico), he renamed the former St. Lazarus Islands to Philippines, in honor of King



Fr. Elago leading the palm procession

Dominicans occupied the Tagalog regions; the Jesuits and the Recollects were in the Visayan islands. They built historic churches some of which are still extant. The schools they established were famous and competitive. The natives learned how to read and write,



Blessing of the palms

Phillip II of Spain.

The Augustinians came with Legaspi, followed by the Jesuits, Dominicans, Franciscans, Recollects (Recoletos) and the Benedictines. Their arrival had helped the process of Christianization and hispanization of the country.

The Augustinians and the

and were taught the basic tenets of Catholicism.

To thank Almighty God for the gift of faith, and for other bountiful blessings, the Conference of Catholic Bishops of the Philippines (CCBP) initiated the yearlong festivity on April 4, 2021 for the 500th anniversary celebration which ended on April 24,

2022.

Auxiliary Bishop Alain Faubert of Montreal officiated the eucharistic mass at Notre -Dame-des-Philippines Catholic

The papal nuncios to Spain, Guatemala, Haiti, and Israel-Palestine are Filipinos. Archbishop Bernardito Auza from Talibon, Bohol was previously the permanent Vatican Observer at the United Nations and nuncio to Haiti, was reassigned to Spain by Pope Francis.

The canonizations of Lorenzo Ruiz, the first Filipino saint and Pedro Calungsod are the crowning jewels of the Catholic faith, giving further credence to the Philippines as the cradle of christianity in the Far East; third largest in the world behind Mexico and Brazil. The United States ranks fourth followed by Italy, France, Colombia, Poland, Spain and Argentina.

The missionary role of the Filipino Catholic Church "to bear witness to the Gospels" was set when the episcopal body of bishops had established in 1965 the Missionary Society of the Philippines as apostles of Christ. Their members serve in many parts of the world that need them. Father Roberto Ruben Elago's assignment to Montreal is a prime example of the Society's missionary apostolate abroad.

Popes Francis, Benedict XV and the late Pope Saint John Paul II echoed the same message "spread the Gospel" and be "fishers of men".

Christian lives should reflect a life of faith, hope and charity.

The Church needs leaders who will defend and promote the Catholic faith in the mold of Saints Lorenzo Ruiz, Pedro Calungsod, Mother Teresa of Calcutta, Maximilian Kolbe, St Therese of Lisieux, St Jean Vianney, the Canadian martyrs Isaac Jogues and Jean Brebeuf.

Society's values are constantly changing with the times. The classical battle of good and evil is at the forefront with war, politics, greed, power and materialism competing for relevance.

The Church is at the crossroad to find answers to the world's challenges and is asking the billion or so members to walk with Her to seek solutions and directions for the next millenium.

Synodality will be a test of our catholicity in "discerning God's will and listening to the Holy Spirit" - "to seek for best ways for every baptized person to fulfill the church mission of proclaiming God's love and salvation in Jesus Christ to the world."

Mission, to mark the culmination of the anniversary celebration. The mass was co-celebrated by Father Roberto Ruben Elago, M.S.P, the resident pastor; fully attended by the parishioners, friends and guests.

The quincentennial celebration was also an attestation of the primacy of the Philippines as the spiritual powerhouse of Asia; once blessed with eight cardinals. Two living Cardinals, Luis Antonio Tagle and Jose Fuerte Advincula Jr. occupy prominent positions in the Church. Cardinal Tagle is the Prefect of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples and Cardinal Jose Fuerte Advincula Jr., a member of the Dominican Order, is the new archbishop of Manila.

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A selfie photo taken by Terry White, PAB instructor at Gilmore College International. Photo shows Batch 12 PAB students during their practicum at Chateau Westmount. Seated from left: Amy Manon-og, instructor, Zenaida Kharroubi, director-general, Sophie Toledo PAB instructor. Standing behind are: Alvin Glen Abellera, Myra Wanawan, Luz Maderazo, Sonia Soto, Katrina Cempron, Lani Grace Abellera and John Arnel Abellera.



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Batch 10 PAB students at St. Marguerite CHSLD: L to R: Ethel Tugna, Janet Mahilum Haydock, Instructor Sophie Toledo, Anne (Guianne) Signey, Joesie Bingayen, Annabelle Allosa, and Lourdescita Lubang.

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Tochong Bangus

Tochong Bangus Recipe is composed of milkfish, tofu and fermented black bean sauce as the main ingredient. This milkfish recipe is Filipino style with Chinese influence. This is an old classic recipe of Filipinos. Tasty, yummy and delish! Note that you need to wash and rinse the Tausi beans for 2-3 times in running water, to remove the saltiness. If you don't rinse it with water, it will be very salty.

INGREDIENTS:

1 kilo bangus (milkfish), descaled, gutted and sliced into serving pieces
2 blocks tokwa (firm tofu), sliced into 1/2-inch thick
1/2 cup tausi (fermented black beans), *rinse 2-3x with running water to lessen the saltiness and drain
4 cloves garlic, minced
1 medium-sized onion, sliced
3 large tomatoes, sliced
1 thumb-sized ginger, julienned
2 tbsp soy sauce
3 tbsp oyster sauce
2 tbsp brown sugar
1/2 tsp whole peppercorns, coarsely crushed
1/2 tsp ground peppercorns
1/2 tsp five-spice powder
2 pcs red chili pepper, chopped
1/2 tsp salt or to taste
2 tbsp cornstarch, dissolved in 1/4 cup water
2 cups water
cooking oil for frying
3 tbsp cilantro or wansoy, chopped

INSTRUCTIONS:
Marinate fish and tofu: soy sauce and ground pepper. Marinate for about 15 minutes.

In a pan, pour oil and heat up over medium heat. Fry the tofu, occasionally turning over on each side until the color turns brown. Transfer into a paper lined plate and drain excess oil. Cut into thin rectangular square. Set aside. In the same pan, fry the marinated milkfish. Continue cooking until both sides are golden brown. Transfer on a paper towel lined platter. Set aside. In a clean sauce pot, sauté the onions, garlic and ginger. Add in tomatoes and continue to cook until the tomatoes are soft. Add the fermented black beans and chili. Saute for 2 to 3 minutes. Pour water and add in the oyster sauce and brown sugar. Season with salt and crushed pepper. Adjust heat to low and simmer for additional 2 minutes. Season with five-spice powder. Stir well to combine. Pour in the dissolved cornstarch and continue to simmer until the sauce thickens. Gently add the fried fish and tofu cubes. Simmer for another 2 minutes. Gently mix until the fish is covered with tausi sauce. Remove from heat and garnish with chopped wansoy. Serve and enjoy!



