

# DIVINA PASTORA FIESTA

A CELEBRATION DEDICATED TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

## GAPASCA MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

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### What is “Divina Pastora”?

“Divina Pastora” is the antique image of La Virgen Divina Pastora, also called Divina Pastora or the Divine Shepherdess. It is not only the patroness of Gapan City but also of the Diocese of Cabanatuan and Nueva Ecija province. We pay homage to La Divina Pastora through our annual traditional event Divina Pastora Fiesta/Santacruzán.



### What is a “Santacruzán”?

“Santacruzán” is a religious-historical pageant held in the Philippines during the month of May. It depicts the finding of the Holy Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ by Queen Helena, the mother of the very powerful Emperor, Constantine the Great who ended the persecution of Christians. Constantine, the emperor of Rome some hundreds of years ago, had a dream in which he was asked to go to the battle field to fight in the name of the Holy Cross. He conquered his enemy and that victory led to his conversion into a Christian. He became the first Christian emperor in history. His mother Reyna Helena, was inspired by all these experiences and in the year 326 A.D., she went on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land to seek the Holy Cross, the wooden cross on which Christ was supposed to have been nailed. She successfully found the Holy Cross, complete with its inscription ‘INRI’ on its top. The festivity commemorates the search of the Holy Cross by Empress Helena and her son, the newly converted emperor. After finding the Holy Cross in Jerusalem, it was authenticated by a miracle of healing attributed to it, and was brought back to Rome. The search was marked with a joyful celebration of thanksgiving. The religious procession is a re-enactment of the finding of the Holy Cross by Reyna Helena.



### What is a “Flores de Mayo”?

This is a religious festival in honor of Mary, the Mother of the Son of God, Jesus Christ. The Feast is marked with the offering of flowers by sagalas or shepherd girls. The “Mayflower” offering may refer to the whole flower festival celebrated in the month of May in honor of Virgin Mary. During the festival in May, flowers are offered to the Virgin Mary at the altar in the church. Every afternoon, young girls dressed in white, visit the church with cut flowers or baskets of petals in their hands. While walking to the altar, they either sprinkle the petals in honour of Mama Mary or offer bouquets of flowers.

## A Note from the President

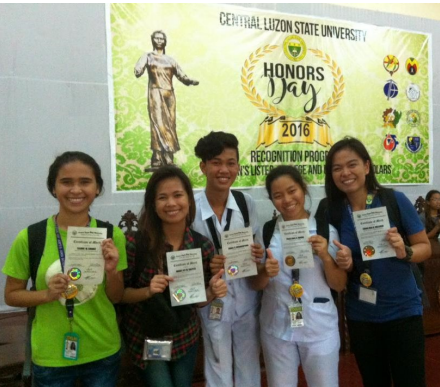
*Armahn Tinawin*

### Greetings to all of our members!

The month of May is a very special time for us as we re-enact the finding of the True Cross, the cross where Jesus Christ died and celebrate the feast of Divina Pastora in our **Divina Pastora Fiesta/Santacruzán on May 7th.**

This Filipino tradition considered to be the “Queen of Filipino Festivals” is a pageant held in many cities and even in small villages in our native country. Instead of icons or images, beautiful women with elegant or theatrical costumes, portray biblical and historical characters. The persons in the parade called, Sagalas which symbolizes queens from the past and are dressed beautifully to emulate “real” queens. Along with their handsome escorts, they parade in this colorful pageant.

**Please join us for this special event which will start at the 11 am mass at St. Linus Church, 13915 Shoemaker Avenue, Norwalk, CA 90650 (new location this year) with the procession and pageant**



Our GAPASCA scholars celebrating Honors Day for making the Dean's List. Congratualtions, you make us PROUD!

## Pechanga Turnaround

Our Pechanga Turnaround trip was again a huge success! Everyone had a great time!

You can grab a seat at our next turnaround on July 30th. Look for event details for this trip in our upcoming newsletters.



### ~ ~ UPCOMING EVENTS ~ ~

- MAY 7 DIVINA PASTORA FIESTA/SANTACRUZAN — St. Linus Church, Norwalk
- JUNE 18 GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING — St. Linus Church, Norwalk
- JUNE 25 ANNIVERSARY & INDUCTION BALL — Cerritos Sheraton Hotel
- JULY 30 PECHANGA CASINO TURNAROUND — Cerritos Regional Park

### ANNIVERSARY & INDUCTION BALL — JUNE 25

Have you SAVED THE DATE? This year's event will be held at the Cerritos Sheraton Hotel. We are expecting more than 250 guests this year so get your tickets early. Tickets are available for \$75 per person as well as program ad pages (Half Page \$75, Full Page \$100). Please contact one of your GAPASCA Officers to purchase your tickets/ad page or **Armahn Tinawin at (714) 853-0575**.



As **GAPASCA** continues to strive to enhance its educational programs, we are pleased to announce the opening of our new Scholarship Merit Award Program to deserving students of the Gapan community in the United States. This program is an extension of our effort to promote education as the foundation of social and economic development and in alignment with GAPASCA's goals and objectives. For more information, **please visit our website [www.gapasca.org](http://www.gapasca.org) or send us an email at [scholarhip.gapasca@gmail.com](mailto:scholarhip.gapasca@gmail.com) attention Vangie Garcia Tan, Program Chairperson.**

