



DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS KAGAWARAN NG UGNAYANG PANLABAS

MESSAGE

The 2021 National Quincentennial Commemorations (NQC) in the Philippines celebrates– VICTORY and HUMANITY – and dares to retell the Philippine story from the perspective of Filipinos.

The Filipino-centric celebrations focus on three events: the 500th anniversary of the Victory at Mactan; the 500th anniversary of the Philippine part of the first circumnavigation of the world; and the 500th anniversary of the introduction of Christianity in the Philippines.

The re-think serves as an instructive moment, coming at the heels of reasserting the independence of our foreign policy, to raise the public's awareness of our national identity, and events and forces that shaped us as a people.

Far too long, we have honored the wrong memory – the subjugation and colonization of our forefathers. It is time to recognize the nascent patriotic sensibility of Lapu-Lapu, who took offense at Magellan's interference in a domestic matter and settled the issue decisively in honorable if clever battle, a true people's *victory* to assert sovereignty no matter how small.

It is also time, as the NQC has done, to honor our people's *humanity* –demonstrated when they welcomed the ragtag, tired and weary European explorers on the island of Guiuan, with food, drink and care. These ancestors of ours exhibited true wealth – generosity of spirit, civility, and an un-awed nobility that regarded these strangers as equals, qualities now recognized worldwide among our overseas foreign workers.

Certainly, there are other events to remember. For one, the **Circumnavigation of the Earth**. The chronicler Pigafetta noted a meeting with a polyglot Rajah from Limasawa with whom he could converse, indicating that indeed they had circled the globe.

Another is the **introduction of Christianity** to a people who were already familiar with Hinduism, Buddhism, and the more settled Islam. While the companions of Magellan may have made a hasty exit, they left behind the seed of a powerful belief system, a Sto. Nino icon, which in many ways has embodied Filipino sensibility for the longest time – a child under the regency of motherSpain.It is about time we shed that image, too.

And so it is that 500 years later, we have somehow grown up, discovering the "*magnanimity, compassion and humanity*" within the Filipino soul- values and traits that mark us and opened doors all over the world. Because while we are citizens of the state, we are also citizens of humanity.

It is time we see the world with our own eyes. It may have taken 500 years, but it is well-worth the wait to embrace who we are.

The Department of Foreign Affairs wishes to thank the international community for embracing the Filipino diaspora and the Philippine Embassies and Consulates General around the world in making the Quincentennial Commemorations in the Philippines more meaningful.

Congratulations and Mabuhay.



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