

FRONT NEWS

Carrot and Stick: US \$32 M for PRRD's War on Illegal Drugs and Criminality

By Gina Villanueva, Associate Editor

July 29 - In his Wednesday meeting with Philippines President Rodrigo Roa Duterte (PRRD) and Foreign Secretary Perfecto Yasay Jr., US Secretary of State John Kerry committed \$32 million in funding for Duterte's campaign against illegal drugs and criminality.

The outlay will be spent on training and supplies for the police and military.

Evidence strongly suggests, according to the World Socialist Web Site, that Kerry also provided Duterte with military intelligence that attempts to connect China with the drug trade in the Philippines.

In return, Kerry made clear that Washington expects Duterte to continue his predecessor's support for the US 'pivot to Asia' aimed against China.

Sounds like a 'carrot and stick?'

Duterte is now attempting to balance between the country's economic dependence on China and the political and military might of the US, because Washington is seeking to use the sweeping ruling by the Permanent Court Arbitration (PCA) The Hague, favoring Manila --as a pretext for a dramatic escalation of its confrontation with China. The White House is looking for the ostensible claimant in the case - the Philippines - to assert its rights in some way on the basis of the ruling.

Kerry also highlighted the fact that he and Duterte had a common past as state prosecutors. Like Duterte, he said that Washington was "committed to fighting the illegal trade."

The Philippines Supreme Court has also ruled "with finality," that the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement (EDCA), which provides the US carte blanche -- with military bases in the country, was constitutional. The judges turned down the bogus legal challenge to the deal filed by Bagong Alyansa Makabayan (BAYAN).

Immediately after leaving his meeting with Kerry, PRRD convened the National Security Council, which was nearly an unprecedeted gathering, what with former presidents Fidel Ramos, Joseph Estrada, Gloria Macapagal Arroyo and Benigno Aquino joining the heads of the legislature and Duterte's cabinet to discuss the West Philippine Sea, the peace talks with the Reds, and the war on drugs.

Surely, it was no photo-op; they met for over five hours.

PRRD then convened a meeting of the mayors of major cities and governors of provinces, organized under the League of Cities and Provinces (LCP) and League of Provinces of the Philippines (LPP). He announced the funding he received from Washington.

He told them that "a friend of ours" has "provided us with intercepts" which revealed that the transhipment of drugs in the Philippines came from China, without revealing the details for security reasons. He claimed that the drug wholesale trade was being run entirely by "the Chinese (intsik)" who were based not in the Philippines, but in China. He claimed that the evidence supplied to him revealed that the Chinese were using drug money to "buy judges, fiscals, the police, mayors, governors."

FRONT NEWS

Robredo downplays 'longest election protest' filed by Marcos

By: Yashika F. Torib, Manila Bureau Senior Correspondent

Vice President Leni Robredo brushes off the incessant election protest of her chief rival for the vice presidency even after he filed a 1,000-page complaint with the Supreme Court.

Robredo, in an interview, said that Senator Bongbong Marcos already "knows that he lost the elections" and was simply raising different grounds of electoral fraud every day.

Marcos and Robredo were head-to-head over the vice presidential race last May with the latter winning the post with a slim 263,473 votes.

In his 1,000-page petition, with over 20,000 annexes, Marcos urged the SC to declare him as the duly elected and rightful vice president.

He pointed out several issues of vote rigging through unauthorized Smartmatic servers where the election results could have possibly been tampered. His camp argued that a "fourth server" does not form part of the three legally authorized servers and was not subjected to a source code review.

The senator seeks to recount votes in 36,000 precincts located in 27 provinces and cities as well as the nullification of election results in Basilan, Maguindanao and Lanao del Sur alleging that there was a massive cheating in those provinces.

Election lawyer Romulo Macalintal dubbed the complaint as the "longest election protest ever filed in any election tribunal in the Philippines," which is "unprecedented in the annals of political cases in our country."

With a lengthy petition, however, Macalintal doubted that Robredo's legal team could comply with Presidential Electoral Tribunal's directive to answer the protest in 10 days.

"The 10-day period would not be sufficient for Robredo and her lawyers to read and answer such lengthy and voluminous petition and annexes," Macalintal said.

