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**PCG CHICAGO COMMEMORATES THE 160<sup>TH</sup> BIRTHDAY  
OF PHILIPPINE NATIONAL HERO DR. JOSE RIZAL**



*From left to right: Consul Melvin Almonguera, Consul and Acting Head of Post Ryan Francis Gener, Consul Ryan Pondoc and Cultural Officer Noly Dulay.*

Chicago, 19 June 2021 – The Philippine Consulate General in Chicago held a wreath-laying ceremony at the Rizal Monument in Margate Park to commemorate the 160<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary of Philippine national hero Dr. Jose Rizal. The Consulate was led by Consul and Acting Head of Post Ryan Francis Gener, who is also the Knights of Rizal (KoR) Maynilad Chapter Commander.

Jose Rizal was born in Calamba, Laguna on 19 June 1861 and his full name was Jose Protasio Rizal Mercado y Alonso Realonda. After finishing high school, he studied land surveying and completed his training in 1877. He passed the exam to get his license in this field in May 1878, but he was not given a license until he came of age in 1881. The

following year, in 1882, he studied medicine at the Universidad Central de Madrid in Spain. He also studied ophthalmology in Paris and Berlin.

Rizal is known for writing two books while residing in Europe from 1882 to 1892: *Noli Me Tangere* (Touch Me Not; published in Berlin in 1887) and *El Filibusterismo* (The Subversive; published in Ghent in 1891). Both books exposed the evils of Spanish colonial rule in the Philippines. However, while he called for urgent and meaningful reforms in the country, he did not advocate for full independence from Spain.

In 1888, Rizal traveled to the US aboard the SS Belgic. Upon the ship's arrival in San Francisco, California on 28 April 1888 from Yokohama, they were not allowed to land and were forcibly placed under quarantine in spite of the clearance given by the American Consul. As a result, Rizal spent six days in quarantine aboard the ship until he was finally cleared to set foot in San Francisco on 04 May 1888.

After two days in San Francisco, his journey to New York started on 06 May 1888. Along the way, his train made stops in Nevada, Utah, Colorado, Nebraska and Illinois. He arrived in Chicago in the morning of 11 May 1888 and strolled around the city for several hours before his evening departure. In Chicago, he noted that "every tobacco shop had a statue of an Indian and was always different."

From Chicago, his train proceeded to Ontario, Canada and finally arrived in New York City on 14 May 1888. He stayed in the Big Apple for two days before catching the second largest ocean liner at the time, City of Rome, bound for Liverpool, England.

The Rizal Monument in Chicago is one of only two life size monuments in the Mainland US and one of six outside the Philippines. The others are located in Cherry Hill, New Jersey; Honolulu, Hawaii; Madrid, Spain; Wilhelmsfeld, Germany; and Jinjiang, China.

Likewise, the Knights of Rizal (KoR) Central USA Area, led by Commander Sir Mariano A. Santos and Consulate personnel who are members of the KoR Maynilad Chapter, commemorated the event in the evening of 17 June 2021 via videoconference.

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*Members of the Knights of Rizal (KoR) Central USA Area.*