

**Remarks of Ambassador Linglingay F. Lacanlale
Closing Mass on 28 September 2008 for the Celebration of the
25th Anniversary of the Filipino Catholic Chaplaincy in Vienna**

Archbishop His Eminence Gaudencio Cardinal Rosales, Bishop Luis Tagle (Diocese of Imus, Cavite), Bishop Pedro Arigo (Diocese of Puerto Princesa) — the first Filipino chaplain in Vienna —, other reverend priests who have served and are serving, the chaplaincy, Fr. Joey Demoy,

and to all of you, the members and the heart of the Filipino Catholic Chaplaincy in Vienna, good morning and congratulations on the celebration of the 25th anniversary of the Filipino Catholic Chaplaincy!

The story of the Filipino Catholic Chaplaincy is the story of the Filipino migrant in Vienna. It is one and the same story, because wherever the Filipinos go, we bring with us our faith.

Much has been said this week about the journey of the Chaplaincy — its growth in strength and in numbers. The reflections of the community this week delved not only on celebrating this journey, but on looking forward with hope and a deeper sense of mission.

After 25 years, we collectively look back and realize that our purpose has indeed gone beyond earning money and seeking to provide for our families in the Philippines. You have settled here, and you have adopted a new home, a new country. You are part of Austria now and today, you have probably voted already, if not planning to cast your ballots later in the day, for the national elections.

Throughout these years, you may have outgrown some habits or ways of thinking acquired in the Philippines and you may have kept some of them. The strong and thriving Filipino Catholic Chaplaincy in Vienna proves that you have kept, honored and nourished, the most fundamental Filipino values — *ang pagmamahal sa kapwa at pananalig sa Diyos*. This is an extremely good thing and, with your presence, you bring blessings of faith and goodwill to your host communities and your host country.

It is also important to reflect at this time on our individual journeys as Christians, as Catholics and as Filipinos and whether we are manifesting in our lives, in our behaviour, in our thoughts and our ways, the true qualities of Christians and the message we bring to the world. It is a blessing that we have during this period of celebration the pastoral guidance of our Cardinal Rosales, two of our Bishops and priests to inspire and help us as we make this reflection. It is said that the “present migration of people across the world is the greatest human movement of all time.” It also said that the migrant communities have become the biggest force for evangelization. Thus, the influence of migrants like Filipinos contributes to how their hosts — Europe in our case — is perceiving, redefining and appreciating Christianity in modern times. Migrants are part of God’s plan to make Himself present and to reach all corners of the earth. It is a most profound mission.

The ways of God are wonderful indeed. Four hundred years ago, the Europeans came to the Philippine archipelago to introduce Christianity to our people. Now, it is the Filipinos’ turn to share with Europeans our faith, and to sustain and strengthen theirs, because it is, after all, about One people having faith in One God.

Muli, binabati ko kayo ng isang maligayang pagdiriwang. Maraming salamat po.