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News Release

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Most Reverend Bishop Francisco Gonzales, Archbishop of Washington leads Philippine tradition "Simbang Gabi"

WASHINGTON, D.C., Dec. 10 - The Most Reverend Francisco Gonzales, one of the Archbishops of Washington, spiritual leader to 580,000 Catholics in 140 parishes throughout the District of Columbia and five Maryland counties will be the main celebrant of the Holy Mass commemorating the start of "Simbang Gabi" to be held at Our Lady of Victory Catholic Church starting at 5:00 P.M. on Saturday, Dec. 15, 2007.

The "Simbang Gabi" is a popular Philippine tradition that will start December 15 and ends on December 23, instead of the usual December 16 to the 24 in celebrating Christmas and of the coming of the birth of Jesus Christ.

Known as the "Misa de Gallo" (Rooster's Mass), it is called "Simbang Gabi" or "Night Mass", a very important Filipino Christmas tradition. It is considered as the nine-day novena by the Catholic faithfuls. In some parishes, the masses begin as early as four in the morning; others start in the late afternoon or in the evening. Completing the nine-day novena is a manifestation of the Catholic faith to most devotees.

After hearing the usual mass, Filipino families partake of traditional Philippine Christmas delicacies, either during breakfast, or immediately outside the church where "vendors" offer a wealth of Filipino delicacies, including "bibingka" (sweet rice), "puto bumbong" (purple sticky rice), "salabat" (ginger tea) and "tsokolate" (thick Spanish cocoa).

The "Simbang Gabi" complete schedules of the Holy Mass which are all held at the District of Columbia start Saturday, Dec. 15, 2007 at 5:00 P.M. at Our Lady of Victory Catholic Church; Dec. 16 Sunday at 5:00 P.M. at Nativity Church; Dec. 17 Monday at 6:00 P.M. at St. Dominic Church; Dec. 18 Tuesday at 6:00 P.M. at Georgetown University Chapel; Dec. 19 Wednesday at 5:30 P.M. at Cathedral of St. Matthew; Dec. 20 Thursday at 7:00 P.M. at St. Stephen's Catholic Church; Dec. 21 Friday at 7:30 P.M. at Epiphany Catholic Church; Dec. 22 Saturday at 5:30 P.M. at St. Anne Catholic Church; and Dec. 23 Sunday at 3:00 P.M. at the Shrine of Blessed Sacrament. #





"Simbang Gabi"

A Philippine Tradition of Advent

*Sponsored by the
Philippine Community of OLV
&
Our Lady of Victory Parish*

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**The Opening Mass of Simbang Gabi
Saturday, Dec. 15, 2007 • 5:15 p.m. Holy Mass
Our Lady of Victory Catholic Church
4835 MacArthur Blvd., NW • Washington, D.C. 20007**

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December 16 to 24 is the usual tradition of celebrating Christmas, the coming of the birth of Jesus. Known as the "*Misa de Gallo*" (Rooster's Mass), it is called as "*Simbang Gabi*" or "Night Mass", a very important Filipino Christmas tradition. It is considered as the nine-day novena by the Catholic faithfuls. In some parishes, the masses begin as early as four in the morning; others start in the late afternoon or in the evening. Completing the nine-day novena is a manifestation of the Catholic faith to most devotees.

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"Simbang Gabi"

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