

'Tita Cory', as Filipinos fondly call her, passed away after a lingering and painful illness; she was diagnosed with colon cancer a year ago. Cory passed away last Saturday, August 1 -- the first Saturday of the month -- which Catholic Christians say is a good day to die, as this the day of devotion to the Virgin Mary. Her family refused a state funeral, perhaps also in keeping with Cory's wishes and simplicity that she had lived her life (another reason is political).

Cory did not need a state funeral, after all. The people bestowed on her a funeral fit for a Queen and Mother of the Nation! In an outpouring of love and gratitude, the Filipino people came to pay their last respects to Cory Aquino -- at Dela Salle University (nra EDSA Shrine) where her wake was held on Aug 1-3; accompanying her casket when it was transferred from Dela Salle to Manila Cathedral on Aug 4; and the final 8-hour funeral procession ('cortege') from the Cathedral to her final resting place beside her husband Ninoy Aquino some 22 km away. People came out in drives, not minding the pouring rain, and waiting for hours just to catch a final glimpse of Cory's remains.

[On TV in front of me are the 4 'honor guards' being lauded for their spectacular feat of unflinchingly standing on guard 8 hours straight atop the flatbed truck which carried Cory's casket yesterday. Beng also tells me that the bunch of yellow balloons that accompanied Cory's casket throughout the 8-hour trek were the same balloons that we/AKKAPKA brought with us to the Cathedral the day before.]

I've pasted below links to pictures/videos of Cory's wake/funeral I've surfed thru the net; the one attached with me on one of Cory's 'murals' near the Cathedral was c/o a friend in Facebook. The scenes are reminiscent of People Power 1, which gives many Filipinos like me much hope.

My hope and prayer is that we again be inspired and challenged by the old Cory magic; in the words of her daughter Kris at the eulogy to her Mom -- "Silence and passivity were never options for Cory." For after all, Cory's legacy are not really grand things, they are merely basic things that each and every Filipino fully deserves -- Truthfulness, Integrity, Decency and Morality in Government.

Anyway, I shall yet again try to rise to the Cory Challenge, with AKKAPKA, and offer what I can for love of country and my people. As Ninoy has said 26 years ago "The Filipino is worth dying for", so has Cory reaffirmed today "The Filipino is worth it." I also paste below two poems -- one written by Cory in 2004, and the other by Ninoy to his wife (Cory) -- to share with you a glimpse of the great Cory Aquino, truly God's gift to the Filipino people, and whose loss we will continue to grieve in a long time.

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Prayer for a Happy Death

By Corazon C. Aquino (2004)

*Almighty God, most merciful Father
You alone know the time
You alone know the hour
You alone know the moment
When I shall breathe my last.*

*So, remind me each day,
most loving Father
To be the best that I can be.*

*To be humble, to be kind,
To be patient, to be true.*

*To embrace what is good,
To reject what is evil,
To adore only You.*

*When the final moment does come
Let not my loved ones grieve for long.
Let them comfort each other
And let them know
how much happiness
They brought into my life.*

*Let them pray for me,
As I will continue to pray for them,
Hoping that they will always pray
for each other.*

*Let them know that they made possible
Whatever good I offered to our world.
And let them realize that our separation
Is just for a short while*

As we prepare for our reunion in eternity.

*Our Father in heaven,
You alone are my hope.
You alone are my salvation.
Thank you for your unconditional love, Amen.*

I have fallen in love with the same woman three times

(Ninoy's Poem for Cory)

*I have fallen in love
With the same woman three times
In a day spanning nineteen years
Of tearful joys and joyful tears.*

*I loved her first when she was young
Enchanting, brilliant, middle-strung
Vibrant, fragrant, eternally new
Cool, invigorating as the morning dew.*

*Desperate, she shared, quieted my despairs
Hopeful, she fanned the fires of my hopes
Lavished me with days of bliss and peace,
Endless, perpetual days of fond memories.*

*She is my hope; I do not wish to realize
Hence my hope; forever green, eternal prize
My life transcending life, my ultimate quest
Dream of my life for whom I'll spare no rest.*