Pork Adobo sa Gata (Pork in coconut milk)

INGREDIENTS:

1.3 lbs pork belly (0.60 kg)
1/2 cup apple cider vinegar

1/2 head of garlic, crushed
1 tablespoon whole black pepper
3 pieces dried bay leaves (dahon ng laurel)
3-4 cups water
1 can coconut cream (400ml) or 2 cups coconut milk
3 tbsp soy sauce
1 tablespoon patis salt, to taste
pinch of brown sugar (optional)

INSTRUCTIONS:
In a pot, add the slices of pork belly and pour in the vinegar, 4 cups water, salt, pepper, crushed garlic and dahon ng laurel (bay leaves). Bring it to a boil and do not stir the vinegar until it starts to boil. Just let it simmer over low heat for about 30 minutes and cover the pot. After 15 minutes, don't forget to turn over the pork halfway through to even out the cooking of meat. After 30 minutes, remove pot cover and continue to simmer for additional 10 minutes or more until water is dry and pork is tender. Once water is dried out, continue to cook pork over low heat and let it render its own oil. Keep tossing and brown it on all side. Keep frying until you get a good golden brown on the pork. Drizzle 1 tablespoon soy sauce on the pork let absorb. Toss and mix. Add 1 can coconut cream or 2 cups coconut milk. Let it simmer over low heat and constantly stir from time to time to avoid curdle for about 15-20 minutes. In between simmer, season with 3 tablespoon soy sauce, pinch of brown sugar, patis salt and pepper to taste. Continue to simmer over low heat until sauce becomes thick to your desired sauce consistency. Do not over cook or the coconut milk will turn to latik. Serve hot with steamed rice and enjoy! Best to partner with ensaladang pipino in vinegar.

New measures to address Canada's labour shortage

April 22, 2022—Saint John, New Brunswick – As Canada continues to recover from the pandemic, employers are actively looking to fill hundreds of thousands of vacant positions in all sectors across the country. Immigration is more important than ever to fuel Canada's economy, as our strong economic growth is now outpacing our ability to find and keep workers. Canada is a top destination for global talent. We need to use this fact to ensure that businesses and employers have access to the skilled workers they need to grow and succeed.

Today, the Honourable Sean Fraser, Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, announced that Express Entry draws will soon resume and that invitations for candidates to apply for permanent residence will begin in early July.

Travel restrictions throughout most of 2020 and 2021 delayed the processing of overseas applications, which led to an increase in the size of the processing inventory. To manage this inventory, we temporarily paused invitations to apply under the federal high-skilled streams, including the Canadian experience class, federal



Honourable Sean Fraser, Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, skilled worker class and federal skilled trades class. Invitations to apply will resume in early July, and the vast majority of new applications will be processed within the 6-month service standard.

As a result of the temporary pause, the federal high-skilled processing inventory has been cut by more than half, decreasing from approximately 111,900 people in September 2021 to just 48,000 people by March 2022. This inventory will be further reduced by July 2022, allowing us to return to the service standards that our clients expect.

Minister Fraser also announced today a new temporary policy that will

give recent international graduates with expiring temporary status an opportunity to stay in Canada longer, so that they can continue to gain work experience and have a better chance at qualifying for permanent residency. Starting in summer 2022, former international students who are in Canada and have a post-graduation work permit expiring between January and December 2022 will qualify for an additional open work permit of up to 18 months. We are exploring a simplified, expeditious process for this, and details will be made available in the weeks ahead.

These talented and skilled international graduates play a vital role in addressing our labour shortage, and those nearing the end of their post-graduation work permit are already well-integrated into Canada's labour market and work in key industries across the country. Tens of thousands are able to successfully transition to permanent residence each year, including more than 157,000 former students who became permanent residents in 2021, with more than 88,000 of them transitioning directly from a post-graduation work permit to permanent status.

This additional open work permit will allow applicants to continue contributing to the Canadian economy, helping address our labour shortage while gaining valuable work experience and preparing their Express Entry profiles.

To help bring even more skilled workers quickly to Canada, we have doubled the number of permanent residence decisions made in the first quarter of 2022, compared to the same time period in 2021. From January 1, 2022 to March 31, 2022, we have made over 156,000 final decisions on permanent residence applications and, through these efforts, Canada welcomed over 113,000 new permanent residents in the first quarter of 2022.

We have also processed more than 100,000 work permit applications in the first quarter of 2022, nearly doubling the number processed over the same time period in 2021.

Through another temporary public policy implemented in August 2020, foreign nationals in Canada as visitors have been able to apply for an employer-specific work permit without having to leave Canada. Recognizing

See next page 13 Labor shortage



Social Tidbits

Montreal Community News

Fely Rosales Cariño

Though the pandemic continues to be around (the news says we're now in phase 6), SPRING is finally here! Do I hear an 'Amen'? Wearing masks and following other health protocols seem to be our new normal and we are somehow getting used to it. But at the back of our minds, we dream a little, wishing for a better tomorrow. As I said the last time, hope springs eternal; let's join together in praying to God Almighty who reigns supreme and who's got the whole world in His hands!

March 31, 2020 – Important updates from MP Anthony Housefather, a very good friend to Filipinos, can be found in his Facebook page where he condemns terrorist acts in Israel where Jews, Christians, and Muslims are murdered. He also gives more information about Ukraine since its invasion by Russia. The Government of Canada has taken strong action against Russia by banning imports of Russian oil, gas, and petroleum imports. To help Ukrainians settle into their new communities, here are some services offered: language training, orientation to life in Canada, access to labor market, networking, assessment of their needs, services targeted to the needs of women, seniors, youth, and the LGBTQ. Another update from the National Director, League for Human Rights, B'nai Brith Canada, Marvin Rotrand, also a dear friend to Filipinos, shares an excellent statement by Housefather in denouncing antisemitism in university campuses.

And folks, like the rest of you, I'm trying to do my bit for public health. People over 80 or those who are immunocompromised can make their vaccination appointments at Decarie Square (6900 Decarie Boulevard) and

Park Extension (7101 Park Avenue). Vaccines remain a most effective response to Covid 19 and Omicron.

Back in action: Monica Regacho. Monica has resumed her weekly trips to the casino. Seniors find the casino a worthwhile place to spend their time and money. Monica has also started her free lunch service on Tuesdays at the FAMAS center with the help of a government grant to operate this. After lunch, she supervises the seniors who play bingo. Monica worked with families who are abroad and couldn't come to Montreal to bury their loved ones. She took care of their funeral services and then informed the families, who are forever thankful to her.

