

## “Simbang Gabi” A Christmas Tradition in the Philippines

December 15th, 2008

The *simbang gabi*, a Christmas tradition in the Philippines, is a series of nine dawn masses that starts on December 16<sup>th</sup> and ends on the midnight of December 24<sup>th</sup> of every year. The mass starts as early as 4:00 o'clock in the morning.

*Simbang Gabi* is also known for its Spanish name *misa de gallo* or mass of the rooster. The Spanish friars introduced this practice in the Philippines so that the farmers who usually go to their farms early in the morning can attend the mass before going to the fields to work.

The church bells begin ringing at three o'clock in the morning to awake the people to enable them to attend the dawn mass. The Roman Catholic churches open their doors early to welcome the faithfuls to these masses.

After the mass, the churchgoers buy and eat heartily the Filipino delicacies such as *puto*, *puto bumbong*, *suman* and *pandesal* that are sold outside the church. These are usually served with hot tea, coffee and/or chocolate and *salabat* or ginger ade.

Some parishes have made changes in the time of holding these masses. They have been rescheduled to 7:00 to 9:00 o'clock in the evening to accommodate the parishioners who have different schedules.

The *simbang gabi* is a compelling evidence of Catholicism among the Filipinos. Hence, the tradition is observed in communities where Catholic Filipinos live elsewhere in the world.

Ref.: <http://tipakan.com/simbang-gabi-a-christmas-tradition-in-the-philippines>