



*Lakas na Alyansa ng mga Katutubong  
Ayta ng Sambales*

NEGrito PEOPLE'S ALLIANCE OF ZAMBALES  
Poonbato, Botolan, Zambales

BRIEF REPORT

ON THE ACTIVITIES OF

PALAWIG CABALIC, BEN JUGATAN AND SR. MENGAY.

IN

AUSTRALIA, BRAZIL AND UNITED STATES

MARCH 21 - JULY 18, 1992



# KASAMA

Newsletter of the Philippines Australia Solidarity Group

(Queensland Edition.)

VOL. 7 No. 1. SPECIAL ISSUE 1993

\$2.50

# **SPEAKING TOUR IN AUSTRALIA**

March 21 - May 19, 1992

June 27 - July 16, 1992

**SPEAKERS:** PALAWIG CABALIC - CHAIRPERSON, LAKAS  
BEN JUGATAN - SECRETARY, LAKAS

**TRANSLATOR:** SR. MENGGAY BALAZO, FMM

**SPONSORS/ORGANIZERS:** PHILIPPINE AUSTRALIA SOLIDARITY GROUP  
PHILIPPINE AUSTRALIA CHRISTIAN FORUM  
FRIENDS OF THE ATYAS  
ASIA-PACIFIC REGIONAL LINKS  
CENTER FOR PHILIPPINE CONCERNS, AUSTRALIA

**NATIONAL SPEAKING TOUR COORDINATOR:**

PETER AND MARYA STEWART  
PHILIPPINE AUSTRALIA SOLIDARITY GROUP  
PERTH, WESTERN AUSTRALIA

## **OBJECTIVES:**

1. To tell the world that our culture is very much alive, even if Mt. Pinatubo had erupted and our homelands buried hundreds of meters deep. Our culture is in our hearts, it is not buried with the land.
2. To thank the people of Australia for the financial support afforded to us before the eruption of Mt. Pinatubo and more so after its eruption.
3. To meet with the Indigenous Peoples of Australia, the aborigines and be in solidarity with each other in our common struggle for life, land and culture towards self-determination.
4. To make people aware of Philippine situation specifically on vital issues such as: Environment, land rights (ancestral domain), US Military Bases, Nuclear arms, Militarization and human rights violations.
5. To deepen existing linkages/relationships with Australian friends and establish new ones.

# QUANTITATIVE REPORT (STATISTICS)

## STATES VISITED

## ALL AUSTRALIAN STATES

1. BRISBANE QLD. (Queensland)
2. ALICE SPRINGS, NT (Northern Territory)
3. PERTH, WA (Western Australia)
4. ADELAIDE, SA (Southern Australia)
5. MELBOURNE, VIC (Victoria)
6. HOBART, TAS (Tasmania)
7. SYDNEY, NSW (New South Wales)
8. CANBERRA, ACT (Australian Capital Territory)

## CHURCHES ASSEMBLIES/GROUPS

26

Non-Catholic - 13  
Catholic - 13

## UNIVERSITIES

5

## COLLEGES

13

## SCHOOLS

9

## ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES/GROUPS

19

## SCHOOLS

5

## CAMPING

3

## FILIPINO COMMUNITIES/GROUPS

12

## FAMILIES

10

## DINNER MEETINGS/SOLIDARITY NIGHTS

11

## HOSTS

15

## VARIED GROUPS

42

## RADIO INTERVIEW

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7

## QUALITATIVE REPORT

We feel we are luckier than most Australians as we have travelled to all the states of Australia. Again, thanks to the organizers.

In all states visited our objectives were fulfilled, albeit in different degrees. The issues that we were concerned about from economic, political and socio-cultural, were discussed in varied forms to a varied range of audience: from adult illiterates to little graders to secondary school to post graduates and professionals. From non-believers to believers, from non-political to highly politicalized audience, to indigenous and non-indigenous alike.

