

Written by Bobby Reyes

Wednesday, 21 January 2009 13:48 - Last Updated Wednesday, 21 January 2009 14:22

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One of our readers, Atty. Ding Bagasao of Manila, sent in this appeal that some Filipino-American lay leaders in New York City have started to save the Chapel of San Lorenzo Ruiz from being closed by the archdiocese.

Atty. Bagasao forwarded a copy of the appeal that his friend, Ms. Linda Nietes, sent in turn to him. According to Ms. Nietes, "It seems that His Eminence, Edward Cardinal Egan, has pronounced that he 'would allow the chapel to continue for a temporary time period, subject to an ongoing archdiocesan review. There is real doubt that a priest's time and people's gifts should be devoted to maintaining this Center. It is everyone's positive experience that Filipinos blend into and build up their local parishes."

Ms. Linda Nietes posted online that attendance at the said chapel at Sunday masses are so low and it seems that the Filipino-American community has not really embraced the chapel as its own; that they only go there when there are special events. She says that she hopes that the Filipino community will make it a vibrant chapel (with their full presence, especially during Sunday masses) and not just an "events" center.

She wrote further: "I understand that there are really big crowds only during big events. Maybe the Cardinal is thinking that with the shortage of priests, he can use the current Coordinator of the Filipino Apostolate of the Archdiocese of New York, Fr. Erno Diaz to better use elsewhere since the attendance at the masses is rather low. This is just an off-the-cuff comment because I do not really know the situation. (*She said also that Rev. Fr. Diaz is the author of the book, 'On the Road with San Lorenzo', UST Press, 2005* .)

"Anyway, it might be good also to campaign to Filipinos and Filipino Americans to please attend masses at the Chapel of San Lorenzo Ruiz to show His Eminence, Edward Cardinal Egan, the patriarch of the Archdiocese of New York, that the Filipino community has heard his concerns.

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“Likewise, more members of the Filipino Community in the New-York (area) and its environs should sign the Petition because this will show their full support of the Filipino chapel that is in their midst.”

Ms. Nietes ends her appeal by saying, “I live in Los Angeles but hope to be able to visit the chapel in the near future.”

Editor’s Note: Ms. Nietes is the lady behind the Philippine Expressions Bookshop, the Mail-Order Bookshop dedicated to Filipino Americans in search of their roots. She can be reached at 2114 Trudie Drive, Rancho Palos Verdes, CA 90275-2006, Tel. (310) 514-9139 FAX (310) 514-3485

Ms. Nietes said that it was Joy Puyat who posted this media-and-community advisory.

Ms. Joy Puyat wrote:

Subject: [OFW-Core\_Group] Urgent

**SAVE THE FILIPINO CHAPEL IN NEW YORK**

Date: Wednesday, January 21, 2009, 9:04 AM

Please view and sign this Global Appeal online at <http://www.petitiononline.com/saveslrc/petition.html>

Here is the Global Appeal for Prayers:

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QUOTE: We, the global devotees of the first Filipino Saint, San Lorenzo Ruiz, request you to sign and join us in this global appeal for prayers. This is the time for Filipinos around the world to unite in prayer: sign to demonstrate your support! Help save the Chapel of San Lorenzo Ruiz in New York!

Forward this to your friends and family! We would appreciate as many signatures ASAP. Our target is to have one-million signatures in a month.

Since the Chapel of San Lorenzo Ruiz opened on September 1, 2005, it has become a home away from home and a symbol of national pride and hope for Filipinos in New York, those visiting and all Filipinos around the globe, including the Philippines. We are truly grateful to finally have a landmark of our faith named after our first Filipino saint, San Lorenzo Ruiz (see official decree signed by the Archbishop of New York, June 20, 2005). Since then, the chapel has become a vibrant community with its various activities, financially self-supporting (i.e. no financial support from the Archdiocese was necessary) through donations and fund-raising activities, including an endowment campaign for financial sustainability.

However, the Chapel of San Lorenzo Ruiz is now facing uncertainty. An official letter dated December 10, 2008, signed by Monsignor William Belford, Chancellor of the Archdiocese of New York, states that effective February 1, 2009, His Eminence, Edward Cardinal Egan "will allow the chapel to continue for a temporary time period, subject to an ongoing Archdiocesan review. There is real doubt that a priest's time and people's gifts should be devoted to maintaining this Center. It is everyone's positive experience that Filipinos blend into and build up their local parishes."

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In the midst of such uncertainty and confusion, we urge all Filipinos, San Lorenzo groups and church organizations to remember the intentions of the Chapel of San Lorenzo Ruiz in your daily prayers, novenas and Masses. Please spread the word and forward this to your contacts ASAP. Let us join together by saying: "San Lorenzo Ruiz, pray for us."

After collecting the signatures, online and on paper for those without access to Internet, we will print a copy of this Global Appeal for His Eminence Edward Cardinal Egan, Archdiocese of New York, for his consideration. We will also publish this Global Appeal in newspapers, websites, blogspots, etc.

For detailed comments and indications of support, please e-mail [savethechapelnow@gmail.com](mailto:savethechapelnow@gmail.com)

SAVE THE CHAPEL COMMITTEE  
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UNQUOTE. # # #

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