"It was so-o-o much fun!" This sentence was echoed by everyone who attended Michelle Vargas Lao's Concert For A Cause that was held last March 19, 2022 at the Cebu Taste Restaurant in Dollard des Ormeaux. This concert would help Michelle's niece and nephew (born premature) to stay at a hospital in the Philippines. You know how expensive hospital costs are in the Philippines! Try 2 million pesos! However, they have enough friends to help them. This is the prize of having friends. Their pockets are open to help in cases like this. So, Cebu Taste was full. The Michelle Vargas Lao's band consists of five members: Marlo Chu (lead guitar), Rex Pudida (drums), Paolo Battad (rhythm 6), Anthony Muje (bass), and Michelle Lao (vocalist). Guests arrived promptly at 6pm and the band started playing before dinner. The food was fabulous, especially the lechon that was still very crispy (which I highly recommend!). And the band's repertoire was highly appreciated as the crowd dined. Certainly, Michelle was a lovely

distraction while we were eating, baring teenage grooves to her songs. She's too good to be ignored. The diners, including myself, were rightly enthralled. And I'd say that our friends Jeannette Perignon and Fely Bisares entertained us with their own version of the rock and roll. They stood up and danced in the space dividing the crowd and the stage. They did it very well, except they were the only ones dancing; that was certainly fun! Elvie Maximo, and many of the guests had an amusing time watching the two in their element. I think we should always invite Jeannette and Fely to parties!

Another event to report is one given by a dear friend, Maria Kuersteiner at her house last March 20, 2022. Our dear Maria has made it a yearly tradition to celebrate Puring Bamba's and my birthday with the same attendees each year ever since I've known her. A gracious host and a terrific cook, her invitations are not to be missed. Those present were the usual group: Mario & Puring Bamba, Thelma & Carlito Arlegui, June D'Silva, Father Lawrence, Chinnappan Deacon Pete Tapia, Ruark Ritando and yours truly. As usual, the talk of the evening is her lovely cooking. Also, laughter broke out when another friend – Ana Maria – was late but then when Father Lawrence arrived, Maria introduced him as Ana Maria. So when Father Lawrence served coffee, he said, "At your service, Ana Maria!" (Ok, I guess you had to be there). The following week, Mario Bamba honored his wife Puring to a great birthday dinner at La Porte Grecque in DDO. Guests were Maria Kuersteiner, Ruark Ritando, Father Lawrence and yours truly.

The computer class under the Filipino Heritage Society of Montreal (FHSM) Chariman Al Abdon held the first graduation exercises last March 16, 2022. It was held at P'lengke – La Mesa, fast becoming a prestigious venue, on Van Horne. According to FHSM Secretary Jeannette Perignon and Ciony Nueva, the evening was full of fun and frolic. The keynote speaker was MP of Pierrefonds/DDO Sameer Zuberi. MP Housefather was also there to impart an inspirational speech. Snowdon Councilor Sonny Moroz and Darlington Councilor Stephanie Valenzuela were there as well to share their encouraging messages. MP Housefather participated in distributing the framed certificates of

the graduates. This was a delightful evening (which started at 7pm and ended at 10pm), accented with Carinosa and Hustle line dances. Manny Rosello sang some of his signature Yoyoy songs, to the delight of many. On top of everything, there were raffles and door prizes. And here are the famous first graduates of the computer class: Rebecca Aguilar, Dolores Belandres, Fely Bisares, Elma Bolatao, Edith Fedalizo, Kim Gultia, Paul Imperial, Nancy Karidis, Sylvia Lemaire, Valent Lloyd Hughes, Amelia Manon-og, Jeannette Perignon, Ricardo Ribaya, Yvonne Apelo, Gloria Diggs, and Vangie Ruance. Emcee was Jeannette Perignon and closing remarks was performed by Edith Fedalizo.

Have you heard of "Rescue in the Philippines", a documentary of a hidden chapter of our history? The film showed the open-door policy of then president Manuel L. Quezon who gave sanctuary in the Philippines to 1,300 Jews who fled the Nazi oppression. This operation sealed the friendship of the Filipino and the Jewish people. The screening was introduced by Philippine Ambassador Rodolfo Robles, followed by remarks from Filipino community leaders of the Federation of Filipino Canadian Association of Quebec (FFCAQ)- President Minda Mazzone, Evelyn Calugay, Jeannette Perignon - and B'nai Brith Chief Executive Officer, Michael Moslyn and Marvin Rotrand, former Snowdon Councilor, now National Director, League of Human Rights. This documentary, which touched our hearts and revealed the generosity and humanity of President Quezon, is worth watching! A huge thank you to Marvin Rotrand who reminded us of a very important event in Philippine history.

While it may seem contrary to rejoice during these times, let us heed what scripture says: "Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus". (Philippians 4:4-7).

Until the next issue and God bless you.

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that those with visitor status in Canada may also wish to stay and find meaningful employment, this temporary public policy has been extended to February 28, 2023.

Finally, the Minister announced new measures for those who applied for permanent residence through the temporary resident to permanent resident pathway last year. The limited-time pathway was launched in 2021 to invite a broad range of individuals already working in Canada to apply to stay permanently. While closed to new applications since November 2021, the processing of applications will continue for some time.

Taking effect this summer, the policy changes announced today include:

- Applicants will no longer be

required to remain in Canada while their application is being processed.

- Applicants who apply for an open work permit while waiting for their permanent residence application to be finalized will be able to get work permits valid until the end of 2024. This will ensure that all permanent residence applications will be finalized before applicants will need to apply to extend their temporary status again.

- To support family reunification, immediate family members who are outside Canada and who were included in a principal applicant's permanent residence application will be eligible for their own open work permit.

These measures support the government's broader effort to ensure Canadian employers have the workers they need while addressing our labour shortage, and build on Minister Qualtrough's recent announcements on

the Temporary Foreign Worker (TFW) Program Workforce Solutions Road Map.

Quote

"With the economy growing faster than employers can hire new workers, Canada needs to look at every option so that we have the skills and labour needed to fuel our growth. Immigration will be crucial to easing our labour shortage, and these measures aim to address pressing needs in all sectors across the country, while providing more opportunities for recent graduates and other applicants to build their lives in Canada and continue contributing to our short-term recovery and long-term prosperity."

– The Honourable Sean Fraser, Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship

Quick facts

- Express Entry is Canada's flagship

application management system for those seeking to immigrate permanently through the Federal Skilled Worker Program, the Federal Skilled Trades Program, the Canadian experience class and a portion of the Provincial Nominee Program. Through Express Entry, candidates submit profiles that are ranked, and periodically, applicants with the highest ranking points are invited to apply for permanent residence.

- About 95,000 post-graduation work permits expire between January 31 and December 31, 2022. While many former students with expiring work permits have already transitioned to permanent residence, applied for permanent residence or successfully applied for a different type of work permit, we anticipate as many as 50,000 applicants could benefit from this temporary measure.

FILIPINO STAR

SHOWBIZ GOSSIP

Bernadette Reyes shares motorcycling journey



Bernadette Reyes

She's a familiar face, being among GMA's more popular and beautiful reporters.

But did you know that Bernadette Reyes is more than just about delivering the news?

She is also an avid motorcycle rider, driving a big 400cc machine, no less.

To think that she did not even know how to ride a bicycle until recently.

