



BELGIUM – EUROPE

REPORT JUNE 19 2011 – 150TH BIRTHDAY RIZAL

Introduction

It started as a very sunny day even the weather was predicted as cloudy and rainy. But on the contrary, the Area Council Knights of Rizal of Belgium, had all the luck on its side for celebrating a whole day the commemoraton of the 150th birthday of the Philippine National Hero, Dr. Jose Rizal. Headed by Area Commander KOR Belgium Sir Dominiek Segært, KGOR, the program started in the morning of that brilliant Sunday with a flower offering and short program at Ghent and later at Brussels, two significant places where Rizal lived 1890-1891 and was exposed to Belgium, a country where his masterpiece El Filibusterismo would be finalised and even printed on Sep. 18, 1891. At noon a thanksgiving mass was showered at Saint Remy Church in Brussels. The day then highlighted a program honouring Rizal brought by the 4 active Chapters in Belgium: KOR Aalst, KOR Brussels, KOR Charleroi and KOR Diamond Antwerp at the Philippine Embassy at Avenue Moliere finalised by a delicious lunch and a significant contributon of a rare Rizal banknote for the Rizal Room of the Philippine Ambassador to Belgium, Luxembourg and the European Union H.E. Enrique Manalo, represented by Charge d'affaires Mme Marichu B. Mauro, all observed by attending Regional Commander for Europe, Sir Antonio Guansing, KGOR. The event was attended by a few hundreds of people including Knights and also Kababaihang Rizalista, as they also, presided by Lady Nina Fernandez, contributed in the touching afternoon program.

Chapter 1: Ghent and Brussels opened the hearts for Rizal





Assisted by the Police and the Cities of Ghent and Brussels the Rizal frenzy started at 9 a.m. at Henegouwenstraat 9 where in front of the Rizal Plaquet a flower offering opened a simple but meaningful moment of silence attended by Mr. Robespierre L. Bolivar, 1st Secretary & Consul. At Ghent Sir Rudy Nollas, KGOR, Past Area Commander KOR Belgium, delivered a message of happiness in revoking lolo Rizal in the minds of the Belgian-Philippine Community.

Around 11 a.m. an even bigger number of participants, showed up in perfect Rizal Costume or Dress at the front of Rizals boarding house at Rue Philippe de Champagne 38 in Brussels, capital of Belgium and heading as metropole of the European Union, perfectly closed and denied to any traffic by the Police.



Here it was Area Commander KOR Belgium, Sir Dominiek Segart, KGOR, who opened the commemoration advanced by the flowering offering and moment of silence by all Belgian Chapters and Ladies of Rizal, witnessed by Mr. Robespierre L. Bolivar, 1st Secretary & Consul and Sir Edmund Rojas, KCR, Deputy Area Commander KOR Belgium. A very special guest was in the KOR-group that day, namely Mme. Renier, current owner of the house at Rue Philippe de Champagne. She was introduced by Sir Bhoy Alcoba, KGOR, also Past Area Commander KOR Belgium. She expressed her gratitude to be invited on this very special day as she specially came from Portugal to be at the 'grand and memorable occasion'. Sir Lino Paras, KGOR, Past Regional Commander KOR Europe, gave some information about the installation of the Rizal Plaque in June 2007, by Former Ambassador to Belgium, H.E. Cristina Ortega, assisted by Former Belgian Ambassador to the Philippines H.E. Christiaan Tanghe. An inspirational message by Sir Dominiek Segart, KGOR and closing remarks with the Non Omnis Moriar sign was delivered by Sir Antonio Guansing.



Chapter 2: Thanksgiving Mass honouring Dr. Rizal in Brussels

The Philippine Chaplaincy of the Brussels Community, headed by Rev. Father Raymond Gaspar, and assisted by Rev. Father Apollo de Guzman, Past leader of the Philippine Catholic Community in Brussels and Belgium, celebrated with the KOR and Ladies and the whole Philippine Community an inspirational thanksgiving mass at Saint Remy Church at Rue de l'Ourthe in Brussels.



In front of the church the Knights and Ladies assembled, followed by a huge entrance ceremony. The banner of 150th birthday Rizal – as also presented and used at the International Assembly last Febr. 2011 in Manila – got a central place near the altar. In his homily Rev. Father Raymond Gaspar

reflected on the meaning of the Holy Trinity and focused in the second part on the life of Rizal and his ideals for dignity and respect for humankind. Mass offering and touching songs altered the unique Rizal-mass.