Meanwhile, Robredo aired her concerns over Marcos' tactics of "using the media and his money to spin a different tale."

"I can't just sit back and allow him to twist the facts," Robredo said referring to Marcos' strong presence on social media and his huge number of following.

"It is difficult for us because we don't have much resource to say otherwise," she added, urging the SC at the same time to act on the matter immediately "because the longer the case drags, the more it is difficult for all of us to move on," she argued.

FRONT NEWS

Philippines Congress Slate August for Constitutional Amendments Proposals

July 29 - Pending President Rodrigo Roa Duterte's 2017 Budget proposal to Congress, Negros Occidental Rep. Alfredo Benitez told senators and congressmen Thursday they could begin their work on the Charter Changes (Cha-cha) in August, saying "We can work as lawmakers in the morning and as Constitutional Assembly (con-ass) members in the afternoon. We can meet from Monday through Thursday, instead of just Monday through Wednesday."

He authored a resolution urging Congress to convene as a constitutional assembly to work on charter change.

Surigao del Norte Rep. Robert Ace Berbers has presented a second con-ass resolution.

Whether the Senate and House of Representatives would vote as one, or separately -- expects to generate a debate, after the amendments are introduced.

Due to budget constraints, Speaker Pantaleon Alvarez revealed that the Chief Executive who has initially advocated an elected constitutional convention to work on Cha-cha, has agreed on the con-ass mode, being also the faster mode.

Alvarez announced their timetable is to complete the amendments within one year for submission to the people in a plebiscite that could coincide with the mid-term elections (for senators, congressmen and local officials) in 2019.

Majority of the members of the House of Representatives have agreed with the con-ass mode.

Eastern Samar Rep. Ben Evardone said, "We can work while the 2017 budget is still not with us, or while it is not being deliberated upon in plenary session and it is with the

appropriations committee. We have until October before the plenary debates on the budget."(GV)

Budget Secretary Benjamin Diokno announced that President Duterte is poised to present his 2017 budget by third week of August.

Isabela Rep. Rodolfo Albano III said lawmakers, convened as a con-ass, could hold sessions and hearings in Mindanao, the Visayas and other parts of the country to feel the people's sentiments on the President's advocacy for a shift to the federal presidential form of government.

Two reasons that con-ass is the most cost-efficient way to go, according to Berbers, as there will be no need for another divisive national elections where delegates will most likely be proxies of politicians, anyway. The second, being that the country will save billions of pesos for eliminating the election of convention delegates.

Benitez' resolution contains details on his proposed federal presidential type of government, including the creation of 12 states - six in Luzon, and three each, in Visayas and Mindanao. (Source: Philippine Star)

INNERVIEW

The Tallano Clan and the Philippine Revolution, Cessation of Treaties with Spain and the United States

By Gina Villanueva, Associate Editor

TALA (TALLANO) ESTATE is a MAHARLIKAN estate owned by the Royal Family of Tallano, through continued possession for Khan Tagean, the successor of the Mongolian Empire, predecessors of King Marikudo Khan Tagean and King Luisong Tagean (Khan), Rajah Lapu-Lapu Tagean and Rajah Soliman (Sulayman) Tagean, succeeded the Shri Vishayas Empire, that liberated Manila Province and its suburbs.

In 1764, through the effort and influence of Prince Lacan Ulrijal Bokiah (Tagean) Tallano, husband of the daughter of a British Lord, Princess Rowena McLeod De Oberveck, a royal government of Great Britain -- liberated the Isla Pilipina (known then as Isla Maharlika).

This caused the recognition of possessory and ownership rights of the (Tagean) Tallano Royal Family by issuance of Ownership Certificate of Title No. 01-04, by British Governor Dawsonne Drakes.

Albeit amended by the Land Registration Court to Decree No. 297 by reason of the last decree that was issued was not cancelled, but instead, was reassigned to Prince Lacan Acuna Ulrijal Bokia (Tagean) Tallano, after all decrees from 01 to 296 were declared null and void by reasons of unlawful usurpation of Torrens Title rights and interests.