In a recent Facebook post, Bernadette shared her motorcycling journey, noting how it all began with her family giving her a BMX bike as present

"I was so happy that day! Nanood ng YouTube 'How to ride a bike,' inalis 'yung pedal at pinag-aralan balansehin ang sarili kaysa 'yung may bubuntot sa likod. After all, we are in charge of our own destiny ika nga," Bernadette said.

She soon learned how to ride an underbone, specifically a Suzuki Smash.

She later bought a Vespa, and then finally, a big bike.

Bernadette is now urging other girls to try and get their own motorcycles using the hashtag #kungkayanilakayamo.

She said, "Never too late to learn how to ride...gaya ng maraming girls, takot na takot ako nung una mag bike. iningatan kasi tayo ng mga magulang natin na hindi magka peklat...takot tayong ma fall sa bike...(pero sa love hala fall ng fall) pero hanggang kailan matatakot?"



"Gusto ko na mas marami pang lady riders ang maging part ng motorcycle community kasi more than the pleasure of riding, its the people you meet along the way that makes riding worthwhile," she added. ■

Diego Loyzaga lost money to a scammer, learns about greed



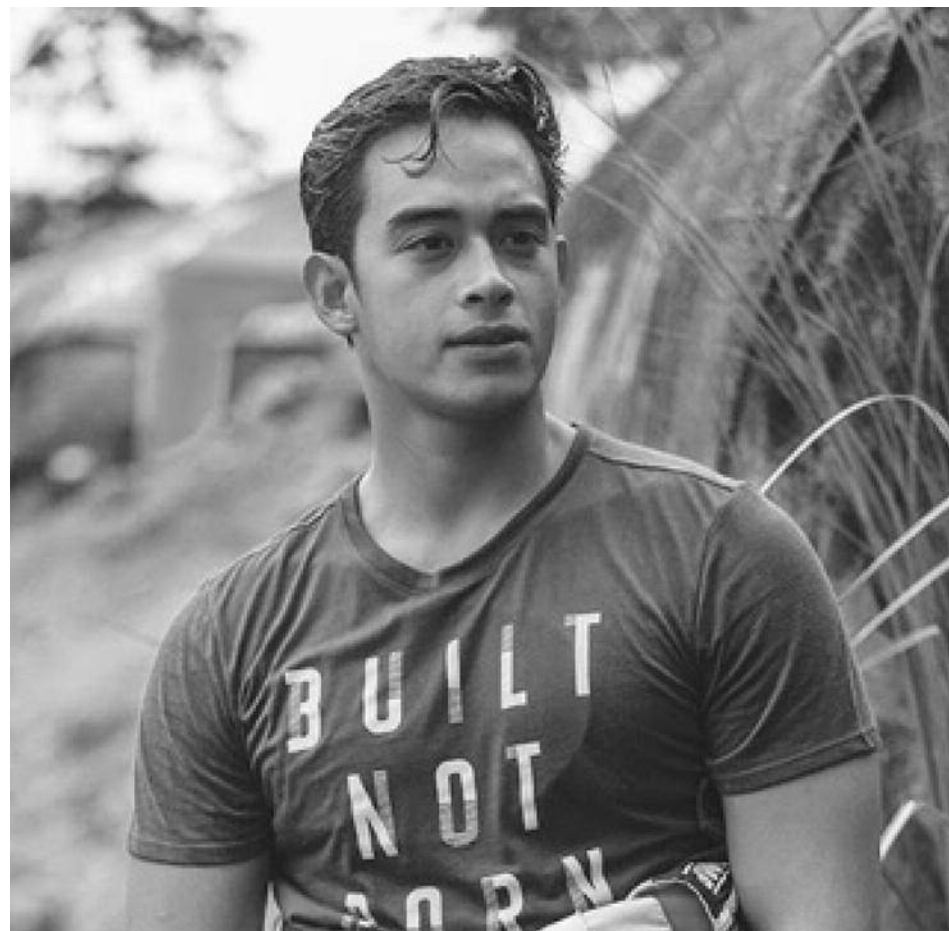
Diego Loyzaga

Diego Loyzaga experienced greed first hand when he was scammed, a learning moment for the actor.

"I acquired some money, which I won. Ginawa ko sa (What I did with the) money, instead of keeping it, I invested it somewhere else, thinking na lalaki 'yung pera (that the money would

gain profit). So you could say that is greed and that personally happened to me," Loyzaga said during the online press conference for his latest film, "Greed," last March 31. The movie also stars Nadine Lustre and Jeffrey "Epy" Quizon.

Loyzaga believes that greed sets in when a person lacks



contentment and wants more than what one has.

"You always look at the things you could have rather than the things that you do have," he explained.

He made an example of an artist who wants more for his talent fee and ends up losing the gig.

"What ends up happening

is hindi matutuloy ang raket kasi 'yung budget na hiningi mo (the gig will not push through because you asked for a budget that) was too big, and then you end up losing the whole thing entirely," he said. "I guess that's greed."

"Greed," directed by Yam Laranas, premiered April 8th, on Vivamax. ■

Pia Wurtzbach reveals she once stole lip balm from store



Pia Wurtzbach

Pia Wurtzbach recounted a time when she stole a lip balm from a store with her cousins, admitting that she thought it was "cool" back then.

Wurtzbach revealed doing the act in a question-and-answer game with Mutya ng Pilipinas 2010 Carla Lizardo and Binibining Pilipinas International 2014 Bianca Guidotti-Santos, as seen on their YouTube channel The Queens yesterday, April 9. The part-Q&A and part-truth-or-consequence game was inspired by the "Spill Your Guts" segment of "The Late Late Show with James Corden."

"Mga batang-bata pa kami nito... And nag-ano kami, we got something from a store. Lip balm lang naman, 'yung mga glittery lip balm," Wurtzbach said.

(We were very young when this happened — we got something from a store. It was just a lip balm, a glittery lip balm.)

The Miss Universe 2015

titleholder explained how she had a misconception back then of regarding the act as a "cool thing" but stressed that she now knows better. Wurtzbach then offered her apologies to the store but its name was bleeped in the video.

"As a kid, you think it's a cool thing especially when you do it with your friends or your cousins kasi parang nagko-connive kayong lahat tapos parang cool siya, may thrill. Pero syempre as an adult, wala na 'no, may issue tayo d'yan," she stated. "So I'm so sorry sa department store na [bleep] na kinuhanan ko ng lip balm."

(As a kid, you think it's a cool thing, especially when you do it with your friends or your cousins, because you connive with them, and it was cool and thrilling. But of course, it's neither thrilling nor cool [to steal] as an adult. That's already an issue. So I'm so sorry to the department store where I stole the lip balm.)

Showbiz Gossip *Continued from p.15*

Maine Mendoza shows off toned abs at the beach



Maine Mendoza proudly flaunted her sexy physique in a bikini, giving a glimpse of her toned abs during her recent beach vacation.

