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Feast of St. Francis Of Assisi

Commemorative masses, novenas, processions, and the traditional blessing of pets will be held in several Catholic churches all over the country Monday in celebration of the feast of St. Francis of Assisi, founder of the Order of the Friars Minor (OFM), also known as the Franciscans.

His feast day coincides with the observance of World Animal Day, held in remembrance of St. Francis' unbounded love for nature and all creatures.

At the St. Francis of Assisi Parish on Shaw Blvd., Mandaluyong City, masses will be held at 6 a.m., 6:30 a.m., 7 a.m., and 6 p.m. Isabela Bishop Joseph Nacua celebrated a high mass in honor of St. Francis Sunday.

St. Francis is one of the most popular saints of the Catholic Church.

He is regarded as the patron of animals and the environment. He founded the OFM in 1209 and in 1212, he co-founded with St. Clare, the Order of the Poor Clares.

He set up the first known Nativity scene in Greccio, Italy in 1220. In 1224, he received the gift of a phenomenon known as the stigmata, or the five wounds of Christ.

St. Francis expressed his love and respect for nature in his writings such as the Canticum of Brother Sun and Sister Moon. (Christina I. Hermoso)

Manila-Bicol operations Delayed

The much anticipated resumption of the Manila-Bicol operation of the Philippine National Railways (PNR) will be delayed despite the arrival of sleeper coaches donated to reopen the dormant line.

Newly installed PNR general manager Jun Ragrario said that engineers will have to inspect

and refurbish the decades-old coaches donated by Japan Rail East Company before it can hit the tracks for its maiden interprovincial trip.

Ragrario claimed that the JR East train coaches, estimated to be worth P40 million each, are "in running condition" when they were donated and are "very presentable."

"These sleeper coaches are 19 to 20 years old, but like jets, they can be used up to 25 to 30 years with proper maintenance," he said.

But aside from renovating the donated coaches, full rehabilitation of the train tracks to ensure passenger safety is what stalls the Manila-Bicol operation from kicking off. Ragrario said Manila to Naga tracks are 378-kilometers long while the Manila to Legazpi line is 478-kilometers long. (Kris Bayos)

Pacman Tells PMA Alumni to Strive Hard

Boxing champ Sarangani Rep. Emmanuel Pacquiao has called on alumni of the Philippine Military Academy (PMA) to strive hard and do better in every challenge that come their way as he graced the PMA Alumni Association, Inc. (PMAAAI) sports fest during the weekend.

Lt. Col. Arnulfo Burgos Jr., Armed Forces public affairs office (PAO) chief said, "In the Spirit of sportsmanship, Sarangani Rep. Emmanuel "Manny" "Pacman" Pacquiao attended the Philippine Military Academy Alumni Association Inc. (PMAAAI) annual sports fest and family day as the guest of honor and speaker and facilitator for the reading of the oath of sportsmanship at the General Headquarters grandstand" last Sunday.

Burgos said the annual event is organized by the PMAAAI with the objective of strengthening the bonds among PMA-ers and reliving their cadet days through sports as it is in one's life in the Academy.

"It is an honor to be with you here today...I know that I may not be a Cavalier like you but I know that you will agree with me that sports is one of our most common denominator," Pacquiao said in his message during the activity. (Elena Aben)

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