



SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE **BOLLETTINO**

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Audience with representatives of the Filipino community in Spain

This morning, in the Vatican Apostolic Palace, the Holy Father Francis received in audience the representatives of the Filipino community in Spain.

The following is the Pope's greeting to those present:

Greeting of the Holy Father

I am pleased to receive you here today.

You chose to call your mission in Madrid “Tahanan”, a beautiful word that we can translate as “home”. And it is true, everywhere we go, the Church is always a home for us, a warm and welcoming home, and today the house of Peter is also like a home for you. Welcome!

I saw that in Madrid you have your headquarters in the parish of *Nuestra Señora del Espino*. And this made me think of the many migrant people who, far from finding this warm and welcoming home, are instead thrust into countless difficulties and misunderstandings, which stand against them like thorns. Our blessed Mother presents herself to us on these thorns, so that we do not lose hope and are capable of confronting problems, trusting in her protection and her support.

The reason for this visit is the twenty-fifth anniversary of the canonical erection of the personal parish of the *Immaculate Conception and San Lorenzo Ruiz*, in Barcelona. Saint Lawrence is a beautiful figure, because on the one hand he speaks to us of the integration of cultures. Indeed, his family, like that of Cardinal Tagle, had Chinese and Filipino origins that, together with the Spanish background that gave him his faith, created an excellent *mestizo*. On the other hand, he had to leave his homeland because of injustice, in his case defamation, like many people who even today find themselves forced to emigrate to save their own lives or to seek a better future. Finally, once he arrived in the land that should have welcomed him, God asked him to bear witness to his faith with the greatest test of love: by offering his own life.

Dear sisters, dear brothers, let us imitate them: both of them had to leave their homeland, but both did so with Jesus' embrace. Trusting in Jesus, both of them faced difficulties without ever losing hope, and both are an example of a life devoted to serving God in their brothers. In this way, we will be able to build our own "Tahanan", that warm and welcoming abode which, like a Mother, our Church should be. May the Infant God bless you and the Holy Virgin keep you.

I cherish two beautiful memories of you, of my visit to your homeland: the seven million people at the Mass in Manila, and then the Mass in Tacloban. With the rain and the wind, I remember we had to rush out because a storm was coming, and otherwise we would not have been able to take off.

The Filipinos are men of faith, women of faith. Some of you work here in the Vatican and it is fantastic, the faith they have and the witness they give is fantastic. Continue to bear witness in this society that has become too rich, too competent, too self-sufficient. Thank you for what you do.

Now I will give you my blessing.
