



## The Filipino Ministry of the Archdiocese of San Francisco

*By Fr. Eugene Tungol, Episcopal Vicar for Filipinos in the Archdiocese of San Francisco*

The Filipino Ministry of the Archdiocese of San Francisco is an archdiocesan agency that promotes the use of Filipino faith practices and religious cultural traditions to inspire, strengthen, and evangelize our universal Catholics faith.

We serve a Filipino community that makes up one of the largest minority groups in the Archdiocese, and one of the largest Filipino Catholic communities in the United States. During this time of the year the Filipino Ministry organizes several high profile events that are well attended by Filipinos and non-Filipinos alike.

This past October we held our 6<sup>th</sup> “Annual Filipino Ministry Gala” at the Cathedral of St. Mary. The annual gala, held during National Filipino American Heritage Month, provides an opportunity for Christian fellowship and also enables the Filipino community to showcase its Philippine cultural heritage. This event was well attended by approximately 500 people. One of the highlights of this event was a performance by the *Filipino Singing Priests of the Archdiocese of San Francisco*.



*Picture: Attendees at the 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Filipino Catholic Ministry Gala*



*Picture: Annual Parol Making Workshop at St. Monica's Church*

In November, we held our annual "Parol Making Workshop" at St. Monica's Church. The parol is a star shaped ornament that is the symbol of a Filipino Christmas. It emulates the Star of Bethlehem. Long ago, parols were used as lanterns to light the way of the faithful making their way to the predawn or late night masses during the Christmas season (Simbang Gabi mass).

This month, the Filipino Ministry will hold its 9<sup>th</sup> annual "Simbang Gabi Commissioning Mass" at the Cathedral of St. Mary on December 6, 2016. This event heralds the beginning of Simbang Gabi masses celebrated in individual parishes

throughout our Archdiocese. Simbang Gabi is a centuries old Filipino tradition consisting of a nine-day novena of masses leading up to Christmas day. Pope Benedict XVI recognized the first Simbang Gabi Commissioning mass that our Archdiocese celebrated in 2008 by sending a formal letter to extend his prayerful support and apostolic blessing to all Filipinos.

In January of 2017, the Filipino Ministry will hold its first annual "Sinulog Festival" at the Cathedral of St. Mary to honor the Santo Niño de Cebu – a statue of the Holy Infant Jesus dating back to the time of Ferdinand Magellan. This statue was given as a gift from the Spanish missionaries to Queen Juana of Cebu. The Sinulog Festival is a devotional practice which is very popular in the Philippines.

 **ARCHDIOCESE OF SAN FRANCISCO**

The Filipino Ministry Consultative Board (FMCB) is inviting the Archdiocesan community to participate in the First Annual "Sinulog Festival" to honor the Santo Niño de Cebu, the Holy Infant Jesus, and to showcase Philippine Cultural Heritage.

