

# MIGRANT HERITAGE CHRONICLE

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## 3rd Annual Misa ng Bayan Calls for Freedom, Peace

In songs and prayers, Filipino-American migrants in Washington DC conveyed the message of freedom and peace for their beloved homeland at this time of what may be another political upheaval.

About five hundred people attended the Misa ng Bayan last February 24, a highly celebrated holy mass that commemorates the EDSA Uprising. Initiated by the Migrant Heritage Commission, its third year commemoration was held at the Most Blessed Sacrament Church in Washington. Grace Valera-Jaramillo, co-executive director of MHC, said the Misa ng Bayan has always been well attended and looked forward to since it began three years ago.

The songs, prayers, and offerings from various community organizations in DC, Maryland, Virginia, and Pennsylvania spoke of hope for unity and change in the seemingly incurable corruption in Philippine government. Way back home, political unrest is brewing anew with the Jun Lozada expose of the ZTE-NBN deal with the government.

Lawyer Arnedo Valera, MHC executive director said in his opening remarks that the Misa ng Bayan is a yearly thanksgiving prayer offered by the migrants for the opportunities that immigration brings to the Filipino families. It is also a community expression of the Filipino-American's political awakening in the midst of the country's economic and political crises.

*"Recently, there has been a series of demonstrations in the Philippines. Our church leaders have called for a communal reflection and action against corruption especially after the expose on the ZTE-NBN deal. As the entire Filipino Nation responds to the present political crisis, we call upon all overseas Filipinos to make a united stand against corruption that is paralyzing our national identity and the quest for a meaningful change in our society.*

*If there is a prayer, therefore, that we would like said on this "Misa ng Bayan" it is that we ask him, the Lord God, to restore clean and honest heart to everyone, especially to those who hold the reigns of power so that corruption and greed may be ended, and the impoverished and the wretched saved from the evils of economic exploitation and so that everybody may live in true freedom and peace again,"* Valera said. **(Continued on page 4)**



### Dancing the Faith: Sinulog in the US

By Marivir R. Montebon

Filipinos in the US have a way to warm and energize the cold month of January. They dance to celebrate Sinulog.

Way back home in Cebu where the Sinulog originated, the streets burst in color and life to this dance. Balikbayan contingents, young students, government workers, and corporate citizens join the Sinulog prayer dance festivity to venerate the Child Jesus, in gratitude for their blessings and to petition for their dreams.

One step forward, two steps backward, along with the synchronized waving of arms up in the air, the Sinulog is an animated rendition of the pagan practice and Catholicism. The acceptance of the image of the Child Jesus as a gift by the Spanish colonizer to Queen Juana symbolizes the natives' acceptance of the Catholic religion. **(Continued on page 9)**

### What's Inside Our Maiden Issue

#### Immigration Options for Victims of Domestic Violence

*Victims of domestic violence can now opt to petition themselves when they suffer abuse from their spouses, parents, and even adult US citizen children who petition them. **Page 6***

#### MHC: Serving the Migrants Nationwide

*The MHC is a non-profit, service-oriented national organization that addresses the needs and issues confronting Filipino migrants. **Page 12***