



**KOR SUPREMO'S SAINT LOUIS VISIT
BY
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PROLOGUE:

Around July 2015, Lady Aida and Sir Juan decided to attend the 5th Canada Regional Assembly in Toronto, Ontario, Canada at the Sheraton Parkway Toronto North Hotel on October 9-11, 2015. Our "Supremo" Knight of Rizal Supreme Commander, Sir Jeremias "Jerry" C. Singson, KGCR was attending to preside over the proceedings with his executive assistant, Sir Marlon Flavier Tagorda, KCR. They were to stay in Toronto for four days and leave for New Jersey to visit Sir Francis D. Sison, KGOR, USA Regional Commander for two days.

Sometime in Early October 2015 around midnight, Sir Juan was on a phone conversation with Sir Francis when he mentioned the Supremo's visit to New Jersey on his way to Los Angeles, California. We were discussing our Toronto's assembly visit. He inquired about the possibility of the Supremo's side visit to St. Louis, Missouri in spite of his heavy and tight schedules. At that particular time, Sir Marlon Tagorda called him and the subject was brought out. We were on a three way phone communication. After a few more minutes of contact with Supremo by Sir Marlon, Sir Jerry accepted the invitation. Preparation for his visit was then started. The information and good news was relayed to the commanders of the central area council in Illinois, Missouri and Texas.

We had an education and productive experience in Canada with Sir Jerry, Marlon, Francis and the Canada group. Indeed, a fabulous time with the sessions, boat cruise and commander's ball.

THE VISIT:

Sirs Jerry and Marlon arrived around 8:40 AM, Thursday, October 15, 2015 at the East Terminal of Lambert International Airport of St. Louis. Sir Alex Datuin, M.D., KCR, Chapter Commander, Sir Al Katzenberger, KCR, Deputy Chapter Commander and Sir Juan were present to welcome them. Flower leis were presented. We went to Williamsburg Residence for breakfast prepared by Lady Aida Castro. Our tour of St. Louis followed starting the newly opened "Total Wine" Store, the first in the State. Sir Juan have never seen such a huge store with all kinds of spirits from all over the world with prices from \$5 to \$11,000 per bottle. It was like a museum of this sort. We drove by the Forest Park where Dr. Jose Rizal's sculpture won a gold medal and Mrs. Teodora Alonso Rizal won two silver medals for her collection of F. R. Hidalgo and Juan Luna paintings and the 1904 World's Fair with the Philippine Pavilion took place. We stopped at the St. Louis Cathedral Basilica for a tour of the world's largest collection of mosaic arts and souvenirs. We attended the mass which was in progress. Since it was past noon, we went to "Cuneto's", an Italian restaurant for their famous "Linguine Totemare", a seafood pasta. Sir Alex joined us. After lunch, Sir Juan brought them to Hotel Frontenac to register and rest. Sir Alex picked them up at the hotel around 6:00 PM for the garden party reception, meeting of the area council and presentation of awards. The event was considered a special area council meeting to commemorate the first official St. Louis Visit by a Supreme Commander and celebrate the third anniversary of the founding of the Mokor St. Louis Chapter in October 2012.

Earlier at 1:00 PM, Lady Aida Castro and Lady Mary Jenkins went to the Amtrak Railroad Station in downtown St. Louis to pick-up Sir Eli Faypon, Ph.D., KGCR and Sir Rufino Crisostomo, M.D., KGOR to stay with us for the occasion.

THE PARTICIPANTS:

The event took place at the Castro's Williamsburg Residence, 4 Williamsburg Rd., St. Louis (Creve Coeur), Missouri. Lady Aida Castro and Mary Jenkins were the hostesses and organizers with Sir Juan Castro, M.D., KGOR, USA Central Area Commander. There were a total of twenty six participants, eight Mokor Knights, two Chicago delegates, three Lincolnland Chapter Knights, Sir Jerry and Marlon, six Lady for Rizal and six guests.

Philippines: Sir Jeremias "Jerry" C. Singson, KGCR, Supreme Commander, Knights of Rizal, from Vigan, Ilocos Sur and Manila. We are very happy for his area visitation. This is the first official Supreme Commander's visitation to St. Louis, MO. He was accompanied by his executive assistant, Sir Marlon Flavier Tagorda, KCR, also from Vigan, Ilocos Sur.

Chicago Area: Sir Eliodore U. Faypon, Ph.D., KGCR, of Ilocos Sur the first USA Regional Commander, helped establish first KOR chapters in USA and Canada. Sir Rufino Crisostomo, M.D., KGOR from Baliwag, Bulacan and current President of the Rizal Heritage Center (FACC) of Chicago, helped establish the Lincolnland Chapter of Springfield, Illinois.