Chapter 3: Program, lunch and toasting on 150 years Rizal at Philippine Embassy



A huge assembly was formed at the garden of the Philippine Embassy at Avenue Moliere 297 Brussels. Welcome by MC Sir Dominiek Segært, KGOR, Area Commander KOR Europe was immediately followed by flower offering by the Chapters, initiated by CDA Marichu B. Mauro, who also later read the inspiring message of Ambassador H.E. Enrique Manalo. The Philippine National Anthem was sung and Rev. Father Apollo de Guzman delivered a prayer. Toasting on the 150th birthday of Rizal started after inside the Embassy, namely in the Rizal Room of the Embassy, Sir Dominiek Segært offered in the name of the whole Area Council KOR Belgium a frame with a Rizal 2-peso-bank note of 1949, issued by Bangko Sentral. He underlined the

good bilateral relations between Belgium and the Philippines and the ideals of Rizal as respect for country, religion, philosophy, equality and education and also the interest in learning languages. It was CDA Marichu B. Mauro who accepted the frame in the name of

Ambass. Manalo – at that time at DFA in Manila – and with the help of Mr. Opiniano of the Philippine Embassy, the frame was brought onto the wall of the Rizal Room.

The apero was gratefully offered by the Philippine Embassy and twinkles and laughters were seen through the bubbles into the eyes of very participant. Sir Maximo Villaroman, Jr., Chap Comm KOR Aalst and his family prepared a sumptuous walking dinner which could be paraphrased 'as more than perfect'. He got a huge applause! Each participant paid a contribution in the costs of the event. Different desserts as leche flan and frutas were offered by the Philippine. White and red wine were offered by Sir Paul Verloo and Sir Dominiek Segaert of KOR Diamond.



Finally the 4 KOR Chapters and the Kababaihang Rizalista presented each in a 10 minute program a highlight and tribute to Rizal. For KOR Aalst Sir Villaroman headed the program, for KOR Brussels Antonio Sienes, for KOR Charleroi Sir Willy Cruz, Acting Chap Comm together with Sir Mario Fajardo, KOR, for KOR Diamond Sir Kris Van Thillo, Past Chap Comm, Sir Antonio Guansing, Sir Dominiek Segaert.



For Kababihang Rizalista the program was initiated by Lady Nina Fernandez and a huge group of a smiling Kababaihang Rizalista. Around 6.30 p.m. the program ended with closing remarks of Sir Lino Paras and Sir Antonio Guansing, who also invited every KOR to the Non Omnis Moriar-sign.

Post scriptum: satisfaction guaranteed & happiness

KOR Area Council of Belgium is proud of this day. The day was prepared and initiated by two big meetings of the Area Council in which the program grew since april till the day of June 19. Thanks to everybody who participated: Sir Guansing, Sir Paras, Sir Segaert – who presided the Area Council Meetings and coordinated with the chapters, Embassy, Cities for June 19 – Sir Rojas Sir Nollas, Sir Alcoba, Sir Villaroman, Sir Verloo, Sir Sienes, Sir Fajardo, Sir Cruz, Lady Fernandez, Sir Pinkihan, Sir Vandeweghe, Sir Mortier, Sir Helsen, Sir Libeau, Sir Van Thillo, Sir Villa, Mme Renier, Mrs. Gamboa, Leah Gallego and the whole Embassy Staff of the Philippine Embassy, the Cities of Ghent, Brussels, their respective Police and not to forget CDA Marichu B. Mauro, Consul Bolivar, Consul Rola and finally Ambassador Enrique Manalo, excused for that day. Also excused but who also contributed in some way on this succesfull celebration were Sir Peter Van Bogaert, KGOR, Special Adviser to the Supremo and

Honorary Consul General, Sir Ronny Felix, KOR and Sir Lucien Spittaël, KGOR, all during that moment in the Philippines.

Report:

Sir Dominiek SEGAERT, KGOR, Area Commander KOR Belgium – 2011-07-21

Pictures:

Sir Kristoff MORTIER, KR of KOR Diamond Chapter