Following the issuance of derivative Titles under TCT T No. 408 in the name of Don Gregorio Madrigal Acop and TCT T No. 498 in the name of Don Esteban Benitez Tallano, the only son of the Queen of Hawaii, Lilieluokalana Kamehameha, whose real name was Princess Aminah Kiram Jumalol Alam Benitez, and Prince Julian McLeod Tallano (Queen Victoria's twin brother) who liberated San Carlos, Pangasinan, and who hanged the Catholic Archbishop of the province of Pangasinan, and the same was sent to Vigan, Ilocos Sur.

Prince Julian owned one million-odd metric tons of U.S. gold nuggets at 12.5 per bar, where around 617,000 metric tons was transported from Hawaii to Isla Maharlika, and was lent to the government of the Republic of the Philippines in 1949 through and in honor of the late former Commonwealth President Manuel Acuna Roxas, the cousin of Don Esteban Benitez Tallano, aka Kapitan Berong of Nueva Ecija who liberated the province through his mighty sword and white-armored horse named Armageddon.

The one million-odd metric tons of precious stones was an integral portion of 1,000 tons of U.S. gold nuggets with an equivalent of US\$20 million, or, 20 million pieces of \$1 dollar gold coin weighing 50 grams per coin of 21 carat of US gold, that was paid by Don Esteban Benitez Tallano to the government of Spain -- leading to the Cessation Treaty between two countries on the assumption agreement of Don Esteban Benitez Tallano with the U.S. government, and the monarchy of Spain, to include among others -- that Maharlikans be left to their own ancestral domain.

(<https://talaestatemaharlika.wordpress.com>)

Philippine Court Documents

Analysts looked at the Decision with Compromise Agreement in Pasay City court, dated February 4, 1972.

There is mention, on page 20, of the last surviving son of Prince Julian McLeod Tallano, who is Jose Antonio Diaz (aka for Jose Protacio Rizal, nephew of Queen Victoria). That name Jose Antonio Diaz is again quoted at the bottom of page 18, thusly:

"3. That the gold bullion lent by the Royal Family to the Republic of the Philippines, consisting of 650,000 metric tonnes now, through Reverend Father Jose Antonio Diaz by arrangement of the brilliant lawyer Attorney Ferdinand E. Marcos in the year 1949, for the establishment of the required gold reserves of the newly installed Central Bank of the Philippines, should be maintained in the Central Bank vaults toward maintenance of the country's gold reserves, and the same shall be withdrawable fifty years thereafter, with five years moratorium."

On page 21, "that the said 640,000 metric tonnes of gold nuggets transported by then surviving son of Prince Julian McLeod Tallano from the Vatican after the World War, in the person of Reverend Jose Antonio Diaz, trustee of the Royal Family, and client of then Attorney Ferdinand E. Marcos deserves a just compensation for no less than 305 of the total value of the said 640,000 metric tonnes."

Marcos and Diaz: Partners in Crime?

My source, 'Vidimus' believes it is fair to state that President Marcos had a consuming passion to make the Philippines the most stable and progressive state in Southeast Asia. As a lawyer, Senator and later President, Marcos was perfectly familiar with the land title claim of the Tallano royalty, and equally well aware of the massive gold deposit made by that clan to establish the first Central Bank of the Philippines.

Marcos' initial meeting with Reverend Father Jose Antonio Diaz must have been a revelation, because his legal brain would rapidly recognize that he was in the presence of a man who represented royalty, wealth, power and influence, and just as quickly, he recognized the outgrowth of that relationship in terms of his long-range vision for the Philippines.

It is no secret that President Marcos and Rev. Fr. Jose Antonio Diaz enjoyed a harmonious relationship lasting many years, and that they actively cooperated in multiple financial adventures designed to achieve each of their individual objectives.

Rev. Jose Antonio Diaz enjoyed a unique distinction in relation to the purposes of Marcos in placing and securing valuable assets, in that Father Diaz was a 'persona ecclesiae.' a parson, where the assets at his disposal were nominally those of the church, and thus Diaz held patrimony of those assets in his own name, essentially as a 'corporation sole.'

President Marcos obviously designed the legal strategies which encompassed and preserved the wealth, while Father Diaz provided the wealth and high-level connection necessary to successfully domicile that wealth as instructed by President Marcos.

In one unique area, Rev. Fr. Jose Antonio Diaz could identify wealth concealed by the Japanese and German forces, and the legal strategies of President Marcos could provide the domicile and protection for that recovered wealth, and so such recoveries became the centerpiece of their financial engagements.