Lincolnland Chapter, Illinois: Lady Elena Pilapil, from Malolos, Bulacan, President of Ladies for Rizal, Lincolnland Chapter of Springfield, Illinois. Sir Virgilio R. Pilapil, M.D., KGOR from Cavite, a recent Distinguished Service Cross (DSC, gold) awardee, past Chapter Commander and deputy Central US Area Commander, a prolific writer on Rizal and editor of the Filipino American Historical Society Bulletin. Sir Enrico Farinas, M.D., practicing Pediatrician of Fairview Heights, Illinois, from Ilocos Sur, current Lincolnland Chapter Commander, a recent Distinguished Service Medal awardee (DSM). Sir Cosme Cagas, M.D., KCR, Chapter Chancellor of Fairview Heights, Illinois, from Misamis Oriental, Mindanao, indefatigable medical and community organizer, missionary and donor, recent DSM awardee.

St. Louis Chapter, MOKOR: Sir Juan M. Castro, M.D., KGOR, US Central Area Commander from Pampanga and Manila, Lady Aida Castro, M. D. from Baliwag, Bulacan, Lady Mary Jenkins, host and hostesses. Sir Alex Datuin, M.D., KCR, Chapter Commander, from Capas, Tarlac, recent DSM awardee. Sir Al Katzenberger, KCR, Deputy Chapter Commander, recent DSM awardee. Lady Virgie Abinoja, Auxillary Lady for Rizal, Sir. Conrad Abinoja, M.D., KCR, Chapter Auditor, recent DSM awardee. Sir Stephen O'Black, KOR, of Augusta, MO. Sir Roger Schmidt, KOR, Chapter Pursuivant. Sir Joel Anderson, KOR, Chapter Deputy Pursuivant. Sir Eugenio Herbosa, KCR and lady Carol Herbosa.

Guests were Dr. Frank and Mrs. Betty Tejada of Troy, Illinois, recent awardee of Mokor Rizaliana Man of the Year 2015, retired Internist, Artist and author. Mrs. Belen Belsky, Mrs. Loida Nash and Serafin Dioso, future Knight, dear friends of the family. Remedios Crespo, M.D., family friend.

MEETING & CEREMONY:

The meeting began at 6:30 PM. in the Williamsburg Florida Room. Sir Juan gave a brief welcome statement, followed by Sir Alex Datuin giving and reading the welcome certificate of the Mayor of St. Louis and Sir Al Katzenberger reading a proclamation for Sir Jerry from the President of the St. Louis Board of Alderman. Sir Jerry Singson, KGCR, Supreme Commander, then read and gave the awards, assisted by Sirs Virgilio Pilapil, KGOR and Juan Castro, KGOR. Sir Stephen O'Black got his Knight Officer of Rizal (KOR) medal and certificate, Sirs Conrad Abinoja, Alex Datuin, Cosme Cagas and Enrico Farinas, their DSM and certificates. Sir Eugenio Herbosa, KCR was announced as a recent recipient of the Life Membership and Knight Commander of Rizal elevation awards. Sir Juan read and gave the Mokor Certificate of Appreciation and Recognition to Sir Jerry. The fraternal message given by Sir Jerry was focused on fraternity and unity of the members of the Order, act as vanguard and defender of the image of Dr. Jose P. Rizal and carry on the objectives of the RA 646 for the Knights of Rizal summarized into the 5S, namely, Study, Spread, Spirit, Solidarity and Socials. He likewise invoked the

campaign to bring down the “Torre de Manila”, which is defacing and demeaning the image of the statue of Dr. Rizal in Luneta (Bagumbayan), Manila.

STUDY: To study the teachings of Dr. Jose Rizal.

SPREAD: To inculcate and propagate them in and among all classes of the Filipino people and by words and deeds to exhort our citizenry to emulate and practice the examples and teachings of our national hero.

SPIRIT: To promote among the associated knights the spirit of patriotism and Rizalian chivalry.

SOLIDARITY: To develop a perfect union among the Filipinos in revering the memory of Dr. Jose Rizal.

SOCIALS: To organize and hold programs commemorative of Rizal’s nativity and martyrdom.

After culmination of the proceedings, a special cake from La Bonne Bouche, a French pastry shop obtained by Lady Aida, to celebrate the belated birthday of Supremo Sir Jerry, attended by all present. Mr. Serafin Dioso, a close friend and future knight, sang “Dahil Sa Iyo” for the celebrant. Sir Jerry expressed to all his sincere and deep appreciation and gratitude to all present. The garden party followed.

THE GARDEN PARTY:

The party was organized and set-up by a teamwork made up of Lady Aida, Lady Mary Jenkins, Sir Juan and volunteers from the knight’s member and guests. It was held in the brick patio at #4 Williamsburg Rd, St. Louis (Creve Coeur), Missouri. Cars were parked on the rear parking area, the circular driveway and on the street. There was a little inconvenience in access to the site due to current repair of the subdivision street. I supposed it was well tolerated and accepted by all.

