

Catholic troubadours  
enjoy the hip scene  
at Jersey City café  
See page 9

# The Catholic Advocate

Catholic  
Cemeteries  
We Remember  
We Believe  
www.RCAN.org

Vol. 56, No. 3

CATHOLIC PRESS ASSOCIATION GENERAL EXCELLENCE AWARD

Wednesday, February 7, 2007



Francisco and Yolanda Ramirez, married for 38 years, at their home in Bloomfield. Emigrating from the Philippines in 1970 and 1972 respectively, the former Jersey City residents faithfully attend the Filipino Mass.

Advocate photos—Melissa McNally

## Fortified by faith, Filipinos weave their way into tapestry

### Communities thrive, but feel culture clash

BY MELISSA MCNALLY  
Staff Writer

As one of the fastest growing minority groups in the archdiocese, the Filipino community blends devout traditions and unique cultural celebrations to create a distinct niche in the Catholic community.

According to the Asian American Federation Web site at <http://www.aafny.org>, New Jersey's Asian American population nearly doubled from 1990 to 2000, making it the fifth-largest Asian population at the state level. As 18 percent of the New Jersey's Asian population, Filipinos bring fervent Catholic faith to the Archdiocese of Newark while emphasizing family values and community spirit.

Maribel Fajardo, co-director of the Filipino Society of the Immaculate Heart of Mary in Secaucus, has been a leader in the Filipino community for almost 20 years. "I see the change and increased presence of Filipinos. There has been a big increase in the community at my parish, Immaculate Conception. Filipinos are very family oriented and bring that aspect to the Church. Family life is usually centered around the Church."

The Philippines is one of only two majority Christian countries in Asia. According to the 2000 Census of Population and Housing conducted by the National Statistics Office in Manila, (Web site: [www.census.gov.ph](http://www.census.gov.ph)) about 90 percent of Filipinos are Christians and 81 percent are Catholic. "Each town in the Philippines celebrates a saint and feasts of the Blessed Virgin are very important," Fajardo explained.

As a way of uniting the burgeoning Filipino community in her area, Fajardo felt it was important to continue celebrating



A shy but curious youngster finds her own unique vantage point in the pews during the Filipino Mass. Passing on Catholic traditions to American-born children is important in the Filipino community.

Catholic traditions. "By making Immaculate Conception Parish the center of all the Filipino community's activities, we appeal to a

Continued on page 4