It was no easy task, for sure. Any recovery from a burial site would contain assets subject to the Statute of Limitations, and if fully disclosed would attract multiple claimants. Marcos played his role masterfully by dealing astutely with the financial 'hyenas' who habitually prey upon such assets, and several arrangements with the Pentagon, the United Nations, International Monetary Fund and other august bodies preserved the assets through permitting their use by the scavengers, but retaining title to the involved principal.

Deposits with banks were largely made under 'bailment' conditions, thus assuring their security until such time as the Statute of Limitations lapsed.

The ultimate beneficiary was kept concealed via use of a coded identification, TVM-LSM-666, and all critical documents referred to the beneficiary exclusively under that code name.

Finally the assignments were made, wherein the beneficiary was fully identified by name. Originals of such assignments were handed exclusively to the chosen beneficiary, with copy to the concerned holding institution, to thus assume a trouble-free assumption of the accounts by the beneficiary at maturity.

That beneficiary has been identified. Significantly, the beneficiary is again a 'persona ecclesiase,' and thus the multiple assignments can be activated by that beneficiary in accord with the confidential 'Letter of Instruction' executed by Rev. Fr. Jose Antonio Diaz, and in the event of death or incapacity of that beneficiary, may equally be passed on to the next intended beneficiary under like conditions.

Might we now ask, what exactly was the origin of the purported 600,000 metric tonnes of gold bullion subscribed by the Clan Tallano to support establishment of the Central Bank of the Philippines?

Was it Vatican gold?

Could Tallano have acquired such a massive store of wealth as a result of a successful business career in the Dutch East Indies?

Ebb and Flow of Power, 100 Years, Hence

At the outset, Prince Julian McLeod Tallano (Queen Victoria's brother) controlled not only his own fortune and business income, but had an interest in the fortune of his British royal family, and acquired the wealth of his wife, the Princess Tarhata upon marriage.

And the wealth of his British family was no less than fabulous. The kings and queens of England were drawn largely from the German nobility, and they, through land ownership via conquest, had amassed major fortunes, the majority of which was in gold.

Moreover, in the immediate post WWI aftermath, those kings and queens were well aware of the chilly winds of Republicanism blowing through their dominance, and having lost both land fortunes to the fates of war, had turned to the church as depository of their remaining wealth in order to gain the patronage of that august influence. The prevailing thought was, where safer to park your fortune than with the richest influence on earth, and therefore trustworthy and beyond venality?

They, of course, neglected to consider that the Rothschild banking family had taken control of the Vatican finances in 1863, and that they were nominally protected by the "Vatican," their wealth was at the disposal of the Rothschild family of 'banksters.'

England, least feared the winds of Republicanism due to an arrangement struck with the government when Britain became bankrupt following a major Sovereign Debt Default, which involved the then Monarch paying all the debts of the country, and assigning certain lands to the country in exchange for permanent recognition of the existing Monarchy, plus a stipend to perform that role, and had, with connivance of the church, formed that one square mile of land now known as the 'City of London' to handle the financial affairs of the 'Crown.'

In the same context, it must be noted that Britain is owned 'lock, stock and barrel,' by the Vatican because of the breach of Treaty considerations surrounding the Magna Carta.

The Queen, although the nominal head of the Church of England, is instructed directly by the Roman Pontiff. That condition has been 'in place,' since Magna Carta, and will remain so while the prevailing Treaties exist.

Who would object, then, if Prince Julian McLeod Tallano had proposed to his British relatives that 600,000 metric tonnes of gold should be loaned for purposes of funding a new Central Bank in the Philippines?

The City of London, with its close ties to the Bank of England had long recognized that a Central Bank was a prolific revenue earner, based upon the issue of credits as opposed to assignment of existing specie.

The Rothschilds banking fraternity, as controllers of the Vatican wealth would have no objection, as such a situation favored their possible later acquisition of the new Central Bank as an extension of their grip on the existing Bank of England, and longer term plan to amalgamate the Central Banks of the world.

The Vatican itself would not object, since the gold was destined for use of a dominantly Catholic community: the Philippines.