The food was great. Sir Conrad Abinoja brought his delicious cooking of pork sis-ka-bob, Mrs. Belen Belsky with assistance of brother, Serafin Dioso and siter Mrs. Loida Nash prepared her much sought after “Pancit Palabok”. It went fast. Some of the knights and guest kept begging her to cook for them. She said she only cooked for Lady Aida for this special occasion of the visitation of our Supreme Commander. Dr. & Mrs. Tejada brought their special “Buko Pandan”; Dr. Medy Crespo, Cassava cakes; Dr. & Mrs. Pilapil, swirl chocolate cake; Sir Eli Faypon, cheese cake; Lady Mary Jenkins, Ham-Cheese Omelet. Lady Aida prepared roast duck, lechon, “paksiw na lechon”, fried vegetable egg roll, roast chicken, fruit cream birthday cake, apple pies, red wines, sparkling Cava wines, soft drinks, bottled water and snacks.

Sir Alex picked them up from Hilton Frontenac and brought them back after the party.

THE NEXT DAY, Friday, October 16, 2021:

Sir Al Katzenberger came to the house at 8:30 AM to be the tour guide and me, the driver. We picked up Sirs Jerry and Marlon from the hotel and proceeded to the CMA Gallery in South St. Louis City where my Rizaliana and Filipiniana collections are on display. It was an impressive display but without the stolen artifacts and items easily picked up and stolen. After the burglary on July 12, 2015, I removed many items and stored them in metal vaults. Luckily, they did not reach the first floor where the Rizaliana collections were kept and displayed. Sir Jerry and Al advised me to set up the museum in a better and safer site and not to do anymore work on this present location. They asserted that I should not expose such expensive and intensive collections to more possible future burglaries. With Lady Aida’s consent, we plan on selling the property and move the projected Casa de Rizal Museum and Library to the suburbs.

The four of us in my small Toyota Corolla tour south city, Broadway Blvd., downtown, drove through Washington Bridge to Malcolm Park in East St. Louis, Illinois to get a good view of the arch. Sir Al described the Cleveland High School where he taught for 25 year, August Busch Brewery and the aged Soulard Public Market on Broadway, many edifices of downtown and the different bridges

visible. We stopped at the park in East St. Louis to view the arch and took pictures. By 1:00 PM, we were back at the hotel for lunch to get a taste of their Bison (Buffalo) Burger. Sir Al and Marlon ordered the burger but Sir Jerry, Cesar salad and Sir Juan, Onion soup. It looked like Sirs Jerry and Juan are getting fed up with too much food. Besides, Sir Juan blood sugar was way up. We went back to the "Total Wine" store to finish the tour of the place and acquire some souvenirs. Tree planting was made at the Williamsburg Residence backyard to mark the first official Supreme Commander's visitation to St. Louis. The tree, Vanilla Ice Hydrangea was designated as "Singson Tree". Back at the hotel at 4:00 PM for short rest and dressing up for Sir Alex dinner party.

The dinner was held at the Missouri Athletic Club West, where Sir Alex was a member for the past 50 years. Present were his daughters, Lady Mrs. Debra Finan and Mrs. Rebecca Arendt, Sirs Jerry, Marlon, Alex and Juan. We had salad, filet mignon, bread, vegetables, red wine Merlot, chocolate cake and coffee. We went home at 8:00 PM for an early sleep and departure in the morning.

DEPARTURE Saturday, October 17, 2015:

Sir Juan was at the Hilton Frontenac Hotel at 5:30 AM to pick up Sirs Jerry and Marlon, who were already in the foyer waiting. By 6:00 AM, we were at the airport, in spite of a wrong exit along the way. We said good-bye and hugged till we meet again. Sir Jerry mentioned that they might do a visitation to Houston, Texas on December 26, 2015 for the inductions of five new chapters, maybe even six. Sir Francis and Sir were committed already for the visit.

CONCLUSION:

The Supreme Commander's visitation was indeed a very happy and memorable occasion. One can see the cheerful wide eyed smiling faces of the Knights, Ladies and guests. They were showing the appreciation, love for the Supremo and eagerness to meet such a personality. His enthusiasm, approachability, frankness and concern for his fellow men was appealing to the group. His fluent fraternal message and open forum discussion was invigorating, implanting and effective.

We are more than encouraged and influenced to carry out the dictates of the Knights of Rizal and the RA 646. Let us all unite and be fraternal. "Mabuhay Si Dr. Rizal". Non Omnis Moriar!

Edited by Lady Aida Castro

JMC 10.19.2015