



**SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE }  
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES }  
First Regular Session }**

'17 MAY -2 P3:30

**SENATE  
S.B. No. 1430**

RECEIVED BY: \_\_\_\_\_

INTRODUCED BY **SENATOR VICENTE C. SOTTO III**

**AN ACT  
DECLARING DECEMBER 8 OF EVERY YEAR A SPECIAL NON-WORKING  
HOLIDAY IN THE ENTIRE COUNTRY TO COMMEMORATE THE FEAST  
OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF MARY, THE PRINCIPAL  
PATRONESS OF THE PHILIPPINES**

**EXPLANATORY NOTE**

The Philippines is a predominantly Catholic nation by reason of the 300 years of Spanish rule. According to the 2016 Philippine Statistics Yearbook – based on its 2010 data – 80.58% of Filipinos are Catholic including Catholic charismatic. To prove the Filipinos’ religiosity and faith are the numerous religious feasts, celebrations and festivities being held in the country all year round.

While there are a number of religious feasts in the Philippines, there are only three (3) Holy Days of Obligation – these days being the most important feasts of the liturgical year. Under the Code of Canon Law currently recognized by the Holy See and the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines, the Philippines has only three Holy Days of Obligation, namely: the Immaculate Conception (December 8), Christmas Day or Nativity of Our Lord (December 25), and the Solemnity of Mary, the Mother of God (January 1). During these days, every Catholic individual is obliged to attend and hear mass – one of the “absolute minimum actions required of Catholics regarding the Church”<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.beginningcatholic.com/precepts-of-the-catholic-church>

However, at present, among the Holy Days of Obligation, it is only the Feast of the Immaculate Conception that is not declared as a non-working holiday – the two (2) other days of obligation being regular holidays in the country. There are several predominantly Catholic countries that declare the aforesaid Feast as public holiday like Andorra, Argentina, East Timor, Guam, Italy, Malta, Monaco and Spain, just to name a few.

The promulgation of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception was made on December 8, 1854. Pope Pius IX officially declared the Immaculate Conception a dogma of the Church, which means that all Christians are bound to accept it as true. As the Holy Father wrote in the Apostolic Constitution *Ineffabilis Deus*, "We declare, pronounce, and define that the doctrine which holds that the most Blessed Virgin Mary, in the first instance of her conception, by a singular grace and privilege granted by Almighty God, in view of the merits of Jesus Christ, the Savior of the human race, was preserved free from all stain of original sin, is a doctrine revealed by God and therefore to be believed firmly and constantly by all the faithful."

Filipino Catholics have a strong devotion to Mary, Mother of God. One of the manifestations of which is when upon the request of the bishops of the Philippines, Pope Pius XII declared Mary, under the title of the Immaculate Conception, as the Patroness of the Philippines on September 12, 1942. Another proof of Filipinos' veneration to Mary is that apart from festivals in honor of a town's patron saint, each also has their own claim to the Virgin Mary with a festivity in her honor and vigorously celebrated throughout the year such as the *Flores de Mayo*, Feast of *Nuestra Señora de Peñafrancia*, *Manaoag Pilgrimage*, and *Obando Fertility Rites*, among others. Other practices of devotion to Mary are novenas to Blessed Mother as preparation for the patronal feast; the block rosary; and the endless symphony of Marian names in the baptismal records<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> [http://www.cbcponline.net/documents/1970s/1975-mahal\\_na\\_birhen.html](http://www.cbcponline.net/documents/1970s/1975-mahal_na_birhen.html)

In order to allow the Filipino Catholics to further strengthen their established devotion to Mary, Mother of God through hearing mass and through the exercise of other customary religious activities, this bill seeks to declare December 8 of every year as a special non-working holiday in the entire country to commemorate the Feast of the Immaculate Conception of Mary, the principal patroness of the Philippines.

In light of the foregoing, the passage of this measure is earnestly recommended.

  
**VICENTE C. SOTTO III**



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**PATRONESS OF THE PHILIPPINES**

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:*

1           SECTION 1. December 8 of every year is hereby declared a special non-  
2 working holiday in the entire country to commemorate the feast of the  
3 Immaculate Conception of Mary, the Principal Patroness of the Philippines.

4           SECTION 2. This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its  
5 publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

6           *Approved,*