*I fell in love again
With the same woman the second time
When first she bore her child and mine
The first fruit of our union and our love.*

*The pains and anguish of motherhood she braved
Loved her children, their love she deservedly craved
Times were she hung on the very brink of death,
Unflinchingly fulfilling her mission to procreate.*

*In politics I plunged, she was always by my side,
Steadfast, uncomplaining, helping to turn the tide,
Amidst hardship, her rare courage would not relent
She was my secret weapon, the source of my strength.
The world was my concern, our home her domain,
The people mine, the children hers to maintain,
So it was in those eighteen years and a day
Till I was detained, forced in prison to stay.*

*Suddenly she became our sole support
Wellspring of hope, source of comfort
On her shoulders fell the burden of life
She emerged our captain in the sea of strife.*

*I fell in love again
With the same woman the third time*

*Looming from the battle, undaunted, unafraid,
Calm composed, she is God's lovely maid.*

*It has been a year of many disappointments
Endless dark nights, long days of sad lament,
Of grave doubts, frustrations, bitter desolations,
Of privations, untold indignities, humiliations.*

*Dreams became nightmares; hopes, despair.
Rally to freedom's call, no one will dare.
Future is obscured, life has lost its meaning,
The tunnel is long, we're only at the beginning.*

*Leaders I admired, whose advice I sought
Became fallen idols, their souls were bought,
Their conscience they bartered for "soft" convenience,
Due to despicable cowardice, they've lost their patience.*

*Leaders became dealers, begging for part of the spoils,
Forgetting the value, the essence of the hottest toil,
Paralyzed by fear, they joined the amoral dictator,
Defending, waving the bloody flag of the new oppressor.*

*The pillars of society became the props of tyranny,
"Be realistic," they urged, "if not for safety, for money."
It is useless to resist, the tyrant is too strong,
Yet aware, with their help the tyranny will prolong.*

*Mother Pilipinas weeps, her noble sons are gone,
Her land of the morning, is now of the setting sun,
Back to her dungeon in chains she's been returned;
For all her sacrifices, this is what she earned.*

*The night is cold and dark, there are no stars,
Our prisons are full, our souls wrinkled with scars,
Afflicted, persecuted, struck down but not crushed,
How soon will this blight be erased by Allah's brush?*

*My only escape is to cling to the woman of my dreams
Who gave me a life full of love, a love full of life,
She is my urge to live, my sole motivation to survive,
She taught me not only to dream, but to make dreams alive.*

Fight on! She says: Let not the guiltless ghost depart.

*Your pains, our people know are caused by a thousand darts,
But be assuaged, remember the Filipino, his story, his past,
Soon, very soon, the tyrant will choke in his greedy power lust!*

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Some photos:

<http://bluepanjeet.net/2009/08/04/5393/tears-cheers-cory-photos-corys-cortege-ayala-makati-manila-cathedral/>

<http://midfield.wordpress.com/2009/08/05/filipinos-bury-their-icon-of-democracy-cory-aquino/>

<http://saveburma.wordpress.com/2009/08/04/huge-crowds-honor-aquino-cortege-in-manila/>

<http://aboutmyrecovery.com/2009/08/03/cory-aquino-memorial-services/>

http://blog.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2009/08/03/aquinos_death_eclipses_arroyos_washington_visit

<http://www.pcij.org/blog/?p=4080>

<http://professionalheckler.wordpress.com/2009/08/06/the-last-five-days/>

<http://traveleronfoot.wordpress.com/2009/08/05/cory-aquinos-funeral-honors/#comments>

http://manilalente.multiply.com/photos/album/183/Pres._Cory_Aquinos_funeral_march

<http://anythingwhatevs.wordpress.com/2009/08/04/despite-the-rain/>

http://newsbreak.com.ph/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=6532&Itemid=88889070

<http://chickalcantara.wordpress.com/2009/08/06/cory-aquinos-funeral-convoy/>

<http://english.aljazeera.net/news/asia-pacific/2009/08/2009856412944112.html>

<http://english.aljazeera.net/news/asia-pacific/2009/08/20098591245770232.html>