Prince Julian McLeod Tallano would clearly have little difficulty in raising the required 600,000 metric tonnes of gold, even if he did not have access to that volume from his personal resources, or Muslim family affiliations.

Truth to say, there were even more powerful undercurrents at work long before the period in which Prince Julian McLeod Tallano assembled the 600,000 metric tonnes of gold. The centuries-old fight for supremacy and world hegemony between the British and Spanish crowns was in full force and effect, and there were religious interest seeking to extend their influence in the form of Islam approaching from the south, and the Catholic Church, as motivator of Spain, obliged them to approach the Philippines with a Bible in one hand, and a sword in the other.

The British proved to be diplomatically superior in their efforts, as evidenced by the production of the decree known as the 01-4 Protocol.

In 1764, the Royal Crown of England, Great Britain, decided case number 571 in the Escribania de Cabildo and ordered the creation of the Philippine Islands pursuant to the Decree of 01-4 Protocol, by virtue of the Supreme Order of the Royal Crown of England embracing four major islands consisting of 169,972,500 hectares of plains, mountains, forests, and seas -- specifically the island of Luzon with 31,804,624 hectares, the islands of Palawan with 3,652,875 hectares, Visayan Islands with 45,996,215 hectares, and Mindanao with 83,518,786 hectares, more or less.

"Witness His Highness King George III of the Royal Crown of England, January 17, 1764, issued at Manila at 10:45 a.m. attested by Governor Dawsonne Drake, P I., signed by Governor Jose Raon, Office of the Escribania de Cabildo, Proprietary Governor."

Was that clever, or what?

The land mass became the property of the Tallano Clan, and when the Treaty of Paris was executed in 1898, the victor was obliged to recognize the Tallano Clan as true title holders to the land mass of the Philippines.

The British had protected their interests in Southeast Asia in a daring move which had assigned the land to "one of their own," the family of Prince Julian McLeod Tallano, brother of Queen Victoria, thus defeating all efforts of the Spanish to retain possession of the archipelago.

We can reiterate that Prince Julian McLeod Tallano would have experienced no difficulty whatsoever in assembling the 600,000 metric tonnes of gold, because it all stayed "in the family."

It would be a valid assumption to suggest that Britain held the dominant position from date of issue of the Decree of 01-4 Protocol.

The Spanish were in possession of the Philippine Islands but lost their colonial powers to the USA. The Spanish tried to maintain a foothold with their invalid 'Titulo de Propiedad' in the name of Hermogenes Rodriguez, and with many Spanish land titles coming from "Friars Land" as if the Friars were the original owners of land in the Philippines. The friars were not, and never were, original land owners.

The owners of the land are indisputably the royal Family of the Philippines, the Tallano-Tagean Clan, originally in the name of Prince Lacun Acuna Tallano (Tagean).

For us to appreciate the intrinsic value of gold at the time of deposit at the Central Bank of the Philippines, it must be recalled that gold was then regularly traded at between \$27 and \$30 per troy ounce, and not the \$1,000-odd figure we note today. Even allowing a ten price of USD 1,000,000 per metric tonne, the value of the deposit at date of completion would have been in the order of USD 600 billion.

Today that value is in excess of \$30 trillion, but the loan was a bailment which established the credit-worthiness of the new Central Bank, and so the appreciated value is of no concern, because the contract calls simply for the return of the original deposit as gold, and the corresponding interest.

Which brings us to the key question: Will it ever happen? (Part 4 of 4: Conclusion - Oligarchs Intentions Unclear)

NEWS AT A GLANCE

AFP pulls out elite units in response to ceasefire

By Priam F. Nepomuceno and Christopher Lloyd T. Caliwan

MANILA, July 30 (PNA) -- The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) ordered a pullout of its elite forces from combat operations after the deadline imposed by President Rodrigo Duterte for the Communist Party of the Philippines-New People's Army-National Democratic Front (CPP-NPA-NDF) to declare its own ceasefire lapsed at 5:00 p.m. on Saturday.

According to AFP public affairs chief Col. Edgard Arevalo that Lt. Gen. General Eduardo Año, the Commanding General of the Philippine Army has completed the pullout of the 2nd Special Forces Battalion from San Miguel, Surigao del Sur on orders of General Ricardo Visaya, the AFP Chief of Staff.

