Sto. Niño Shrine and Heritage Museum after Yolanda
(45 Pictures of What’s Inside It Now)

October 11, 2014 By Victorino Q. Abrugar

Sto. Niño Shrine and Heritage Museum as seen along Real Street in Tacloban City. Picture was taken on October 9, 2014.

Sto. Niño Shrine and Heritage Museum is one of the most famous tourist attractions in Tacloban City. But I guess many of the city’s and neighboring towns’ residents have never seen what’s inside it. Sto. Niño Shrine, as what the locals usually call the place, is one of the several presidential rest houses built under the administration of the late President Ferdinand Marcos. It was specially built for his wife Imelda Romualdez Marcos who was raised in Tacloban City.

Sto. Niño Shrine is located along Real Street. From outside, it looks like just an ordinary mansion, but inside, it houses a chapel for the Leyte’s Patron Sto. Niño, several rooms with their own motifs, a grand ballroom, beautifully crafted furniture, and priceless artifacts, such as paintings, dioramas, religious relics, antique collections and ivory sculptures.

Truly, the former presidential mansion was a symbol of grandeur during the Marcos administration. But after the custody of the mansion was transferred to the national government through the Presidential Commission on Good Government (PCGG), did it retain its splendor?

The museum was also damaged during the onslaught of Super Typhoon Yolanda (Haiyan) on November 8, 2013. Thus, many of us are wondering and worrying about the present condition of this important tourist destination.

I believe that if the mansion and the priceless stuff in it are owned by the government, they are also owned by the people. They’re all part of the national legacy for the people. This makes every Taclobanon and all Filipinos be obliged to visit the place, see what’s inside it, and assess the current condition of our own heritage.
If you haven’t been inside Sto. Niño Shrine and Heritage Museum or if you’re wondering what happened to it after Super Typhoon Yolanda, here are 45 pictures that were taken on October 9, 2014 to give you an idea of what’s inside it now.

The door entrance to Sto. Niño Shrine and Heritage Museum. The place is already open for the public. For a fee of P230 (already good for 3 persons and inclusive of the P30 camera fee) a guide will tour you inside for approximately 30 minutes.

The entrance will lead you directly to the chapel dedicated to Sto. Niño, the Patron of Tacloban City.
The altar of Sto. Niño Shrine.

A view of Sto. Niño Shrine from the altar.
The tour on the mansion’s rooms begins on this Palawan motif room.

The left side of the chapel. A three step stair will lead you to the guest rooms. A mosaic of Jesus Christ is displayed on the wall. The walls here were designed like a “banig“.
A Muslim inspired guest room inside the Heritage Museum.

The guest room with a Bicolnon motif.
The bed inside the Bicolnon room (left) and the bed in Muslim room (right).

The shell motif guest room.
Inside the shell-themed guest room. The room and furniture are truly inspired and decorated with shells.

A collection of paintings from a famous Filipino artist.
More paintings displayed on the walls in the first floor.

An 18-seater table and chairs inside a conference room near the governor’s room.
The Governor’s room is the largest room in the first floor of the museum.

The beds and furniture inside the Governor’s room
The largest diorama I’d seen inside the museum. Each room inside the museum has a diorama that depicts Imelda Marcos reaching the common Filipino people.

Various pictures of the late President Ferdinand Marcos are displayed on the wall in this area going upstairs. Collections of ivory sculptures are also displayed here. Unfortunately, one of the shelf that’s keeping these ivory collections are already damaged.
The grand ballroom at the second floor of Sto. Niño Shrine and Heritage Museum. However, I don’t think that this ballroom can still function as it was before, as the furniture were already old.

The room of the late President Ferdinand Marcos. Most rooms in the museum actually have a collection of books.
The bed and furniture inside the room of the late President Ferdinand Marcos.

The room of Bongbong Marcos, with his bed and his Philippine money collection.
Senator Bongbong Marcos’ grades are displayed in his room in Sto. Niño Shrine Museum in Tacloban City. My camera wasn’t able to clearly capture the texts so I guess you have to see it for yourself. 😊

These paintings and antique collections are really beautiful. But they need to be preserved before it’s too late.
There are still more paintings, artifacts and other priceless collections found in the second floor of the museum.

A 30-seater conference/dining table at the second floor of the Museum.
The room of one of the daughters of Imelda Marcos and the late President Ferdinand Marcos.

Decaying furniture inside the room.
More rooms of the Marcos Family

The room of Imelda Marcos, the largest bedroom in the museum.
The bathroom of Imelda Marcos.

The stairs of Sto. Niño Shrine and Heritage Museum. A view going down to the first floor.
The guest room with a primitive motif at the other side of the ground floor.

Another guest room in the ground floor. This one has a Sampaguita motif.
There’s also a guest room inspired by Ilokano.

And here’s a coconut inspired guest room.
What do you expect from a coconut inspired room?

A guestroom with a butterfly motif.
A room inspired by the province of Capiz.

The last guest room introduced by our tour guide, the room with a “Banig” motif.
The mansion still has its magnificence. If it’s your first time to visit the place, you might be awed by what you will see inside. However, it’s already obvious that the heritage museum is not well preserved, as evidenced by decaying furniture, deteriorating walls, and not well conserved artifacts. I believe that the artifacts housed by the museum are priceless and must be maintained by the government. The whole structure must also be preserved as it’s one of the most important tourist destinations in the city.

Should you pay a visit at Sto. Niño Shrine and Heritage Museum?

If you’re a Filipino, especially if you’re a Taclobanon or a Leyteño, you must definitely visit the shrine and museum. There are still many other awe-inspiring and important things that my camera failed to capture, and I think you have to personally visit the place to see them with your own eyes.

Although the tangible properties of the place are deteriorating, the lessons of history and culture that the museum will teach you are absolutely valuable. Furthermore, the mansion might not last for long. Thus, you have to personally visit it before it’s gone. Okay, perhaps I’m exaggerating about its fate. Anyway, I hope that the mansion will be preserved by our government. Remember that the mansion and the treasures inside it are legacies for the Filipino people. We have the right to see them, assess them, and protect them.

About Victorino Q. Abrugar

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