The actress showed herself smiling widely while posing in a violet two-piece bikini, as seen on her Instagram page today, April 19. She also hinted that her toned midsection is simply an “optical illusion,” noting she has “flabby abs.”

“Flexing the happiness... and the fake and flabby ‘abs’ #opticalillusion,” she said.

Whether the abs are real or

not, Mendoza still received praise and compliments from fellow actresses Maxene Magalona and Ciara Sotto. Her post has also earned more than 95,000 likes as of this writing.

Mendoza has been in show business for six years and is about to mark her seventh year this coming July.

Last March, the actress toasted her 27th birthday with her boyfriend, fellow actor Arjo Atayde. The couple have been together for three years and celebrated their third anniversary in December 2021. ■

Stars come down for VP Leni Robredo



(Left) Vice President Leni Robredo, & Vice Gand. (Right) Kathryn Bernardo, Liza Soberano.

Stars came down for presidential aspirant Vice President Leni Robredo and her running mate Kiko Pangilinan during a rally dubbed “#ArawNa10To” People’s Rally and Street Party on Macapagal Avenue in Pasay City over the weekend.

Among those who attended the birthday bash of Leni include ace comedian Vice Ganda, award-winning actor John Arcilla, Miss Universe Philippines 2021 Beatrice Luigi Gomez, and Miss International 2016 Kylie Verzosa.

Kathryn Bernardo and Liza Soberano showed their support via video

Fans of Leni crowded the Macapagal Boulevard in Pasay City on Saturday, April 23.

The event ended at about 11:30 p.m. Other activities that coincided with the celebration were the nationwide house-to-



house campaign and people’s march.

Last month, many celebrities were also seen at Leni-Kiko campaign rally in Pasig City. (With report from Joseph Pedrajas)

Jake Cuenca, Kylie Verzosa remain friends despite breakup



Jake Cuenca and Kylie Verzosa

Despite the breakup, actor Jake Cuenca shared that he and beauty queen Kylie Verzosa decided to remain friends because of their respect for each other.

On Sunday, Jake put an end to breakup speculations, confirming on his Instagram page that his relationship with Kylie is over.

“I’ll hold on to all our precious memories together with so much value. This past 3 years of my life have certainly been the best,” Jake said.

“I say this with such a heavy heart but me and Kylie have

decided to go our separate ways. I’m still so proud of us because we didn’t want to break up in anger we both wanted to be able to look back on our relationship with no bitterness no anger and no regrets only the good memories,” he added.

Jake vowed to still support Kylie and will pray for her success.

“Certainly that’s what I will be holding on to. I will still be here to support you because in so many ways I feel part of your journey and I will always pray for your success,” he said.

“I’m happy we were able to

finish this chapter of our lives the same way we started it. Holding hands as friends. Wherever you are or whatever you’re doing I will always be sending you love and positivity. Know that you will always have a person in me who will always be proud of you. I’ll see you around Kylie,” he added.

The breakup rumors began when Kylie posted “Broken” on her Twitter account previously. The actress also became emotional in an episode of “It’s Showtime” after the show hosts talked about ending a relationship. ■

Piolo Pascual breaks silence, makes known his presidential bet



Piolo Pascual

Piolo Pascual, who has been known by fans to be mostly silent when it comes to political issues, has finally revealed who his presidential bet is.

Pascual made the revelation through a video, as seen on his Instagram page today, April 11. In the video, he expressed his support for his presidential bet Vice President Leni Robredo.

Pascual spoke about how Filipinos have demonstrated “pagkakaisa” (unity) through collaborative efforts during the pandemic as well as in campaign rallies.

“Ang totoong pagkakaisa ay isang pangako na walang maiwan. Lahat tayo magkakasabay na humahakbang para sa pangarap na lipunan. At ang totoong pagkakaisa ay inspirasyon at panawagan na tayong lahat ay gumawa ng kabutihan,” he said.

(Real unity is a promise that no one is left behind. All of us are walking together towards our envisioned society. And real unity is an inspiration and a call for us to do good.)

The actor stressed the importance of having a leader capable of inspiring people to unite through service.

“Sure ako, totoo at malalim ang unity ng Pilipino kung tapat, mahusay at mabuti ang namumuno. Hindi ito ‘yung

pagkakaisa ng mga political dynasty para sa sarili nilang interes,” he added. “Ang totoong unity ay pagkakaisa ng taumbayan. Pilipino para sa kapwa Pilipino.”

(I am sure that unity among Filipinos would be genuine and heartfelt if an honest, skilled and good leader will lead them. It's not the kind of unity among political dynasties for their own interests. Real unity comes from the unity of people. Filipinos for their fellow Filipinos.)

“At si Leni Robredo lang ang tanging iboboto kong pangulo ngayong eleksyon,” he concludes.

(And Leni Robredo is the only one I will vote for president this election.)

In 2020, Pascual stated that he doesn't “do politics” after his controversial Sagada trip at the time was speculated by many to reflect his political leanings to President Rodrigo Duterte. He clarified that he was just helping his friend and director Joyce Bernal, who was shooting footages for Duterte's State of the Nation Address at the time.

Aside from Pascual, celebrities who have publicly expressed their support for Robredo's presidential bid include Daniel Padilla, Nadine Lustre, Ben & Ben, Angel Locsin, Kris Aquino and Ely Buendia, among others. ■

Olivia Rodrigo breaks one of her Grammys; parties with Paris Hilton



Oops! Olivia Rodrigo, you dropped something!

Filipino-American singer Olivia Rodrigo had a night to remember after winning her first three Grammy awards, though there was one moment backstage she will probably want to forget.

In the press room after the ceremony ended, Rodrigo was having her photo taken as she held her three Grammy trophies — and she dropped one of them, breaking it in half.

Rodrigo won Best New Artist at the 64th Grammy Awards, beating out nine other creatives, including fellow Filipino-American artist Saweetie. She also won Best Pop Vocal Album for “Sour,” and Best Pop Solo Performance for her debut single “drivers license.”

The singer also performed the single during the ceremony itself while inside a white Mercedes-Benz, and had a viral

moment during BTS' performance of “Butter” when V seemingly flirted and whispered into Rodrigo's ear to kick off the chart-topping song.

But that wasn't Rodrigo's only close-up encounter in what was a victorious night as she was seen celebrating with socialite-celebrity Paris Hilton at a private afterparty in Paris Las Vegas, a couple of blocks from the MGM Grand Garden Arena where the 2022 Grammys were held.

Other big winners at this year's Grammys were Jon Batiste, who won five awards, including Album of the Year, and Silk Sonic — composed of Anderson .Paak and another Filipino-American artist Bruno Mars — as they swept the four categories the duo was nominated in.0. ■

The Philippines' High-Stakes Election: What to Know

By Joshua Kurlantzick, CFR Expert
April 21, 2022 3:00 pm (EST)
The Philippines' upcoming presidential election is likely to bring to power Ferdinand Marcos Jr., the son of a longtime dictator, and could spell the end of democracy in the country.

