

Environmental heroes led by Cardinal Rosales and Bishop Labayen get awards

PRESIDENT Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo led participants in the Ecology Mass and recognition of the country's environmental heroes as part of the week-long Earth Day celebration from April 19-25.

The President has issued Presidential Proclamation No. 1276 calling on the public to celebrate Earth Day every April 22 by doing their share in protecting the environment, especially now that the world is starting to experience the effects of global warming and climate change.

The President joined the Ecology Mass at the NBN-4 studio along Visayas Avenue, Quezon City on Friday, April 25.

After the Mass, the President led the handing out of trophies to the recipients of the Fr. Neri Satur Awards led by Gaudencio Cardinal Rosales who was recognized for Environmental Activism.

Cardinal Rosales has spearheaded the establishment of ecology desks in parishes and the use of the pulpit in staunchly protecting the environment.

Assisting the President in handing out the Father Neri Satur Awards was Secretary Heherson Alvarez, Presidential Adviser on Global Warming and Climate Change.

Other environmental heroes under the category of Climate Change Mitigation are Bishop Julio Labayen for his Adopt-a-Mountain Program; Muntinlupa City for its Public Market with the Best Solid and Water Waste Management Program; and Talavera National High School of Nueva Ecija for its Mini Hydro Power Invention.

For the category on International Support for Climate Change, the awardees are GTZ German Technical Cooperation (Green Energy Initiatives); Northwind Power Development Corp. (Green Energy Sector); Green Architecture Movement/United Architects of the Philippines (Green Building Sector); Green Renewable Independent Power Producer Foundation Inc. (Electric Jeepney for Transport Sector); and Benson Industries (Zero Waste Recycling of Machine Oil).

The Eco-Cultural Communications sector award would be given to the Arts Association of the Philippines (Environmental Education for Visual Arts); Joey Ayala (Music); and Kidlat Tahimik (Film Documentation for Indigenous Peoples).

The Fr. Neri Satur Special Citation for Media and Culture will also recognize the television and radio talents of Francis Mag-



Archbishop Gaudencio Cardinal Rosales

Photo courtesy of Inquirer.net

alona (posthumous award as an Eco-Friendly Artist for his *BA-SURAP*); Timmy Cruz (*Panata sa Kalikasan*); Kim Atienza of ABS-CBN Channel 2 (*Matang Lawin*); Richard Gutierrez of GMA-7 (*Full Force Nature*); Angelo Palmones of DZMM for *Takbo Para sa Kalikasan*; and Clement Bautista of DZRH for Environmental Reporting.

A briefing on solid waste management was also conducted as part of the President's Friday schedule that promotes awareness and programs on environmental protection and climate change.

The Fr. Neri Satur award was given during the worldwide observance of Earth Day every 22nd of April to posthumously honor the martyrdom of Fr. Neri Satur who lost his life in 1991 fighting illegal loggers and protecting the forests of Bukidnon.

Earth Day was first held in the US in 1970, led by then Wisconsin Senator Gaylor Nelson, to call attention to the degradation of the environment.

When he was then a senator, Secretary Alvarez, authored the Senate resolution proclaiming April 22 of each year as Earth Day in the country. (*PND*)

Incentives sought for heritage sites in QC

by JULIE M. AURELIO
Inquirer.net

QUEZON City councilor is pushing for incentives to be granted to owners of historical and heritage sites in order to encourage them to preserve such sites of national interest.

In a proposed ordinance, city councilor Ma. Diorella Sotto is battling for incentives like discounts on real property taxes, business permits or renovation fees for residents who own cultural sites.

Sotto's proposed ordinance defines heritage sites as all houses, buildings and structures, including religious and civil structures, which trace the history, culture and heritage of Quezon City and the entire country.

She added that such structures could be indigenous or influenced by the Spanish, American, Chinese or other cultures "which played a role in the history and socio-cultural life of people in the city."

Under the proposal, property owners of heritage sites will be granted a 20 percent discount on annual real property taxes of both the structure and lot on which it was constructed.

Owners who wish to restore their structures will be exempt from paying the required building permit and renovation fees.

Should the proposed ordinance be passed, owners renovating their buildings will also enjoy a tax exemption for the next five

years and a 20 percent discount for the succeeding years.

"Restoration of stone gates and fences to its original state shall be undertaken by the city government at no cost to the owner," Sotto proposed.

However, she clarified that the incentives would be granted only to owners of heritage sites which have been opened to the public.

The National Historical Institute will be in charge of issuing certifications that the structure is a historical and cultural site before the discount can be granted.

Sotto added that any renovation or alteration should be in sync with the style, material and process used at the time period when it was built, and that renovation or alteration must be approved by the city government.

Heritage sites will be also exempt from any demolition or destruction as the office of the city building official will not issue any demolition permit for historical sites.

