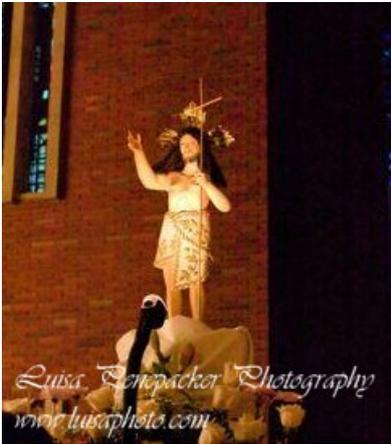


Salubong: an easter dawn celebration



Easter Sunday ends the 40-day Lent and the three-day mourning following the death of Jesus Christ on the Cross. It is the principal feast of the ecclesiastical year. Leo I (Sermo xlvii in Exodum) calls it the greatest feast (festum festorum), and says that Christmas is celebrated only in preparation for Easter. It is the centre of the greater part of the ecclesiastical year. And at dawn of this day of celebration, a semblance of angels will appear in most Catholic churches all over the Philippines. These “angels” are the little girls who remove the “lambong” or veil of mourning of the Blessed Mother shortly after processions at Easter dawn, signifying the resurrection of Jesus.

“This ritual is popularly known as salubong because this is done in a procession where the men and women are separated and coming from different directions. But they eventually meet in front of the church,” says Dez Bautista, a religious researcher.

The men are led by the image of the Resurrected Christ while the Blessed Mother, still covered in a black veil, comes in the front line of the women.



“Salubong signals a new beginning not for Jesus but for us. He paid with His life to save us from our sins and this means a new life for us,” says Bautista.

According to Fr Joel Tabora, S.J., Salubong is “a celebration which actually has its roots in Ignatian spirituality! In Ignatius’ personal intimacy with Jesus and devotion to His Mother Mary, he noticed Sacred Scripture never mentions Jesus appearing to his grieving mother after his resurrection. But instead of being troubled by this, he argued that any person with right reason and a modicum of insight would understand that Jesus could not have done otherwise than appear first to his mother after his Resurrection.”

“Out of this insight, came the popular devotion in the Philippines of the Salubong, depicted, by the way, as our representation of Easter in our 8th Window. It is the celebration of Jesus meeting his mother before all others and consoling her after his Resurrection. Here, a somber procession of sorrow, led by the grieving Mother shrouded in a dark mourner’s veil, encounters a procession of light and triumph, joy and festivity, led by the Resurrected Lord. When Jesus meets his mother, her veil of sadness is removed by an angel of the Lord. She is elated in his life; he is gladdened in her elation. And this is the doctrinal content of the Philippine devotion.”

While many will start the Easter Sunday with Easter bunnies and Easter egg hunting, here in St. Lambert Church in Skokie, as in the Philippines, Easter Sunday starts with Salubong. This is one of the many beautiful Catholic traditions the St. Lambert Parish is celebrating yearly.

Article sources: Easter Vigil Celebration by: Fr. Joel Tabora, S.J. (www.philjesuit.net) and STAR by Cecille Felipe and Felix Delos Santos, www.catholic.org

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Ref.: <http://ffos.org/events-calendar/celebrations-and-traditions/salubong-a-filipino-tradition/>