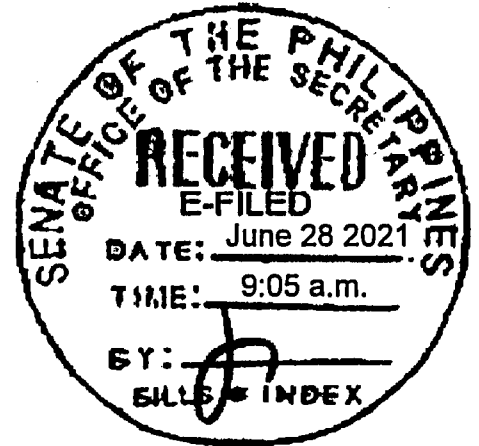


EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE)
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
Third Regular Session)

SENATE

S. No. **2301**



Introduced by **SENATOR LEILA M. DE LIMA**

AN ACT
DECLARING THE SAN ROQUE CATHEDRAL-PARISH IN CALOOCAN CITY A NATIONAL HISTORICAL SITE FOR HISTORY, FREEDOM, AND INDEPENDENCE, PROVIDING FOR ITS PRESERVATION AND IMPROVEMENT, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

EXPLANATORY NOTE

History is a beautifully weaved encapsulation of all that was. For whatever piece of land on which we erect our dreams and hopes for this nation, thousands of other stories have already been experienced, lived through and shared by those who came before.

This is the very reason why we protect these treasures – not only because of their historical importance, but because many of them are the only existing witnesses to the struggles and triumphs of our forefathers who fought for and died for the many blessings we cherish today.

One of these sites which we should give importance is the San Roque Cathedral-Parish. It bore witness to centuries-worth of stories. It has proven the richness of its contributions to our history from one location to the other.

But a small chapel located in *Sitio de Espinas* (now Libis) in the district of Kalookan, Province of Tondo in 1765, this site is in itself a chronicle of narratives and journeys. Built with the blood and sweat of residents within the area under the direction of Fray Manuel Vaquero, an assistant priest from the Parish of Tondo, it is a testament to the richness of the history of the area. It also housed the images of San Roque and Nuestra Señora de la Nieva from Talaver, España which were donated by Fray Vaquero when the construction of the Church ended.

From only the residents of the area patronizing the chapel, it would not take long before worshipers flocked to its doors and grew significantly. Offering succor to

church-goers, it blossomed into a stronghold of faith which led then Archbishop of Manila, Antonio de Zulaivar, to separate it from the auspices of Tondo Parish and named Fray Manuel San Miguel as its first Parochial Priest.

More than half a century later, the San Roque Cathedral-Parish was uprooted so that it can spread its roots even more. By 1819, under Fray San Francisco Xavier, Fray San Miguel's successor, the construction of the new parish began. It however took almost three decades to be finished. Already under the leadership of Fray Cipriano Gerola, the parish as it stands today was finished in 1847.

It stood mightily through the years, watching over the courage of the Filipino spirit and the strength of their faith in Christ. Within its halls it heard their prayers, and from a distance the Filipino resilience echoed. When the Filipinos knew that the time has come for an uprising, when they realized that enough is enough and they could no longer tolerate and endure the tyranny of the Spaniards within whose iron fist they have been crushed, the thirst for freedom spread like wildfire. San Roque Cathedral-Parish was a living witness to the bravery and heroism of the many *Katipuneros* in *Balintawak* who laid their lives and paid the ultimate sacrifice for the freedom we relish today.

It also served as one of General Antonio Luna's staging camps in 1899 when he led the fight against American soldiers during the Filipino-American war. As the blood of our heroes drenched the earth, the Parish stood there still listening to the prayers of the faithful.

Amidst the Filipino-American war, the American soldiers were able to overrun Gen. Luna and his party, which caused the Parish to be partially destroyed. Eventually, the same grounds were utilized as a temporary hospital for the injured members of the invading force. From holy grounds, history would tell us that it was at one time also a regiment camp with Colonel Frederick Funston of the 20th Kansas Regiment as its commander when General Arthur occupied Calocan.

When the war settled and the winds calmed down, the Parish began to once again witness the resilience of the Filipinos. It rose from the ashes through the help of the Confraternity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus led by Father Victor Raymundo who restored the Parish. As the Filipinos started picking up the pieces of their lives and livelihood that were shattered by the war, the reconstruction and renovation of the San Roque Parish also transpired. It was completed in 1965. Unfortunately, it was so

badly beaten that the repairs later proved to be insufficient to prevent the deterioration and inevitable collapse of the Parish.

