



REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES

**PHILIPPINE CONSULATE GENERAL**

LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA



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## LA PCG Family Joins Virtual Celebration of *Kalayaan* 2020



*Consul General Adelio Angelito S. Cruz, together with the officers and staff of the Philippine Consulate General in Los Angeles, including all attached agencies (PHL Trade and Investment Center, PHL Department of Tourism, PHL Overseas Labor Office, Police Attaché Liaison Office on the U.S. West Coast and the Social Security System) applauding from their homes to give tribute to Filipino healthcare workers. This clip is part of the video tribute incorporating clips from all over the United States.*

15 June 2020, Los Angeles – Consul General Adelio Angelito S. Cruz with the women and men of the Philippine Consulate General in Los Angeles joined all Philippine Foreign Service Posts (FSPs) in the United States for a unique and historic celebration of the *122<sup>nd</sup> Anniversary of the Proclamation of Philippine Independence*, which was viewed by thousands of Overseas Filipinos in the United States and other parts of the world through livestream in the afternoon of 12 June 2020.

Under the leadership of Philippine Ambassador to the U.S.A., H.E. Jose Manuel G. Romualdez and his team at the Philippine Embassy in Washington, D.C., this year's Independence Day celebration defied the odds of a global pandemic and successfully commemorated the historic event by way of a simultaneous virtual flag-raising ceremony and Independence Day program. The event was conducted over online meeting platform Zoom and streamed through Facebook Live, a first for any PHL FSP in the United States.



A pre-event virtual reception was held to welcome special guests composed of officials from the Department of Foreign Affairs, partners from PHL government agencies and the private sector, as well as guests from the foreign diplomatic corps in Washington D.C. (See left photo courtesy of Washington, D.C. PE)

The formal program began with the singing of Philippine and U.S. National Anthems, followed by Independence Day video messages from President Rodrigo Roa Duterte and Foreign Affairs Secretary Teodoro L. Locsin Jr. Also sending their felicitations via video were U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, David R. Stilwell, and Manila Mayor Francisco “Isko Moreno” Domagoso.

In line with this year’s theme, *Kalayaan 2020: Tungo sa Bansang Malaya, Nagbabayanihan, at Ligtas* (Freedom 2020: Towards a Free, United, and Safe Nation), Amb. Romualdez, in his remarks, said that while the CoViD-19 pandemic has brought fear and uncertainty into our lives, it has also brought out the best in the Filipino, particularly through the front-liners and healthcare workers all over the world who embody the courage and resilience that were once displayed by our forebears who fought for our nation's freedom and independence.



Amb. Romualdez and ConGen Cruz singing the PHL National Anthem during the simultaneous flag ceremony on 12 June 2020, at the Philippine Embassy in Washington D.C. and Consul General Cruz’ official residence in Arcadia, CA, respectively.

The Ambassador further added that despite the grim situation, there is cause for hope and optimism because the *Bayanihan* spirit lives on and has become the mark of Filipino communities in the Philippines and overseas.

The commemorative event included performances by New York-based Filipino-American musical theatre artists and members of Broadway *Barkada*, Ms. Ester Barroso-Guerzon and Mr. Roy Flores, whose soulful rendition of OPM hit *Umagang Kay Ganda* and inspirational song *Beautiful City*, respectively, highlighted the Filipino’s innate musicality.



The program concluded with a music video prepared by all PHL FSPs in the U.S.A., honoring the hard work and sacrifice being made by countless Filipino-American essential workers who are at the frontlines of combating the CoViD-19 pandemic. The tribute video, which was inspired by the song, “We Heal as One”, also featured video clips exhibiting the Filipino community’s *Bayanihan* spirit.



Clockwise: Healthcare workers from Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles; Mr. Regalado Valerio Jr., President of the Philippine Nurses Association in Southern CA; and the Pilipino Workers Center of Southern CA were among the front-liners featured in the video tribute.



To cap Independence Day festivities, Consul General Cruz and Mrs. Catherine A. Cruz, together with the Consulate General's officers and staff who joined the ceremony at their residence, watched the 2016 Spanish war drama film entitled, "1898, *Los Últimos de Filipinas*" (1898, *Our Last Men in the Philippines*), gaining insight into how the historic Siege of Baler was depicted through the Spaniards' point of view.

A few days before Independence Day, the Consulate General sent electronic "postcard style" messages to its contacts and colleagues from the host government, consular corps, Filipino-American community organizations, and the media, among others, to convey in a tasteful and appropriate way, the importance of *Kalayaan* 2020 celebrations to the Filipino people, while remaining sensitive to and cognizant of the global pandemic the whole world is presently grappling with. The ePostcard was meant to convey hope and aspiration for a better future with beautiful places one can look forward to visiting post-pandemic.



The Consulate General also shared on its Facebook page the livestream of Independence Day celebrations in the Philippines, which began at 8:00 a.m. on 12 June 2020 (PHL Standard Time). END.