



Republic of the Philippines  
**House of Representatives**

Quezon City, Metro Manila

Seventeenth Congress  
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. **4661**



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**Introduced by Representative Rodolfo C. Fariñas**

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**EXPLANATORY NOTE**

This bill seeks to declare December 8 of every year as a special non-working holiday in the entire country to commemorate the Feast of the Immaculate Conception of Mary, the principal patroness of the Philippines.

The Philippines is a predominantly Catholic country and is the third largest Catholic country in the world. As of 2013, there are about 76 million Catholic Filipinos, based on data collected by the Catholic Directory.

Pope Pius XII, through the Apostolic letter *Impositi Nobis* issued on September 12, 1942, declared the Virgin Mary under the title of the Immaculate Conception as the principal patroness of the Philippines. Among the titles under which Mary is venerated in the Philippines, the Immaculate Conception is one of the most prominent and its feast highly observed by members of the Catholic Church.

The invocation of the Immaculate Conception dates back to February 8, 1578. Pope Gregory XIII, in a Bull, issued a decree that the Manila Cathedral should be erected under the invocation of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Following this, Pope Clement VIII decreed several cathedrals more to be erected under the same title. Moreover, one of the three ships that reached the Philippines in the voyage of Magellan in 1521 was the *Concepcion*, named after the Immaculate Conception, together with the ships *Trinidad* and *Victoria*. Thus, the country before being named Filipinas, and even before the name of Christ had begun to be preached, saw on these shores the name of Mary under her title of the Immaculate Conception.

December 8 was declared a holy day of obligation by Pope Clement XI in 1708 for Catholics all over the world, in honor of the holiness and purity of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The Catholic Church has continuously propagated the doctrine concerning the original innocence of the undefiled Blessed Virgin Mary. By this most significant fact, the Church declared that the conception of Mary must be venerated as extraordinary, wonderful, eminently holy, and different from the conception of all other human beings. Hence, the church requires public devotion and veneration of the faithful during the Feast of the Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. In fact, in some countries such as Guam and Malta, Catholics take the day off from work and school to observe said feast.

Filipinos, in particular, profess their devotion to the Blessed Virgin through venerative and celebratory practices pursuant to the Marian dogmas of the Roman Catholic Church. Churches throughout the country celebrate the feast with particular attention and ceremony. The festival usually involves processions, marching bands and cultural shows.

Catholicism plays a significant role in the development of Filipino culture, philosophies, politics, education and sociological norms. Declaring December 8 as a special non-working holiday will strengthen the established devotion of Filipinos to the Mother of God, the Blessed Virgin Mary.

As contained in the *Ineffabilis Deus*, the Apostolic Constitution issued by Pope Pius IX in 1854, "*let all the children of the Catholic Church, who are so very dear to us, hear these words of ours. With a still more ardent zeal for piety, religion and love, let them continue to venerate, invoke and pray to the most Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God, conceived without original sin. Let them fly with utter confidence to this most sweet Mother of mercy and grace in all dangers, difficulties, needs, doubts and fears.*"

In view of the foregoing, approval of this bill is earnestly sought.

  
RODOLFO C. FARIÑAS



Republic of the Philippines  
**House of Representatives**  
Quezon City, Metro Manila

Seventeenth Congress  
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 4661

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**Introduced by Representative Rodolfo C. Fariñas**

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**AN ACT DECLARING DECEMBER 8 OF EVERY YEAR AS A  
SPECIAL NON-WORKING HOLIDAY IN THE ENTIRE COUNTRY TO  
COMMEMORATE THE FEAST OF THE IMMACULATE  
CONCEPTION OF MARY, THE PRINCIPAL PATRONESS OF THE  
PHILIPPINES**

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:*

SECTION 1. December 8 of every year is hereby declared as a This bill seeks to declare December 8 of every year as a special non-working holiday in the entire country to commemorate the Feast of the Immaculate Conception of Mary.

SECTION 2. This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in at least two (2) newspaper of general circulation.

Approved.

  
**RODOLFO C. FARIÑAS**