On May 9, voters in the Philippines choose their next president, who will serve one six-year term. There are many candidates, but only two have any chance of winning: Ferdinand Marcos Jr., son of the Philippines' longtime former dictator, and current Vice President Leni Robredo.

Although the Philippines has deep-rooted problems—its economy has been hit hard by COVID-19, graft, and growing levels of poverty—the presidential contest has not focused much on these issues. Instead, it has centered on personalities and the future of the country's freedom. Outgoing President Rodrigo Duterte has often acted in an autocratic fashion during his six years in office. The election of Marcos Jr., who has some antidemocratic tendencies, could sound the death knell for Philippine democracy.

The Candidates

Ferdinand Marcos Jr. With experience serving as a senator, regional governor, and member of the House of Representatives, Marcos Jr. is a well-established figure in Philippine politics. Polling at 56 percent, Marcos Jr. has won extensive public support for several reasons. For one, he is positioning himself as a savior for a country battered economically by COVID-19. He is also drawing on some degree of nostalgia for Ferdinand Marcos Sr.'s era from 1965 to 1986, which some Filipinos see as better

than the country's current dire situation. Marcos Jr.'s kleptocrat father placed the Philippines under martial law and tortured thousands of opponents, but his family has spent decades whitewashing these crimes by using sophisticated disinformation methods and emphasizing the supposed stability of that time. (Many voters also are too young to remember that period.) Marcos Jr. has never really apologized for his father's repression and corruption; the elder Marcoses are estimated to have stolen some \$10 billion from the country, while also overseeing a disastrous national economic performance.

Marcos Jr. is also charismatic, especially on social media. His campaign has been criticized by journalists and an election watchdog for overseeing social media networks that spread vast amounts of disinformation about Marcos Jr., his opponents, and his family's legacy. These efforts are enormously effective in shifting public opinion in one of the most online populations in the world. In fact, they could be the biggest factor in Marcos Jr.'s likely victory. Marcos Jr. also benefits from the legacy of Duterte, who fostered the spread of disinformation and made it easier for another strongman to win.

What's more, Marcos Jr. has entered into an alliance with three other powerful political families: the Arroyos, the Estradas, and the Dutertes. Duterte's daughter is effectively running as vice president with Marcos Jr. With a Marcos Jr. presidency and this alliance, these families could dominate both the executive and legislative branches, making a mockery of democracy.

Leni Robredo. A former vice president, Robredo has made protecting

democracy and fighting graft the centerpieces of her campaign. She is trying to turn the public against the Marcoses and gain support of other small parties. Her rallies have been packed and her poll numbers have crept up slightly in recent months, but only to 24 percent, nowhere near Marcos Jr. Other relatively minor candidates, such as boxing champion Manny Pacquiao and Manila Mayor Francisco Moreno Domagoso, have stayed in the race, which could draw votes from Robredo. In 2016, the unwillingness of Duterte's major opponents to form a unified front and back one candidate was one of the reasons he triumphed.

The Platforms and Foreign Policy Issues

Although Marcos Jr. and Robredo have both made vague pledges to improve health care and fight poverty, the overriding issue is the long-term survival of Philippine democracy. Robredo has emphasized this point in speeches and online appearances, and Marcos Jr. has tended to offer platitudes about the past and promises of "unity." Yet, Marcos Jr. has indicated he would protect Duterte from prosecution by the International Criminal Court for Duterte's extrajudicial drug wars and signaled that he would possibly continue these killings.

On foreign policy, China remains the biggest issue. Duterte, who has strong, lifelong anti-American sentiments, tried to pursue a closer relationship with Beijing early in his term, in an effort to reduce Manila's dependence on Washington. But many promised Chinese infrastructure projects never came to fruition, and the public grew increasingly angry at Beijing's "wolf warrior" diplomacy and incursions in

the South China Sea. Duterte eventually turned back toward the United States.

Marcos Jr. has historically enjoyed a warm relationship with Beijing and could want to woo China again, as well as attempt to launch more Beijing-backed infrastructure projects. But Beijing's enormous unpopularity in the Philippines could limit Marcos Jr.'s ability to work closely with China. In contrast, Robredo has promised a tough approach toward Beijing, vowing not to even discuss the South China Sea with Beijing until it recognizes that a 2016 tribunal at the Hague ruled in favor of Manila's claims—something Beijing almost surely will never concede. Both candidates will likely continue the recent trend of building closer ties to the United States.

The Implications

While this election's implications for Philippine foreign policy might not be enormous, if Marcos Jr. does try to shift Manila toward Beijing, that would be a serious problem for regional security and U.S. forces. The Philippines is a U.S. treaty ally and central to U.S. posture in the South China Sea and toward Taiwan.

The implications for the future of Philippine democracy, and by extension democracy in Southeast Asia, are even more enormous. Democracy has already regressed significantly in Southeast Asia in the past decade, and a death blow to the Philippines, one of the world's most populous democracies, would further this trend. Prominent Philippines analyst Richard Heydarian has called the May 9 vote the "most consequential election in modern Philippine history." That is no understatement.##

From Page 8 Reverend Orlan

history of the humanitarian deeds and courage of Filipinos in welcoming the Jews under the open-door policy in 1939 of the late Philippine President Manuel L. Quezon. The second door represents the historical vote of the Philippines, the only Asian country that recognized the acceptance of Israel as an independent country at the UN in 1948. The third door represents the over 30k Filipinos in Israel currently caring for its elders, which former Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu praised and thanked in his welcome address during the official visit to Israel of President Rodrigo Duterte in 2018.

Pastor Orlan has been sending church groups to Israel and other Bible lands since 1985 and have visited Israel nine times and counting, plus 3 times as a guest of the Israel Ministry of Tourism. To celebrate God's faithfulness, the 38th Anniversary of the Voyages to Lands of the Bible has been scheduled for January 19-29, 2023. Anyone interested to join this pilgrimage tour may contact him via oracacho4@gmail.com.

Last year, Pastor Orlan coordinated a brief and simple ceremony at the Dr. Jose Rizal monument on Mackenzie-King Park on St. Kevin, Montreal. Flag, posters, and banners with 'Happy Birthday Israel! Mabuhay! Shalom!' added a very festive spirit to the occasion, which was videotaped by Norberto Jr. Relador Mandin of Canadian Pinoy Radio Montreal (CPRM) and can be seen on YouTube.

What's exciting coming up on May 5, 2022? It's the Israel Day Rally!

Pastor Orlan yearly coordinates this event. The annual Philippine community participation at these parades has attracted the media every year with the colorful banners and posters which he designed and made. This year's striking theme is "The Ties That Bind Filipinos and Jews" and "The Philippine Rescue of Jews from the Holocaust." Watch for new banners printed from the Philippines. Participants are already excited!

