



January 7, 2014

Consular Corp of the Philippines
Makati City
Republic of the Philippines

Dear **Friends and Colleagues in the CCP,**

გილოცავთ შობა-ახალ წელს! (gilocavth shoba-akhal c'els!)

In behalf of the Honorary Consulate of Georgia in the Philippines (CAR), I wish to greet you a MERRY CHRISTMAS and a HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Today, January 7th 2014, is Christmas Day in my country and the rest of the Orthodox Christian World. It is one of the most important holidays for my people. On this day, large processions make their way through cities, towns, and villages throughout the land. These mass walks, called “*Alilo*”, are central to Georgia’s unique Christmas celebration. Banner-carrying clergy lead the processions, and men, women and children follow. Dressed as shepherds, soldiers, famous religious figures, or wearing traditional Georgian clothes, the procession members congratulate and greet each other warmly, and collect money for charities.

Songs play an important role in the Christmas tradition in Georgia as well. Harmonious Georgian carols echo through the streets during the procession, and can also be heard in churches throughout the day. Although the songs vary from region to region, Georgian Christmas carols are solemn and beautiful.

This evening, all over the enchanting land of *Sakartvelo* (as Georgia is traditionally referred to), families will gather for Christmas dinner and enjoy bountiful food and wine, in a beautiful banquet tradition called the “*Supra*”.

On this joyous and festive occasion, it gives me considerable pleasure to share with you an article that came out in Food magazine last month (December 2013) about the wonders of Georgian cuisine and the time-honoured *Supra*, through a dinner that I hosted, together with famous chef and food writer JJ Cojuangco-Yulo, for select members of the press and food aficionados. My heartfelt gratitude goes to our colleague, Consul (a.h.) Anna Marie Ablan of Belarus, for her special participation!

Attached with this letter is the PDF file of the article. You may also view this on my official website: <http://georgiaconsulphil.com/2013/11/28/food-magazine-features-georgian-consulates-dinner/>

Through this article, I want to share with you a little bit about the amazing culture of my people, in the hope that one day I may entice all of you to visit *Sakartvelo* and to experience the splendour of my country and its heritage. You will surely love it.

One again, my best wishes to all of you in 2014!

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'TLO', written in a cursive style.

Consul (a.h.) Thelmo Luis O. Cunanan Jr.