Arevalo said that recent movement of Army elite units, another company of Scout Rangers, and other infantry units in pulling out from the area of combat operations of the 4th Infantry Division under the Command of Maj. Gen. Benjamin Madrigal manifests the AFP's resolve to comply with the directive of the President to step back from the operational area where there are likely armed engagement between government security forces and members of the CPP-NPA-NDF.

He said the recent movements by AFP combat units away from conflict areas happen even at the wake of a fresh attack by avowed NPA units on CAFGU units that were also pulling out from forward deployment in Brgy. Gupitan, Kapalong, Davao del Norte.

The AFP firmly believes on the primacy of peace as the road to sustainable development and enduring prosperity for our countrymen, Arevalo noted.

He added the AFP will not renege on its commitment to the CIC that it will be a willing instrument of security and stability.

"That it will be glad to set aside ideological differences, to partner, and to cooperate with any entities or groups in order to engender peace and development for the people it sworn to protect and defend," Arevalo said. (PNA)

NEWS AT A GLANCE

16 confirmed dead as hot air balloon crashes in Texas

HOUSTON, July 31 (PNA/Xinhua) -- US Texas Department of Public Safety has confirmed that 16 people were killed on Saturday morning after a hot air balloon caught on fire and crashed near Lockhart, a city in the central part of the US state of Texas.

The accident occurred shortly after 7:40 a.m. local time on Saturday near Lockhart, a city about 48 km south of the Lone Star state capital of Austin, when the hot air balloon with at least 16 people on board crashed into a pasture, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) said in a statement on Saturday.

Local police also confirmed the accident, saying in a statement that "The balloon was occupied and it does not appear at this time that there were any survivors of the crash," according to local TV station ABC13.

The FAA and the National Transportation Safety Board are rushing to the scene to investigate the cause of the accident.

Texas Governor Greg Abbott offered his condolences to those killed in the crash, one of the deadliest balloon accidents on record.

"Our thoughts and prayers are with the victims and their families, as well as the Lockhart community," he said in a statement.(PNA/Xinhua)
BNB/PJN

NEWS AT A GLANCE

Duterte: No Coalition Gov't with Reds

July 29 - Philippines President Rodrigo Roa Duterte Friday firmly assured the communist rebels that "I will never, never agree to a coalition government. I am very emphatic about that. I can have an inclusive government. I have taken them in. I can only really surrender to them in the sense that I can shake hands and talk about peace - - an inclusive government."

He will also lift the ceasefire if the Reds don't get back with him by 5 p.m. Saturday.

Duterte announced this during a visit to the wake of the slain militiaman at the 60th Infantry Battalion headquarters in Davao del Norte.

The Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) today asked the Chief Executive for more time to verify and investigate the ambush in Davao del Norte.

Jose Ma. Sison, founder of CPP told the Manila Standard the negotiating panels are in touch with each other, and that "President Duterte should give more time to the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) to investigate the alleged incident."

Sison, who is in Utrecht in the Netherlands, asked for Duterte's patience and not expect quick surrenders from highly principled and experienced revolutionaries who have a growing mass base against the "rotten ruling system of big compradors and landlords," adding that " it took at least three days for Duterte government to make clear what is the content of its unilateral ceasefire order, which he merely announced only during his State of the Nation address on July 25, but it was only on July 26 when the Armed Forces issued a suspension of military operations (SOMO) that was not clear about many things, while the police, on the other hand, only issued a suspension of police operations against CPP rebels on July 27." (GV)

TOURISM

Dapit Alim: Mindanao's Shrine of Healing for Christians, Muslims and Lumad Alike

By Randy V. Urlanda, Manila Bureau Chief Correspondent

After climbing the 243 paved steps leading to a breathtaking al fresco hilltop sanctuary called Shrine of the Healing Cosmic Christ, popularly known as "Dapit Alim" in the outskirts of the capital town of Tubod in Lanao del Norte, one is amazed and at the same time exhilarated by the 360-degree vista around the exalted place.

"Dapit Alim," whose first word, "dapit," is Cebuano which has a triple meaning of place, invitation and nearness, while "alim," means "to heal."

