

MESSAGE

We, at the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA), hope that the Siquijor Heritage Museum serves as a means in promoting a deeper and more enlightened appreciation of Siquijor culture and arts. Its inauguration is indeed a triumph for the arts and culture community, as it showcases the reassured history and eloquent architecture of the San Isidro Labrador Parish Church and its convent.

Truly, the 148th anniversary of the San Isidro Labrador Parish as an independent church is a cause for celebration. It is a momentous event to celebrate the church's sanctity, history, and beauty. For one, as declared by the NCCA, it is one of the "country's outstanding heritage churches." The National Museum, on the other hand, declared this church and its convent both as "National Cultural Treasures."

As a haven of indigenous furniture and religious artifacts, the San Isidro Labrador Church and its convent offer us important details about our historic past dating back from the Spanish colonial government. Both are a reflection of the country's richness of culture and arts that the people of Siquijor and the entire nation should be proud of. For these reasons, the NCCA recognizes the need to preserve these cultural treasures for future generations, with respect for the memory of our ancestral roots and determination to uphold the integrity of form and content.

Herewith, the NCCA, as the principal government agency for the protection and development of cultural diversity, in line with the newly crafted UNESCO Convention, spearheads the continuous efforts to raise consciousness and community action to safeguard our tangible and intangible cultural heritage.

In fact, the San Isidro Parish Church and its convent belong to the first four priority churches that the NCCA has given adequate technical and financial assistance. The Detailed Engineering Study of the parish church has also been completed. An inter-agency committee of the NCCA, National Museum, and National Historical Institute, on the other hand, is scheduled to convene to further discuss the study and help move towards its operationalization.

On behalf of the NCCA, I assure you that the agency will encourage sustainability of efforts in creating and assisting programs that aim to preserve the wealth of our rich historical patrimony and cultural traditions that mirrors our racial identity.

We also applaud the hard work and continuous coordination of Rev. Fr. Victor A. Fontejon with the NCCA for the establishment of this ecclesiastical museum. Likewise, we commend the valued efforts of the Siquijor Heritage Foundation Inc. in the preservation of the region's cultural heritage and traditions.

Panatilihin natin ang mga pambansang kayamanang cultural! Mabuhay tayong lahat!

CECILE GUIDOTE ALVAREZ

NCCA Executive Director

National Commission for Culture and the Arts

(message read by Faisal Alih during the inauguration of the Siquijor Heritage Museum, Aug 8/05)