



PRESS RELEASE

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REMARKS OF CONSUL GENERAL MARY JO BERNARDO ARAGON AT THE HOLY MASS FOR FORMER PRESIDENT CORAZON C. AQUINO

St Basil's Catholic Church, Los Angeles

04 August 2009

There is a pall of darkness over our hearts today. The last glimmer of brightness has passed from our national treasure and we now feel the cold knowing we will no longer feel the warmth of that unmistakable presence.

This is a tremendous loss that we now together mourn. Former President Corazon Cojuangco Aquino was more than a statesman. She was an inspiration. In life, Former President Aquino was faced with the tremendous task of waging a long and hard battle to restore justice and democracy in our country.

In her utter simplicity, conviction and piety, she shone during a benighted period in our history when a dictatorship held our country in its grips.

Able to galvanize the support of Filipinos from all walks of life – she helped transform a trying moment for our nation into a genuine triumph for our democracy.

She became the first woman President in the Philippines and in Asia, following a peaceful, bloodless revolution.

It was a movement – distinguished by the color yellow – which the world saw with its own eyes and that inspired similar movements for full democracy – the Velvet revolution in Czechoslovakia and the orange revolution in Ukraine.

It was during her administration that the 1987 Freedom Constitution was drafted and overwhelmingly approved – the framework and bedrock of our strong republic.

She staved off attempts to weaken our Republic through coup d'états. And she ensured the continuity of the democratic ideals and values we hold dear to our hearts.

Now, in death, former President Aquino looms large as an even bigger figure for democracy, one that our nation and the world will long remember.

Now, former President Aquino's memory and her legacy rightly belong to the world and the entire human family.

She has moved on to meet her creator in the manner that she touched other people's lives – peacefully.

In expressing his sympathies, United States President Barack Obama said "her courage, determination, and moral leadership are an inspiration to us all and exemplify the best in the Filipino nation."

Pope Benedict XVI hailed former President Aquino for her "courageous commitment to freedom" and "her firm rejection of violence and intolerance."

President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo described former President Aquino as "a national treasure." Now, former President Aquino's brilliance will continue to shine in the eternal presence of the Almighty.

This is a brilliance from a gem unlike any other: One that leaves its light in the hearts of those whom she has touched. This is the gem of a great woman – a proud Filipino - named Corazon who will live forever in our hearts.

And in that knowledge, we are certain that the pall above our heads and hearts will be dispelled by the bright yellow of former President Aquino's memory.

Salamat at paalam po aming dating pangulong Aquino.