The proposed ordinance will prohibit any private owner or administrator from destroying, vandalizing and demolishing "houses, buildings and structures declared as historical, cultural and heritage sites."

Violators of the ordinance will be fined P5,000 and imprisoned for one year should they be found guilty of destroying or vandalizing heritage sites. ■

Gov't never supported Nicole from Day 1

PAGE A10 ◀

The lawyer took exception to part of the ruling that said the prosecution failed to prove force while Smith was with an intoxicated Nicole inside a moving van at the Subic Bay Freeport, a former US naval base.

"We do not agree with that because you have to take into context that Nicole was severely intoxicated. She tried to resist but she was too intoxicated," said Ursua.

Discouraging precedent

She added that the decision "rewrites the rule" in court's appreciation of evidence in such a case as it set aside the state of mind of the complainant at the time of the incident.

In proving rape against Smith, the prosecution had shown the lower court the evidence that Nicole was too drunk to have consented sex when she was with Smith on the night of Nov. 1, 2005.

The reversal also set a discouraging precedent for other rape complainants, Ursua said.

"It will discourage victims from reporting and pursuing their cases. This will influence trial courts in how they look at cases of similar circumstances, where the victims are in a state of intoxication," said the lawyer. ■

'Constituent assembly a slow boat to China'

PAGE A17 ◀

by the SC ruling, Comelec Chairman Jose Melo said his colleagues would first have to meet with the High Court's technical working group before acting on the tribunal's decision.

The SC unanimously rejected the old formula of computing party-list representation in the House, which was two percent of the highest votes cast for a party-list group.

The new formula is 20 percent of the total number of legislative districts, which under the present composition of the House should be 55 seats.

Earlier, Nograles said he would ask the House's legal department to study the ruling after stating that the decision would put the House membership over 250 which, he added, would violate the Constitution.

Last Wednesday, April 22, Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile formally informed Escudero that he was withdrawing authorship of Senate Bill 3123 or "An Act Increasing the Number of Membership in the House of Representatives," citing the SC ruling.

A similar bill had earlier been filed at the House by Iloilo Rep. Raul Gonzalez Jr. and had passed the committee level.

Gordon said Malacañang could not wash its hands of the House move for Cha-cha, saying that Mrs. Arroyo would do everything to avoid prosecution after stepping down in 2010.

He said the President might run for congresswoman of Pampanga and then vie for the House speakership and then prime minister.

He called Mrs. Arroyo a transactional president whose decisions have always been after gaining political points.

Legarda said it was understandable if the opposition in the House were "wary" of contesting before the SC the present Cha-cha initiative at the House.

Roxas also rebuked Mrs. Arroyo and her allies in Congress for their continued attempt to ram through an illegal con-ass.

He warned that persistent moves by Malacañang cronies to change the Charter could turn the public against the government and provoke street demonstrations.

He said Mrs. Arroyo should have learned from Thailand's experience and prevented her cronies from reviving any Cha-cha moves, which a recent Social Weather Station (SWS) survey had shown was spurned by 66 percent of voting Filipinos.

He said the government should re-focus its priorities and concentrate on bringing real service to the people.

The figure is expected to increase with the entry of new college graduates to the employment sector, Roxas said.

Makati Rep. Teodoro Locsin Jr. said Resolution 1109 calling on "members of Congress" to convene a con-ass to propose Charter amendments insults President Arroyo.

Aside from Villafuerte and Nograles, the President's two congressmen sons, Juan Miguel and Diosdado, her brother-in-law Rep. Ignacio Arroyo of Negros Occidental, and 170 other House members signed the con-ass measure.

Three sponsors have delivered their speeches on Resolution 1109.

Next week, the sponsors will begin answering their colleagues' questions on the Nograles-proposed amendments.

Locsin said he was surprised why Nograles agreed to be the lead signatory of Villafuerte's con-ass resolution. (*Philstar.com*)

ATLAS WORLD
Travel & Tours

LOWEST RATE AIRFARE

KOREAN AIR

\$599

TAXES INCLUDED

Travel Dates : April 10 until May 31
Sept 01 until Nov 30

Ticket Deadline : Apr 25

LAX-MNL/CEBU-LAX

Other airlines also available... CALL OUR TRAVEL EXPERT
800.351.0535

AXP ATLAS XPRESS PADALA

MONEY
REMITTANCE

BDO Remit

Higher Exchange Rate & Beat any Competitor's Rate

\$6.00 fee
Dollar to Peso
with BDO Accounts Only

\$8.00 fee
for other Banks or
Door to Door delivery
(Manila and Provinces)

Present this coupon for redemption

(626) 332-6093 (626) 922-8930
1011 E. EDNA PLACE, COVINA, CA 91724