Pastor Orlan is currently helping people with post traumatic stress disorder during the covid-19 through Psychotherapy. I think it's built in his DNA to help! He also considers himself a practical handyman, and at age 83 on October 28, 2022, he's able to do what he loves to do – the 'do it yourself' (DIY) projects. To the amazement of his friends and neighbors, he had built four skylights at his 5-bedroom home in Brossard that he had built in 1972. A carpenter with the heart of God.


He believes that "many pastors actually do not retire; they recycle themselves to a more challenging ministry." Given a chance to reach others for Christ, he employs his friendly but bold approach to engage them in conversation: "You know what? I do believe that I have a surprise for you; are you ready for the surprise?" He usually gets a positive response, after which he continues, "This conversation is not an accident, because I believe in prayer, do you believe in prayer?" Again, he gets a positive response. To make the story short, the hopeful outcome is that the friend will follow his lead to pray verbatim the 'sinner's prayer' and accept the Lord Jesus Christ as his personal Lord and

Savior. Pastor Orlan would then encourage this person to seek a bible-believing church for Bible study and fellowship.

What an amazing life journey for Reverend Racacho! He acknowledges that all his blessings and favors are from God and more importantly, about God! He continues to credit God's faithfulness in keeping His promises, giving God all the glory! He believes that he persevered and endured all because, "I love what I do." Furthermore, he says, "I truly believe that God has shown the path for me to accomplish something where He wanted me to be and for the reason of my existence as well as sharing God's blessings to others. When we bless what

God wants to be blessed, we enjoy His great blessings."

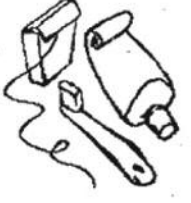
What else can I add to this overflowing and prodigious body of work? It is both an inspiration and a challenge to read a dizzying array of accomplishments by one man. It's not every day you get to meet a real-life reverend who plays tennis and builds skylights. Is there anything else the pastor cannot do? Knitting, perhaps? Dare I say, we have finally met a man I'd like to baptize as "The Renaissance Man"; certainly, a hard act to follow. However, we can choose to follow his helper the Holy Spirit, his Lord Jesus Christ, and his loving father God. Yes, to God be the glory! ##



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Budget 2022 Highlights – For Filipino Community

Budget 2022: A Plan to Grow Our Economy and Make Life More Affordable.

Housing Affordability

Budget 2022 introduced a Multigenerational Home Renovation Tax Credit, which provides up to \$7,500 in support for constructing a secondary suite; and \$475 million in 2022-23 to provide a one-time \$500 payment to those facing housing affordability challenges.

Investing \$1.5 billion over two years to CMHC to extend the Rapid Housing Initiative. Expected to create at least 6,000 new affordable housing units, with at least 25 per cent of funding going towards women-focused housing projects.

Budget 2022 announces the government's intent to reform the Rental Construction Financing Initiative by strengthening its affordability and energy efficiency requirements. Developers who significantly exceed these requirements and build highly affordable and energy efficient units will be eligible to have a portion of their repayable loans converted to nonrepayable loans.

Budget 2022 proposes to provide \$562.2 million over two years, beginning in 2024-25, for Infrastructure Canada to continue providing doubled annual funding for Reaching Home.

Budget 2022 proposes to introduce the Tax-Free First Home Savings Account that would give prospective first-time home buyers the ability to save up to \$40,000. Like an RRSP, contributions would be tax-deductible, and withdrawals to purchase a first home—including investment income—would be non-taxable, like a TFSA. Tax-free in, tax-free out.

Budget 2022 proposes to double the First-Time Home Buyers' Tax Credit amount to \$10,000. The enhanced credit would provide up to \$1,500 in direct support to home buyers.

Budget 2022 announces an extension of the First-Time Home Buyer Incentive to March 31, 2025, and that the government is exploring options to make the program more flexible and responsive to the needs of first-time home buyers, including single-led households.

To help develop and scale up rent-to-own projects across Canada, Budget 2022 proposes to provide \$200 million in dedicated support under the existing Affordable Housing Innovation Fund. This will include \$100 million to support non-profits, co-ops, developers, and rent-to-own companies building new rent-to-own units.

Budget 2022 announces that the Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion will engage with provinces and territories over the next year to develop and implement a Home Buyers' Bill of Rights and bring forward a national plan to end blind bidding. Among other things, the Home Buyers Bill of Rights could also



MP Rechie Valdez, Mississauga-Streetsville, hosted a press conference virtually about the aspects of the budget that are beneficial to the Filipino community, April 20, 2022

include ensuring a legal right to a home inspection and ensuring transparency on the history of sales prices on title searches.

Budget 2022 proposes to double the qualifying expense limit of the Home Accessibility Tax Credit to \$20,000 for the 2022 and subsequent tax years. This will mean a tax credit of up to \$3,000—an increase from the previous tax credit of up to \$1,500—for important accessibility renovations or alterations. Budget 2022 proposes to provide \$5 million over two years, starting in 2022-23, to the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation to support all these efforts. Immigration

Budget 2022 aims to support the processing and settlement of new permanent residents to Canada as part of Canada's Immigration Levels Plan—the government has committed \$2.1 billion over five years and \$317.6 million ongoing in new funding.

Budget 2022 proposes to provide \$385.7 million over five years, and \$86.5 million ongoing, to facilitate the timely and efficient entry of a growing number of visitors, workers, and students. Investing \$187.3 million over five years, and \$37.2 million ongoing, to improve its capacity to respond to a growing volume of enquiries and to invest in the technology and tools required to better support people using their services.

Budget 2022 will provide \$29.3 million over three years to introduce a Trusted Employer Model that reduces red tape for repeat employers who meet the highest standards for working and living conditions, protections, and wages in high-demand fields. Further details on this program will be announced in the coming year.

Healthcare

Budget 2022 proposes to provide \$20 million over five years, starting in 2022-23, for the Canadian Institutes of Health Research to support additional research on the long-term effects of COVID-19 infections on Canadians, as well as the wider impacts of COVID-19 on health and health care systems.

Budget 2022 proposes to provide funding of \$5.3 billion to provide dental care for Canadians with family incomes of less than \$90,000 annually, starting with under 12 years-olds in 2022, expanding to under 18 years-olds, seniors and persons living with a disability in 2023, with full implementation by 2025 \$5.3 billion over five years, starting in 2022-23, and \$1.7 billion ongoing, to Health Canada to provide dental care for Canadians.

Budget 2022 proposes to provide \$140 million over two years, starting in 2022-23, to Health Canada for the Wellness Together Canada portal so it can continue to provide Canadians with tools and services to support their mental health and well-being.

Families

In response to requests from provinces and territories, and to support the implementation of the Canada-wide early learning and childcare system, Budget 2022 proposes to provide \$625 million over four years, beginning in 2023-24, to Employment and Social Development Canada for an Early Learning and Child Care Infrastructure Fund. \$30 billion over five years to build a Canada-wide early learning and childcare system

Expanding the Canada Workers Benefit to support an estimated one million additional Canadians, which could mean \$1,000 more per year for a fulltime, minimum-wage worker.

