

September 10, 2020

Mr. Joseph Martino  
Chair, Board of Trustees  
Toronto Catholic District School Board  
80 Sheppard Avenue East, Toronto.

RE: A letter of support for the TCDSB Proclamation of the *Quincentennial Jubilee of Christianity in the Philippines (QJCP) and ensuring the implementation of this year of celebration*

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Dear Trustee Martino and TCDSB Trustees,

*“At Toronto Catholic we transform the world through witness, faith, innovation and action.”*

Matthew 28:19-20 says, *“Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember I am with you always, to the end of the age.”*

The Philippines was christened 500 hundred years ago. For almost half a millennium, it was the only predominantly Christian nation in Asia. More than 86 percent of the population is Roman Catholic, 6 percent belong to various nationalized Christian groups, and another 2 percent belong to well over 100 Protestant denominations.

In a time where Christianity and Catholic values are besieged from many fronts, and, in the current desperate times due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the *500<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Arrival of Christianity in the Philippines celebration* brings good tidings, joy, a breath of fresh air, and hope.

As we always say in Toronto Catholic, we *“Rooted in Christ. we belong, we Believe, we Become.”* Here is an opportunity to celebrate, witness and proclaim our Catholic faith. In this difficult pandemic time, we all need to be reminded of our sustaining faith. God will always be with us to the end of days but as humans, it is easy to forget once strife and challenges come our way. We need to be reminded always of Christ’s sacrifice and the sacrifices of early Christians, in the name of God.

In line with this, we, Ben Corpuz, Kit Galema, and Paulina Corpuz, strongly and deeply supports the motion presented by Trustee Garry Tanuan that the TCDSB:

1. “Proclaims to centrally and locally celebrate the *500<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Arrival of Christianity in the Philippines*, alongside and highlighting its celebration of June 12 as *Filipino Heritage Day* and June as *Filipino Heritage Month* at the TCDSB in 2021, with all our elementary and secondary schools encouraged to mark the auspicious *Quincentenary Jubilee of Christianity in the Philippines (QJCP)* and *Filipino Heritage Day/Month* with their own in-school celebrations through various educational, cultural, and religious activities throughout the Board.

2. Proclaims the year-long celebration of the *Quincentenary Jubilee of Christianity in the Philippines (QJCP)* in close collaboration with the Philippine Consul General's office in Toronto, Archdiocese of Toronto, Toronto Organizing Committee - 500th Year of Christianity in the Philippines and Catholic community stakeholders for school year 2020-2021 commencing from the *PH500 Quincentenary Jubilee Art Exhibit* launch in October 2020 at the Catholic Education Centre, thence followed by a couple of historic landmark events in March/April 2021, key associated activities accentuating the celebration of the Filipino Heritage Day on June 12 and Filipino Heritage Month in June 2021; and culminating in a *Catholic Community Jubilee Mass* by His Eminence Thomas Cardinal Collins to highlight the Closing Celebration in August 2021."
  
3. Ensures the implementation of the key activities by, "immediately establish a *Quincentenary Jubilee of Christianity in the Philippines (QJCP)* Task Force to appropriately manage and coordinate the key events and activities marking the 500<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Catholicity celebrations and to further nurture, embrace, and commemorate our shared Catholic Faith and devotion amongst the faithful in our diverse ethnic Catholic communities across the GTA. The TCDSB QJC Task Force will be composed of a Trustee, Director/designated senior Staff Superintendent, Lead Community Relations Coordinator, Student leaders, Filipino-Canadian Advisory Committee & Parents/Teachers/Faculty/Staff Association representatives, Philippine Consul General, Toronto Archdiocese, Parish & GTA School Board Trustees/Representatives, and other prominent leaders of various Catholic communities."

Respectfully,



Ben Corpuz  
 Chair, Filipino Workers Network and  
 External Vice President, Philippine Independence Day Council  
 Treasurer, Board of Directors, Kababayan Multicultural Center  
 Vice-President, Governance, Canadian Multicultural Council, Asians in Ontario



Kit Galema  
 Acting President & EVP, Filipino-Canadian Parents Association in Catholic Education (FCPACE)  
 Coordinator, Live Christ Share Christ (Maritime Provinces)  
 Past President and Country Servant, Couples for Christ Foundation for Family and Life



Paulina Corpuz  
 President, Philippine Advancement Through Arts and Culture (PATAC)  
 Proponent, June as a Filipino Heritage Month  
 Member, Council of Leaders, Philippine Independence Day Council (PIDC)  
 Past President, Filipino-Canadian Parents Association in Catholic Education (FCPACE)