

NINETEENTH CONGRESS OF THE)
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
Second Regular Session)



23 JUN 19 P2:06

SENATE
S. No. 2278

RECEIVED BY:

Introduced by Senator Jinggoy Ejercito Estrada

AN ACT
DECLARING THE IMMEDIATE ENVIRONS OF THE NATIONAL SHRINE OF
OUR MOTHER OF PERPETUAL HELP, POPULARLY KNOWN AS THE
BACLARAN CHURCH, LOCATED ALONG ROXAS BOULEVARD, PARAÑAQUE
CITY, A HERITAGE SITE AND TOURIST DESTINATION

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The National Shrine of Our Mother of Perpetual Help is a prominent landmark and an iconic religious site located along Roxas Boulevard in Parañaque City that is visited by thousands of pilgrims and devotees every week, the author included. Wednesdays are acknowledged as "Baclaran Day" by many Filipino Catholic families, that are also associated with heavy foot and vehicle traffic. As much as 150,00 devotees from all walks of life flock to the shrine to offer novena and profess their unflinching faith to the Blessed Mary, Mother of Perpetual Help. It is also considered as one of the largest Marian churches in the country.

St. John Paul II was able to bless the National Shrine with his presence on two memorable occasions – on February 17, 1981 when he was Pope and addressed the Women Religious of the Philippines, and on February 1973, as Kraków Archbishop Karol Jozef Cardinal Wojtyla when he celebrated the Holy Eucharist during his brief stopover in Manila.

The Modern Romanesque architecture designed by Cesar Concio and his associate Jesse Bontoc, its distinctive golden hue that matches the background of the

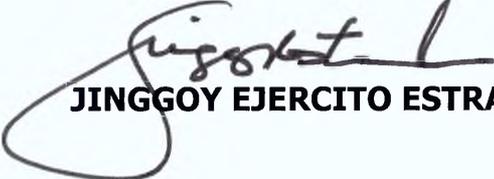
Icon, and its ceiling which resembles two hands in prayer, all contribute to a spiritual ambiance which earned its signature as a “Shrine that Prays with the People”.

Undeniably, the Redemptorist Church, as the National Shrine is also called, is one of the most popular churches in the Philippines, which attracts and gathers a multitude of devotees as well as tourists. Through the years, it has become deeply embedded in the spiritual life and an important part of the rich tradition of Catholic Filipinos, especially those in the National Capital Region and the neighboring localities.

It is therefore important that we institutionalize a policy which will preserve the historical and sociocultural significance of the church, and ensure the accessibility, convenience and security of its countless visitors through the construction, installation and maintenance of appropriate facilities and infrastructure in its immediate surroundings.

This measure was already approved on Third and Final Reading by the House of Representatives on three consecutive Congresses, i.e. during the 17th, 18th and most recently in the current 19th Congress.

In view of the foregoing, the passage of this bill is fervently sought.


JINGGOY EJERCITO ESTRADA

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Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:

1 Section 1. The immediate environs of the National Shrine of Our Mother of
2 Perpetual Help, popularly known as the Baclaran Church located along Roxas
3 Boulevard, Parañaque City, is hereby declared a heritage site and tourist destination.
4 As such, the development of the immediate environs of the Baclaran Church shall be
5 prioritized by the Department of Tourism (DOT), in coordination with the National
6 Historical Commission of the Philippines (NHCP), the local government of Parañaque
7 and other concerned agencies, subject to the rules and regulations governing the
8 development of heritage sites and tourist destinations.

9 Sec. 2. Within one (1) year after the approval of this Act, the local government
10 of Parañaque City shall, in coordination with the DOT, NHCP, Department of Public
11 Works and Highways (DPWH) and concerned agencies of the government, prepare a
12 tourism development plan that shall include the construction, installation and
13 maintenance of such appropriate facilities and infrastructure to improve the overall
14 features of the immediate environs surrounding the Baclaran Church, thereby ensuring
15 its accessibility and the security of tourists: *Provided*, That said development plan shall
16 ensure the preservation and conservation of the historical significance of the Baclaran

1 Church: *Provided, further,* That the implementation of the tourism development plan
2 shall be included in the budget of the local government of Parañaque City.

3 Sec. 3. The DOT shall assist the local government of Parañaque City in the
4 implementation of the tourism development plan by providing technical assistance in
5 tourism capacity building. It shall also include the immediate environs of the Baclaran
6 Church in all its national and regional promotion programs.

7 Sec. 4. The funding for the implementation of this Act shall be included in the
8 annual budget of the local government of Parañaque City. The DOT may augment
9 such allocation with internally-generated funds.

10 Sec. 5. Within sixty (60) days from the effectivity of this Act, the local
11 government of Parañaque City shall, in consultation with the DOT and concerned
12 agencies of the government, promulgate rules and regulations to implement this Act.

13 Sec. 6. This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the
14 *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,