The open air "heavenly" shrine, where mass is celebrated every Sunday at seven o'clock in the morning , is carpeted by fine, Bermuda grass-like lawn and hemmed by leafy trees and flower gardens with a flat top boulder as the altar. Rising 22.5 meters from the depths of the earth towards the sky, the Cosmic Christ bearing a benign-looking bronze-colored concrete face with a halo embellished with embossed stars of the universe, welcomes everyone – Christians, Muslims and "lumad" (non-Muslim indigenous people) in the embracing love of God.

Christ's enveloping outstretched arms with huge, pierced open palms, which serve as catwalks, draw everyone to His heart where a smiling Holy Child awaits them.

Located three kilometers east of the laid back provincial capital of Tubod, the lofty shrine is nestled on a 5-1/2-hectare forested land overlooking the tranquil waters of the saber tooth-shape Panguil Bay and fronting the majestic Mount Malindang in Misamis Occidental across the strait.

Dapit Alim's roots could be traced back 42 years ago when a progressive-minded diocesan priest, Fr. Rodulfo M. Galenzoga, who founded Dapit Alim, organized the Kolambungan Dance Theater (KDT) in 1974 in his former Parish of the Holy Cross in the picturesque coastal town of Kolambungan, one of Lanao del Norte's 22 municipalities.

After the 1974-1975 KDT national road tour that showcased "Maranatha" (Make Haste, Lord), a dance-drama that depicted the excesses of corrupt politicians, the 35 members of the KDT, who were mostly out-of-school youth, prodded their director-priest to establish a commune where they can start to do full time work as evangelizers through dance and theater. But, Galenzoga, who is a native of Tubod, declined and chose instead to bring theater in his parish to a professional level by accepting a one-year scholarship in London to study theater in a dance and mime school.

But, the cold English weather and loneliness made him feel disillusioned instead. After two months in England he dropped his scholarship and went to Ireland upon the invitation of an Irish Columban priest.

"What I really wanted to do was to study liberation theology in Peru under the renowned liberation theologian Gustavo Gutierrez, but the response was negative," says the 71-year-old, white-haired priest.

"From Ireland, I went to the US and joined a charismatic group in Chicago for several months, then I went to Maine where the parish was also interested in dance," he adds. "However, I felt that prayers should be combined with justice to help the oppressed."

(Liberation theology is a school of theology within the Roman Catholic Church that emphasizes the Christian mission to bring justice to the poor and oppressed through political activism.)

He forsook that dream of becoming a liberation theologian when he rushed home to be at the bedside of his sick mother. Like he was cut for another divine undertaking to make him stay home, his mother got well soon after.

While in Lanao, the Bishop asked him to take care of the seminarians in Iligan City, then the seat of the provincial government. However, Galenzoga felt he needed space in his new cloistered life so he thought of establishing a community comprising of 11 seminarians in the remote highland township of Magsaysay 18 kms east of Tubod.

They lived in a small hut and held services at the old wooden church. There they worked and lived with the peasants and did house-to-house Bible studies. While in Magsaysay, three of the eleven seminarians were ordained deacons, which Galenzoga described as “a triumph of the Church of the Poor.”

In 1999, Galenzoga built a small, flimsy cottage on what will become Dapit Alim. When local folks heard about a shrine being built in their midst, they started trekking through the shrubs along the steep 100-meter high hill to join the “Kahigalaan ni Hesus” (Friends of Jesus), a small religious group that prays and serves God.

“Initially, we just thought of having a statue of Mother and Child and, later on, with the help of a sculptor from Davao, we came up with a Cosmic Christ embracing all, as our inspiration in 2001,” states the articulate and soft-spoken priest, who finished his priesthood at the Jesuit-run San Jose Seminary at the Ateneo de Manila University in Quezon City.

“It’s a Cosmic Christ with heart of a child because we have to be children to be able to welcome all, and as a child, to be able to play and to trust everyone,” he adds. “That’s why in order to become true leaders we must have a heart of a child – trustful and welcoming.”

Now, Dapit Alim is one of Lanao del Norte’s popular tourist landmarks. Aside from the giant Cosmic Christ, whose back serves as a dormitory for participants attending seminars and spiritual retreats, it also has unique spiritual-themed sculptures such as the Grotto of Holy Mary, Mother of God, “Panaw Alim” (Journey of Healing), a 30 to one hour meditative walk along the eight stages of one’s life, the “Tuburan sa Pag-alim” (The Fountain of Blessing), with three big hands flowing with water that serves as a blessing font, and many more that will enhance one’s spirituality.

