



## “President Duterte Instructed Us to Prioritize Overseas Filipinos” – Amb. Romualdez



*(Photo left)  
Consul General  
Cruz introduces  
“Nanay  
Fedelina” to  
Ambassador  
Romualdez.*

Los Angeles, CA– In a moving encounter with “Nanay Fedelina,” a Filipina who was kept in slave-like conditions and recently won her case against her former abusers, Ambassador Jose Manuel G. Romualdez reiterated the Philippine Government’s commitment to uphold the welfare and protect the rights of Overseas Filipinos at all times.

“The President instructed us (government officials abroad) to prioritize Overseas Filipinos. We must do our best to safeguard their welfare,” he said.

“Nanay Fedelina” was a family nanny who was brought to the United States by the Filipino-American family she was serving when she was just 16 years old. She spent 65 years in servitude that could only be described as a case of modern-day slavery.

In 2018, the Pilipino Workers Center (PWC) through the help of U.S. law enforcement rescued her, helped pursue and win her case in court. Today, Nanay Fedelina, with the help of PWC, the Philippine Consulate General (PCG) and many other generous hearts in Los Angeles, is ready to begin a new life at 81.

“I want to go home to Tacloban and find my family,” she said. The Ambassador hopes to help her with her dream.

“Nanay Fedelina” came from a generation when slave-like employment practices, that is to say, highly unregulated domestic employment, were still commonplace in the Philippines. She also seems to be one of the few to survive this and gain freedom. Although transnational slavery has long been abolished, its modern-day incarnations still exist in the form of human trafficking, forced labor, debt bondage, unpaid salaries and many others.

The meeting between Ambassador Romualdez and “Nanay Fedelina,” which took place at the LA PCG Conference Room on 15 September 2019, was facilitated by PWC. It was part of the joint advocacy of the Consulate General and PWC to tell the story of “Nanay Fedelina” in the hopes that no more Filipino would fall victim to modern-day slavery. END.



*(Photo left) PWC Operations Director Malou Villacisneros, Ambassador Romualdez, PWC Founder and Executive Director Aquilina Soriano Versoza, Vice Consul and Assistance-to-Nationals Section Head Dyan Kristine Pastrana, ATN Officer Judelyn Cuaresma and Consul General Cruz with Nanay Fedelina (3<sup>rd</sup> from left)*