

DATELINE PHILIPPINES

Prayer power for Aquino goes global

by FE ZAMORA
Inquirer.net

MANILA – “Prayer Power” is in force for the cancer-stricken Corazon Aquino, and it has spread to the Internet with bloggers and members of social networks writing short but heartfelt prayers for her recovery.

The former President’s official website, <http://www.coryaquino.ph>, has been inundated with prayers and messages since July 1, when it was reported that her condition had turned serious.

As of on July 4, the website had devoted a total of 73 pages—with 10 messages per page—to letters from the public, including Filipinos and foreigners overseas.

On July 4, at the fourth of the nine-day healing Masses for Aquino, members of her former Cabinet showed up dressed in her signature yellow.

Her spokesperson Deede Siytagco said this was the least they could do for the former President who remains under close watch at the Makati Medical Center.

“You may call it prayer power,” Siytagco said.

Or it could be the vaunted “Cory magic,” which peaked during the February 1986 Edsa people power revolt that toppled Ferdinand Marcos’ dictatorship.

“Thanks for everything” Among the letters to the 76-year-old Aquino were narrations of some writers’ experiences during what is now known as Edsa I.

Others recalled their first meeting with her during the campaign for the 1986 snap presidential election, when she challenged the dictator who called her “a mere housewife.”

A few sent poems and prayers asking various saints to help “Tita Cory.”

All the writers sent their names and addresses, with many carrying formal introductions of their family or clan, offices, parishes and organizations.

An Ishmael Sinsuat said “the Sinsuat clan of Cotabato City, Maguindanao,” was not only praying for Aquino but also offering its “humblest thanks for

everything you have done for our country.”

A Lutheran pastor said he was also at Edsa and had earlier “willingly obeyed” Aquino’s call for civil disobedience “even if it was difficult.” He said he would include Aquino in the prayers in his church.

On the social network Facebook, prayers and messages for Aquino made up popular postings.

A statement on her condition posted on the account of her only son, Sen. Benigno Aquino III, also generated numerous comments.

Even the AM radio programs have become outlets for public expressions of support for the former President.

On the noontime show on dzMM, a caller said he wished it were possible that Filipinos could spare Aquino her pain: “*Eh, kung pwede lang sana hati-*

in na lang nating mga Filipino yong sakit na nadarama ninyo, amin na lang po.”

More members of the Aquino Cabinet attended the healing Mass at the Greenbelt 5 chapel in Makati. Jose “Ping” de Jesus (Aquino’s former public works secretary) led the reading of the novena prayer.

Among those present were Franklin Drilon (executive secretary), Elfren Cruz (Presidential Management Staff chief), and other Aquino secretaries Cesar Sarino (interior), Jesus Estanislao (finance), Dondon Paderanga (socioeconomic planning), Philip Juico (agrarian reform), Pete Prado (transportation) and Aniceto Sobrepeña (Cabinet secretary).

Also present were Aquino’s legal adviser Justice Adolfo Azcuna, former Central Bank governor Jose Cuisia, former Trade Secretary Jose Pardo, Manila

Mayor Fred Lim and Ambassador Miguel Perez Rubio.

Lim was the director of the National Bureau of Investigation and Perez Rubio was Malacañang protocol officer during Aquino’s term.

Noli’s prayer

In a statement, Vice President Noli de Castro said he was joining the rest of the country in praying for Aquino’s recovery.

“I know that Our Divine Healer will always bless and protect the woman who was instrumental in restoring democracy in our country and who is considered a moral beacon in times of national crises,” De Castro said, adding:

“To the family and friends of the former President, please be assured that our grateful Filipino nation is praying with you to bless and heal President Cory so that she can continue to be an inspiration to our nation.” ■

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