

# *Flores de Mayo*

## *Filipino Celebration, Flowers of May* *Mildura, May 24, 2009*

In our multicultural Parish of Mildura we had a lovely celebration with our Filipino community to recognise Mary, their special patroness in the celebration known locally as Flores de Mayo.

Filipino families are engaged in decorating the statue of Mary. Eight girls all wearing long white dresses with wings to make them look like angels, carry a letter each to complete the word "AVE MARIA.". Other children representing St Helena, carrying a cross, her son, the Emperor Constantine and other biblical characters process into the Church. The festivity commemorates the search of the Holy Cross by Queen Helena and her son, the newly converted emperor Constantine. After the Holy Cross was found in Jerusalem and brought back to Rome, there was a joyful celebration for thanksgiving. The Flores de Mayo is always held in the month of May

During the month of May, in the tropical islands of the Philippines we don't have to stop and smell the roses. -- the fragrance of flowers floats in the air. When the rains begin to pour after a long dry spell, flowers magically bloom overnight. And being predominantly Catholic, the Filipinos celebrate the beneficial rains by giving praise to the Blessed Virgin Mary.

After Mass the community share homemade delicacies and snacks.

This festival was introduced by the Spaniards in the Philippines and has since become part of Filipino traditions identified with youth, love and romance. It is wonderful to see that the members of our Filipino community are happy to honour Mary and share their traditions with us.



Decoration of Our Lady's Shrine



Groups of children taking part in the procession



Members of the Filipino community gather with Fr Tom while we sing the Parish Blessing over them



Members of the choir who worked hard to Prepare for the Celebration with Noreen Armsden (organist)





Some Sacred Heart parishioners enjoying Filipino hospitality



A group of Filipino parishioners with the two Missionaries of Charity from Dareton,  
who are also from the Philippines.

After this special morning tea the Filipino community gathered at Jacyee Park on the banks of the Murray River for a barbecue to continue their celebrations and to spend time with each other.