More than \$3 billion over three years to support nearly 500,000 new job and training opportunities, including by helping mid-career workers transition to in-demand jobs, and helping young Canadians gain valuable work experience.

Over the next year, the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development will work with provinces, territories, municipalities, Indigenous partners, and stakeholders to develop a National School Food Policy and to explore how more Canadian children can receive nutritious food at school.

Every year, the federal government provides more than \$3 billion in funding to provinces and territories to provide training and employment support through the Labour Market Transfer Agreements. These investments help more than one million Canadians every year prepare for their next job through programs ranging from skills training and wage subsidies, to career counselling and job search assistance.

Seniors

In Budget 2022, the government proposes to amend the Old Age Security Act to clarify that the onetime payment made in August 2021 to seniors aged 75 and older will be exempted from the income test for the Guaranteed Income Supplement and Allowances.

Implementing a ten per cent

increase to the maximum GIS benefit for single seniors, and reversing the announced increase to the eligibility for OAS and GIS back to age 65 from 67

The government also intends to engage with experts on the role that a Career Extension Tax Credit could play in boosting the labour force participation of seniors who want to continue to work later in life.

An estimated one in four Canadian seniors over the age of 85 are diagnosed with dementia. The effects on both those living with dementia and those who care for them can be devastating. Budget 2022 proposes to provide \$20 million over five years, starting in 2022-23, for the Canadian Institutes of Health Research to ramp up efforts to learn more about dementia and brain health, to improve treatment and outcomes for persons living with dementia, and to evaluate and address mental health consequences for caregivers and different models of care.

Twenty million over two years, beginning in 2022-23, for an expanded New Horizons for Seniors Program to support more projects that improve the quality of life for seniors and help them continue to fully participate in their communities.

Foreign Credential Recognition

Budget 2022 proposes to provide \$115 million over five years, with \$30 million ongoing, to expand the Foreign Credential Recognition Program and help up to 11,000 internationally trained health care professionals per year get their credentials recognized and find work in their field. It will also support projects—including standardized national exams, easier access to information, faster timelines, and less red tape—that will reduce barriers to foreign credential recognition for health care professionals.

Anti-Asian racism and racism in general

Recognizing that Canada's fight against racism is far from over, Budget 2022 proposes to provide \$85 million over four years, starting in 2022-23, to the Department of Canadian Heritage to support the work underway to launch a new Anti-Racism Strategy and National Action Plan on Combatting Hate.

Budget 2022 proposes to provide \$539.3 million over five years, starting in 2022-23, to Women and Gender Equality Canada to enable provinces and territories to supplement and enhance services and supports within their jurisdictions to prevent gender-based violence and support survivors.

Education

Making post-secondary education more affordable by waiving interest on Canada Student Loans until March 2023 and enhancing repayment assistance to ensure that no person making \$40,000 or less will need to make payments on their federal student loans going forward. ##

Leni Robredo gains ground in fight to be Philippines' third female president

Esther Au Yong, April 8, 2022 *(Yahoo news) With just over a month to go to the May 9 election, incumbent vice president (VP) Leni Robredo has gained some ground on frontrunner Ferdinand Marcos Jr., according to a new poll published Wednesday (April 6).

Robredo gained 9 percentage points in the Pulse Asia survey conducted March 17-21, putting her at a voter preference score of 24%. Marcos, on the other hand, saw his score dipping to 56% – from 60% in a February survey. Still, he continues to enjoy a significant lead.

The survey polled 2,400 people face to face.

Being the incumbent VP could play either way for Robredo, who is gunning for the Presidential ticket.

On one hand, she's had almost six years of experience being second-in-command and many years in politics.

On the other, she's known to be at odds with incumbent President Rodrigo Duterte and his policies, earning her the wrath of Duterte's supporters. She has become the biggest victim of disinformation campaigns among this year's presidential candidates, according to a fact-checking initiative.

For instance, she has most recently been accused of receiving questions in advance of the end-February CNN presidential debate. She replied to the rumours on Facebook, "Does that mean you were impressed?"

"To those saying that I received advance questions for the debate: Thank you, even though it's not true," she added.

The network has clarified that no questions were given in advance for the debate which involved nine of the 10 candidates.

Arguably the most powerful opposition figure in the Philippines currently, Robredo, 56, has slammed several of Duterte's key policies such as his bloody war on drugs and pro-China policies. Duterte has publicly attacked Robredo for her comments.

Robredo became VP after beating Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. – the late dictator's son and namesake – by a slim margin in the 2016 election. Marcos later waged a four-year legal battle to unseat her, which came to naught when the Supreme Court unanimously



Poster taken from Facebook page of the Vice-President

dismissed the case in February.

On October 7, 2021, Robredo aimed to go a step further in her career by announcing that she is running for president in this year's election. Curiously, she did so as an independent candidate despite being the chairperson of the

and won a congressional seat, representing her husband's old constituency, the third district of Camarines Sur. Her husband died in a plane crash while serving in the administration of late President Benigno Aquino III.



Robredo daughters champion Leni as loving mom, competent leader in campaign ad

Liberal Party. This, she said, was to show her openness to forming alliances with other political groups. But by doing so, she cannot leverage on the political machinery of the Liberty Party to her advantage.

Political/professional career

Following her husband's death in 2012, Robredo entered politics in 2013

During her term, Robredo prioritized participatory governance and transparency. She has authored or backed bills that sought to allow more citizen participation in decision and policy-making, and promoted transparency in the taxation process, among others.

As VP, she was appointed

Housing Minister but later resigned after being told by Duterte not to attend Cabinet meetings.

Should Robredo win the presidency, she would be the third woman to lead the Philippines. The previous two women who became President were Corazon Aquino in 1986 and Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo in 2001.

Candidate's issues of focus

In her current campaign, Robredo has promised to usher in a government that cares for the people and not personal interests.

"If we truly want to liberate ourselves from this situation, we should change not just the surnames of those in power; the corruption, the incompetence, the lack of compassion must be replaced by competence and integrity in leadership," said Robredo in a Reuters report in October last year.

Personal and family background

Born in April 1965, Robredo is the eldest of three children born to a Naga City regional trial judge and an English professor. She studied law at the University of Nueva Caceres after graduating with a first degree in economics from the University of the Philippines Diliman in 1986. She passed her bar exams in 1997.

A former public attorney, the mother of three girls is the widow of former interior secretary Jesse Robredo, who in 2000 won the Ramon Magsaysay Award for government service, widely regarded as Asia's Nobel Prize.



This photo taken on 20 March, 2022 shows supporters of Philippine Vice President and opposition presidential candidate Leni Robredo waving pink flags and banners during a campaign rally in the business district of Pasig City in suburban Manila. (AFP Photo)