

A Celebration of 50 Years Of Diplomatic Relationship between the Philippines and Germany

The Goethe Institute, Manila in cooperation with the Philippine Consulate based in Munich, Germany, invited Filipinos living in Munich and people who love the Philippines and representatives of Organizations who are involved in social- and development projects in the Philippines, to a day of thanksgiving and celebration, to mark the 50 anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between the two countries.

Mrs. Minerva Jean Falcon, Ambassador of the Philippines in Berlin, Germany opened the meeting in the renowned Goethe Institute, situated in the heart of Munich. She spoke warm words of recognition of a fine partnership which has developed in those years, past. The two countries are not only trading partners but also allies and close friends. 30.000 Filipinos live permanently in Germany and 5000 Germans live in the Philippines.



(from left: Rev. Olivar, SVD, Catholic Priest for the Philippine Congregation in Munich, Mrs. Minerva Jean Falcon, Phil. Ambassador in Germany, Rev. Alois Schwarz)

The keynote speaker at the congress, Hon. Fidel Valdez Ramos, Präsident of the Philippines from 1992 – 1998, gave a humorous and delightful insight into the

German-Philippine relationship which goes back to the 15th century. He explained to the audience, that the German Banker Jakob Fugger, financed the journey of Magellan, so he argued Fugger was the first German investor in the Philippines. Magellan was the first tourist to the Philippines who did not survive his journey. But with a smile he added, “don’t be afraid to visit our country now, we are much more friendly than in those days.”



Hon. Fidel V. Ramos enjoys to welcome visitors at the Goethe Institute in Munich.

14 Organizations came to show their activities in both countries. They distributed material and books and were eager to answer questions of the guests who wished to learn more about the far away 7100 isles inhabited by 84 Million people. Officials of Universities and Cultural German-Filipino clubs, as well as non governmental organizations which support educational, social and caritative projects in the Philippines talked about their work. Two Church related Organizations were also invited: MISSIO, a Catholic agency and the “Friendship Philippines” group, of Redeemer Lutheran Church, Tauperlitz.

Most of the guests were surprised, that there is a Lutheran Church existing in that country. Rev. Alois Schwarz was more than happy, to talk about the church and its evangelistic work, its ministry among children and youth in Manila, Mindanao and in the Cordilleres. He distributed pictures and information leaflets, and talked about the visit of Bishop Marvin Paas and Youth worker Gerald Salda, both

from La Trinidad, North Luzon, as well as the visit of Dr. Francesco Feliciano and Mrs. Beth Nacion, both from the Asian Institute of Liturgy and Music, Manila. These visitors have been good ambassadors of their country to Germany. Rev. Schwarz has been working in the Philippines from May 2002 to July 2003 as lecturer, commissioned by the Department of World Mission of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria. He has been thankful for the chance to introduce the small Lutheran Church in the Philippines to an interested audience from all walks of life.

Hon. Fidel Ramos and Ambassador Minerva Jean Falcon thanked Rev. Schwarz for the relationship that has been established between the two sister churches. They publicly wished Redeemer Lutheran Church and North Luzon Autonomous Diocese well in their “endeavour” to build closer ties in the future.

A Panel discussion followed with German and Philippine scientists researching at German Universities. The discussion was interesting, focussing on science and trade co operation between the two partner countries. However, the spiritual needs of both countries also have been addressed, through the representatives of Missio and Redeemer Lutheran Church, Tauperlitz. That has made the congress, which ended at 8pm, an unforgettable experience for all participants.

(Rev. Alois Schwarz, M.Div., is Pastor at Redeemer Lutheran Church Tauperlitz, Germany, She is the Partner church of the North Autonomous Lutheran Diocese of the Lutheran Church in the Philippines, since June 2005.