As history repeats itself, the pillars and halls of the Parish were again erected with the efforts of the constituents of the City of Caloocan, and the strong determination and conviction of the Parochial Priest, Monsignor Boanerges Lechuga. Three years after the celebration of the Jubilee Year 2000, San Roque Parish was elevated from a Parish to a Cathedral which houses the newly created Diocese of Kalookan, consisting of south Caloocan, Malabon and Navotas (CAMANAVA Area) in Pope John Paul II, in his Apostolic Letter "Quoniam Quaelibet" of June 28, 2003.¹ San Roque Cathedral-Parish, under the admirable leadership of Bishop Pablo Virgilio S. David, continues to be a beacon of hope and tireless service to its community through commendable programs such as "Salubong", a rehabilitation program for drug dependents, "Center Of Mercy" a program for street children, and "Center Of Mercy" that helps Extra-Judicial Killing Orphans.

Over and over, the Parish did not only witness the pains and struggles and the successes and victories of Filipinos; it also always housed them in their time of need. Its grounds are where the hopes and dreams of Filipinos have been implanted, and from its halls their prayers have been heard. For hundreds of years these stories have reverberated within its sacred chambers – tales of heroism, countless other stories shared between parishioners. It heard the cries of heroes for freedom, and the giggles of infants as holy waters trickle down their foreheads.

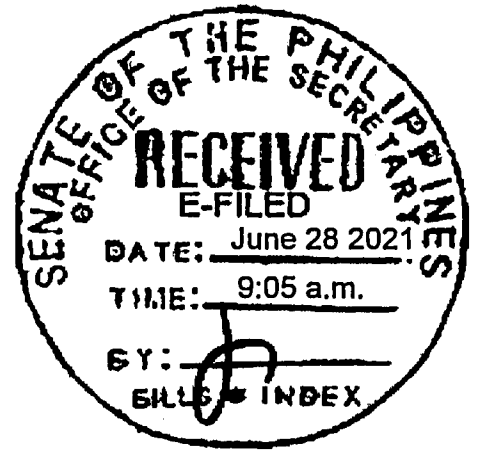
In view of the foregoing, it is only fitting that the San Roque Parish be acknowledged as a national landmark and shrine for history, freedom and independence. The passage of this measure is earnestly sought.


HEILA M. DE LIMA

¹ Malabanan, J (6 February 2019) San Roque de Caloocan - The Patron of Caloocan City. Retrieved from: <https://pintakasi1521.blogspot.com/2019/02/san-roque-de-caloocan-patron-of.html> accessed last 13 June 2021

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

1 Section 1. *Declaration of Policy.* - It is hereby declared the policy of the State
2 to preserve historical sites, monuments and other relics that represent the Filipino
3 heritage and culture and should therefore be under the protection of the State.
4 Likewise, the State must provide the necessary support to conserve, promote and
5 popularize these national treasures as part of our nation's history.

6 Sec. 2. *Designation as Historical Site.* - Consistent with the constitutional
7 mandate to preserve, promote and popularize the nation's historical heritage, the San
8 Roque Cathedral-Parish of Caloocan City, an edifice constructed in 1765 A.D. and
9 where events of national significance took place to bear witness to the nation's
10 struggle to attain freedom, is hereby declared a National Historical Site for History,
11 Freedom and Independence having served as a refuge to General Antonio Luna and
12 Colonel Mamerto Natividad and their men when, on 10 February 1899, during the
13 Philippine-American War of 1899-1902, the 20th Kansas Regiment advanced to
14 Caloocan with support from the USS Monadnock and USS Charleston, and
15 bombarded the town with naval gunfire, claiming the lives of Filipino soldiers who
16 fought valiantly to defend the nation from foreign subjugation.

1 **Sec. 3. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.*** - The National Historical
2 Commission of the Philippines (NHCP) shall exercise supervision over the
3 preservation of the aforesaid site and shall, within ninety (90) days, issue the
4 necessary rules and regulations to implement the provisions of this Act.

5 **Sec. 4. *Appropriation.*** - The amount necessary to carry out the provisions of
6 this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

7 **Sec. 5. *Authorization to Accept Donations.*** - The NHCP shall be authorized to
8 receive and solicit donations from private sources for the improvement and
9 maintenance of the San Roque Parish. There is hereby created a special fund for this
10 purpose, which shall be managed by the Department of Finance.

11 **Sec. 6. *Effectivity.*** - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
12 publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,