



### 3 Kings Day in the Philippines

the long Christmas season traditionally ends on this day, known colloquially as "Three Kings" or "*Tres Reyes*" (Filipino: *Tatlong Hari*).

Filipino children also leave their shoes out, so that the Kings will leave behind gifts like candy or money inside. Most others on this day simply greet one another with the phrase "Happy Three Kings!".

In some localities, there is the practice of having three men, dressed as the *Tatlong Hari*, ride around on horseback, distributing trinkets and candy to the children of the area. The collective name for the group is immortalised as the Filipino surname *Tatlonghari*.

Meanwhile the Spanish name for Epiphany has survived to the present in the Philippines as the masculine given name *Epifanio* (e.g. Epifanio de los Santos).

The Three Kings are those who came bearing gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh for the newborn Jesus in the Biblical stories. They were named Melchor, meaning "king of light", Gaspar, "the white one", and Balthazar, "the lord of treasure".

The Feast of Three Kings (or *Araw ng Tatlong Hari*) is the official end of the liturgical Christmas season in the Philippines. It is also known as the Feast of the Epiphany, which commemorates the manifestation of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles as represented by the Magi. It is also known as the *Pasko ng Matatanda* (Feast of the Elderly), the day that specially honors senior citizens.

#### Celebration

The Feast of the Three Kings was traditionally commemorated on 6 January but is now celebrated on the first Sunday of the year. For hundreds of years the Three Kings, not Santa Claus, were the traditional bearers of Christmas presents for children. The children left their polished shoes and fresh socks on the window sill, ready for the gifts from the Three Kings on their way to Bethlehem.

For decades, the club Casino Español has organized a Three Kings' parade to celebrate the feast day. Those who play the roles of the Three Kings dress in royal robes and ride on horses (since there are no camels in the Philippines). Gifts are prepared for the children of the Spanish community, as well as other children, who receive them at the end of the parade.

Ref.: [http://en.wikipilipinas.org/index.php?title=Three\\_Kings](http://en.wikipilipinas.org/index.php?title=Three_Kings) and private informations ☺