

[Voices of Sisters](#)



Filipino Catholics attend a Mass at Quiapo Church in Manila May 9, 2025, a day after the election of Pope Leo XIV at the Vatican. (OSV News/Reuters/Noel Celis)



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In 2008, I was blessed with an opportunity that broadened both my mind and my heart. This unique opportunity was graciously extended by the prioress of the Missionary Benedictine Sisters of the Manila Priory, aimed at missionaries actively involved in the socio-pastoral apostolate — a mission that seeks to respond to the pressing needs of society through service and advocacy.

I attended a renewal program for scholars and church leaders from various parts of the world at the Overseas Ministries Study Center in Connecticut. The program offered stimulating conversations, new insights and valuable opportunities for learning. Yet one of the most memorable aspects of that experience was not found in the classroom or lecture hall — it was found in the company of fellow Filipinos.

Being far from home often heightens one's appreciation for familiar faces, shared stories and common roots. During my stay in Connecticut, I had the privilege of meeting members of the Philippine American Association of Connecticut, Inc., an organization that has been serving the Filipino community for more than 60 years. Through them, I witnessed a remarkable story of perseverance, community and hope.

The history of the Philippine American Association of Connecticut reflects the larger story of the Filipino diaspora. Its members are men and women who left their homeland in search of opportunities, carrying with them dreams for a better future. Like many immigrants, they faced the challenges of adjusting to a new culture, learning unfamiliar ways of life, and finding their place in a foreign society. Yet they persevered, drawing strength from their faith, family values and shared heritage.

What impressed me most was the sense of community they had cultivated over the decades. The Philippine American Association of Connecticut is more than an organization; it is a family. It provides a space where Filipinos can gather, celebrate traditions, support one another during difficult times, and pass on their cultural heritage to younger generations. In a world where distance can easily weaken connections, the association has helped keep those ties strong.

Living in Connecticut also means confronting realities unfamiliar to many of us who grew up in the Philippines. Harsh winters, heavy snowfall and long periods of cold weather can be daunting. Yet these challenges have become part of the shared experiences that unite members of the Filipino community. They have learned not only to survive but to thrive, building friendships and creating lasting bonds that

transcend geography and time.

My encounters with the Philippine American Association of Connecticut reminded me that the Filipino spirit knows no boundaries. Wherever Filipinos go, they bring with them a unique capacity for resilience, adaptability and hospitality. They build communities, nurture relationships and create a sense of home even in distant places. Their success is measured not only by professional achievements but also by their ability to support one another and remain connected to their roots.

As I reflect on that memorable experience, I continue to be inspired by the members of the Philippine American Association of Connecticut and by countless Filipinos around the world who embody the same spirit. Their stories remind us that while migration may separate people from their homeland, it does not diminish their identity. Instead, it often strengthens their appreciation for who they are and where they come from.

Editor's note: This story was translated using artificial intelligence software from the author's original language into English.

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