“Thank God we’re able to survive with no funds, with no direct help from abroad,” says Galenzoga, who wanted to be a doctor when he was a kid. “We’re surviving only through Providence, the people’s generosity here, and our Diocese, which recognizes our work here by being its implementing arm for inter-religious dialogue and ecumenism.

“We’re also trying to bring Christians and Muslims together here,” concludes Galenzoga, who is also a theater playwright, choreographer and stage director. “My concern though is who’ll take over me when I’m gone. But, I feel it’s God’s work that will make Dapit Alim continue what it was meant for.”

EDITORIAL

CLINTON VERSUS TRUMP

I read the editorial of the Houston Chronicle wherein it lambasted Republican presidential candidate New York billionaire Donald Trump for his being unworthy of the position he is aspiring to be, and that is running in this November presidential election.

Since Trump started campaigning during the primary, his uncanny remarks against other presidential wannabes, Senators Rubio and Cruz have reverberated in the halls of all the campaign trails. Trump's choice of words describing his opponents are despicable of the position Trump is aiming for in this November presidential election.

And lately, some Republican US senators have distanced themselves from the uncanny remarks of their own presidential candidate, Donald Trump who chose to engage Mr. and Mrs. Khan, parents of American hero Capt. Khan who died defending the United States in the Middle East in a war.

Mr. Khizr spoke during the Democratic convention while his wife Ghazala Khan was visibly quiet standing beside her husband, Republicans have responded to a number of controversial comments that GOP presidential nominee Donald Trump made about Khizr and Ghazala Khan, the parents of an American soldier killed in Iraq. Their son, Capt. Humayun Khan, was posthumously awarded a Purple Heart and Bronze Star for his service.

The couple appeared at the Democratic National Convention, where they condemned Trump's policies and statements about Muslims. Khizr Khan said that the businessman has "sacrificed nothing and no one" and questioned if Trump had read the U.S. Constitution.

The Houston Chronicle endorsed the candidacy of Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton. Her vast experience in politics, as a former First Lady, to becoming a US Senator for the state of New York, and to being the former Secretary of State in the administration of US President Barack Obama, has placed herself ahead of Republican candidate Donald Trump.

In the last 50 years, the paper has endorsed two Democrats, Lyndon Johnson in 1964 and Barack Obama in 2008.

The last time the paper endorsed a Democrat in consecutive presidential elections was Franklin Roosevelt in 1944 and 1940

STRAIGHT TALK

ADVERTISING WITH A COMPETITOR NEWS MAGAZINE

I was taken aback when I got this information from a Filipino Houston community leader that the reason my request for a quotation to advertise with a news magazine format in Houston can't be accepted because I am a threat to its existence.

I am not surprised for the owner of the news magazine to comment in a manner that is unprofessional and most of all unthinkable from a person like him whom I have lent my name in his editorial board for so many years from the time of its inception to the time I resigned a few years back.

Even CNN, a global cable network would even advertise its competitor, DISH NETWORK in some of its programs, why not The Philippine Sentinel advertising its Digital Edition in his news magazine? I am not asking for a freebie, but am asking him for a quotation so I can pay whatever is fair and reasonable.

In the beginning of the news magazine existence, advertisers, especially those who have been our advertisers with The Philippine Sentinel for over a decade have chosen to patronize it because they have seen my name in every second page of its edition.

I am no longer in this mood of using my column, just like in the old broadsheet of the Sentinel, and now in my blog, in the digital edition of The Philippine Sentinel, to write about expose' but rather current news about the Philippines, whether it be political or otherwise.

But I can't escape from the fact, that certain personal aspects of the deal about advertising in his magazine would be interjected with false remarks that are totally uncalled for, coming from a supposed dear friend of mine.

He must have been blinded by the color of his success, is he?

Journalists are supposed to be guided by its own CODE OF ETHICS AND PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT in the pursuit of its own mandate to spread good manners and show the true grit of a professional journalist.

Those of my friends who know the whole story about why I left the editorial board of the news magazine, would somehow know why I decided to part ways with him. And the rest is history.