

Ambassador Gaa leads Metro Washington VIP Filipinos attend traditional “Simbang Gabi” at OLV

WASHINGTON, D.C., Dec. 22 (PinoyGlobal) - For the first time in so many years, the “Who’s Who” among Filipino Americans in the Metropolitan Washington, trooped in to attend the traditional Filipino “Simbang Gabi” at Our Lady of Victory Catholic Church in this city last Saturday.

Led by the **Philippine Ambassador to the United States Willy C. Gaa** and **Minister Carlos “King” Sorreta, Philippine Deputy Chief of Mission**, and other embassy’s officials; Filipino high achievers mostly members of the elite “**Circle of Leaders**” - **Twenty Outstanding Filipinos Abroad (TOFA)** awardees; prominent Fil-Am community leaders of organizations; key leaders of Filipino prayer groups headed by the **BLD** and **Couples for Christs** with their key members, all participated in celebrating the sixth day of a 9-day novena tradition.

Below are some of the participants of the “Simbang Gabi”. **HOLY MASS**: Concelebrants: **Rev. Father David Werning OLV Pastor** and **Rev. Father Jaime Noel Deslate**; Reader: - **Dr. Victor Lorica (TOFA)**; Responsorial - **Dr. Larry Yap (TOFA)**; Liturgical Offering of Host and Wine; **Ambassador Willy C. Gaa** and **Mrs. Linda Gaa**; Liturgical Offering of Collections: **Minister Carlos Sorreta**, Philippine Deputy Chief of Mission and **Mrs. Maria Sorreta**; Intercessory - Visaya: **Consul Rico Fos**; Intercessory - Tagalog: **Mr. Ador Carreon**, Chairman of PAFC-Philippine

American Foundation; Intercessory - Ilocano: **Atty. Arnedo “Nedo” Valera (TOFA)**; Intercessory - Bicol: **Dr. Antonia Grandea (TOFA)**; Intercessory - Pampanga: **Ms. Cathy Manansala**; Intercessory- Cuyunon (Palawan): **Ms. Lolit Villegas (BLD)**; Intercessory - Pangasinan: **Ms. Margie Paglinawan (Couple for Christ)**; Intercessory on behalf of TOFA: **Dr. Bayani Manalo (TOFA)**. **OFFERING**: PA-ROL (Lantern) **Henry Balagtas (TOFA)** & **Claudio “Jun” Pedery, Jr. (TOFA)**- Represent Filipinos as “Light Bearers” as there are Filipino Immigrants in almost every continents of the world and with them they bring and share the gift of their Catholic Christian faith. **ROSARY**: **Tita Kenney (TOFA)** and **Mel Villegas (BLD)**: Represents Filipinos great devotion to Mary, Mother of God and Mother of all. **PALAYOK OF RICE (Clay Pot)**: **Sonny Florendo (TOFA)** & **Dr. Ben Oteyza (TOFA)**: Filipino's collective faith that sustain them in times of trials and tribulations. **BASKET OF FRUITS**: **Van Pineda Singh (TOFA)** & **Daisy Tucay (PRA - Philippine Retirement Authority)** Fruits of every Filipino's labor- both materials and spiritual that they willingly and lovingly share with others. **FLOWERS (Poinsettia)**: **Atty. Edilberto Atienza & Ms. Eileen DeCesare**: Represent that Christmas is at hand. **NIPA HUT & Carabao**: **Ray Cabacar (TOFA)** & **Dr. Nerita Estampador-Ulep (TOFA)** Nipa hut to represent the house and animals, laborers, and farmers of the Philippines.#



Simbang Gabi Participants

In photo are some of the participants of the “Simbang Gabi. From left: Mrs. Aida Mendoza, Jun Pedery, Henry Balagtas, Mrs. Linda Gaa, Ambassador Willy C. Gaa. Behind the ambassador can be seen Dr. Nerita Estampador-Ulep, Ray Cabacar and others. (PinoyGlobal Photo)



Simbang Gabi 2008
Ambassador Willy C. Gaa
with some of the TOFA
Delegation from Baltimore.
From left: Sonny Florendo,
Edna Gan, Nerita Ulip, Dr.
Toni Grandea, Tita Kenny,
Nonoy Mendoza, Gerry
Florendo and Aida J.
Mendoza.
(PinoyGlobal Photo)



From left: Minister Carlos
“King” Sorreta, Philippine
Deputy Ambassador, Mrs.
Sorreta, Atty. Arnedo
“Nedo” Valera (TOFA),
Ador Carreon, President
PAFC; and Dr. Bayani
Manalo (TOFA).
(PinoyGlobal Photo)



From left: Dr. Bambi Loreca, Chicago 2008 Hall of Fame Awardee, Consul & Cultural Attache Rico Fos, Mrs. Myla Fos, Emilie G. Dearing, TOFA and Chicago 2008 Hall of Fame Awardee; Van Pineda Singh 1990 TOFA Awardee, Mrs. Mary Balagtas, and Henry Balagtas, TOFA Awardee and Founding President of Mission of Mercy and a successful entrepreneur
(PinoyGlobal Photo)



VIPs Simbang Gabi

From left: Sony Florendo (1990 TOFA Awardee), Gerry Florendo, Baltimore Entrepreneur; Adolfo “Ado The Noble Wolf” Paglinawan, former Press Officer and Special Assistant to the Philippine Ambassador; Mrs. Cabacar; Tita Kenney (TOFA Awardee); Edna Gan (TOFA Awardee) and Dr. Antonia “Toni” Grandea (TOFA Awardee).

(PinoyGlobal Photo)



More VIP Guests

From left: Dr. Nerita Ulip-E stampador (TOFA Awardee), Celso Barrientos, Ph.D.(TOFA Awardee), Adelle Oteyza, Dr. Ben Oteyza (TOFA Awardee) who headed the TOFA Delegation from Baltimore, and Mrs. Lita Oteyza.

(PinoyGlobal Photo)



Some of the VIP Guests of the 2008 Simbang Gabi

Seated from left: Sony Florendo (TOFA), Dr. Toni Grandea (TOFA), Aida J. Mendoza, Mrs. Ray Cabacar, Emilie G. Dearing (TOFA), and Mrs. Daisy Tucay. Standing from left: Gerry Florendo, Tessie Calderon-Alarco (TOFA), Mrs. Margie Paglinawan, Mrs. Mary Balagtas, Henry Balagtas (TOFA), Nonoy Mendoza, Mrs. Nanette Carreon, Ray Cabacar (TOFA), Deputy Ambassador Carlos “King” Sorreta, Ador Carreon, Pablito Alarcon, Jun Pedery (TOFA) Dr. Bayani Manalo (TOFA), Bing Branigin, Fe Bravo, and Jun Tucay. *(PinoyGlobal Photo)*