## HIGHLIGHTS OF THE TOUR! LOW POINTS TOO?

### BRISBANE:

After experiencing a cultur shock at the huge amount of food served in the plane compared to the lack of food in the evacuation centers at home, we landed in the sunny Brisbane, met by handsome Filipinos Ted and Ike. We felt at home immediately. Brisbane, was indeed the right choice for the first landing. To Dee, Max, Minda and Bobby. Thank a lot!

The Filipino group in Brisbane really impressed us. The warm welcome at the beach in Wellington Pt. followed by the dinner meeting with interested Pinyos and Pinays was indeed a good start for us. It gave us the empetus for the rest of our speaking tour. Maraming salamat po, mga kapatid!

Mt. Pinatubo for us is a "paradise lost". Coming to Brisbane we saw "paradise regained" in Mt. Nebo. Walking into the rainforest misty eyed, we remembered our homelands as we saw, felt and smelled the trees, the herbal medicines, the birds, the insects, the creeping animals, etc. Indeed it was a painful memory but it was worth remembering. It did lift up our spirits to our Apo Namalyari. We are full of hope. Soon our children and their children's children will enjoy Mt. Pinatubo's paradise regained.

Our first encounter with the FMM sisters (my Congregation) was in Brisbane. We were happy to have a Filipina sister who came from the Mt. Pinatubo area and also another Australian FMM sister who knew us personally as she visited us in our evacuation center. We visited them in their convent for only a quarter of an hour as they were too busy. Our hearts were broken to leave without having shared ourselves to them. This was the lowest point in our Brisbane tour. Anyhow, this was well compensated by our visits to FMM convents in Alice Springs, Melbourne, Adelaide and Sydney.

### ALICE SPRINGS:

"An Ayta performing a Kangaroo dance? Are there Kangaroos in the Philippines?" Well, it takes a gun, a huge search light, a van and a sharp shooter for us to witness a "hi-tech" hunting with Arthur, our aboriginal friend in the desert of Alice Springs. Three Kangaroos drop dead not with our bows and arrows but with the white man's weapons. Before the Kangaroos last breath we observed closely the movements of their body, their eyes, nose, their regal posture and their athletic jump. This was before we savor of the delicious non-cholesterol menu. Here we observed the similarity in food preparation. As we prepared our indigenous feast we gathered together in a camp fire and shared a lot. This is the height of our Indigenous integration with our brothers and sisters Aborigines.

Another highlight of our Alice Springs Visit was the opportunity to express our solidarity with our brothers and sisters aborigines in their struggle against the building of a dam in their sacred sites. We signed their petition resisting the dam construction which later on bared a positive result: The dam project was cancelled!

In Alice Springs, we had the deepest integration with our indigenous brothers and sisters. Thanks Ronnie, Arthur, Bob, Deb, etc.

One low point in Alice Springs is in our observation at the Tanganyere Executive Council, the aborigines were still shy, they had not yet broken their culture of silence. We expected then to ask questions. The whites were more vocal.

#### PERTH:

We stayed the longest in Perth because compared to other states, Perth has the most number of Australian exposurees who had been to Ayta lands. Besides, Holy Week during our stay there.

One of the highlights in Perth is our meeting with school communities. We experienced talking to a wide range of school people: from primary school children to post graduates and University professors. We learned to adjust our language and our audio-visual aids to these varied audience. Here we learned a lot of patience for non-interested children who were forced to listen to us as required by their school. But mostly it was very enriching to be able to interact with various age groups, interests and concerns.

Another highlight is our meeting with a politician who was interested in our struggle. We met Senator Christabelle Chimarette who replaced our long time friend Senator Jo Valentine. Sen. Chimarettewas a big help in getting our visa for the United States together with Ex. Senator Robert Wood and Peter Stewart. Sen. Chimarette will influence some other progressive senators in the Parliament to help us lobby on issues as Environment and Ancestral land rights. We also met the Deputy Minister of Western Australia and the Archbishop of the Roman Catholic Church.

Our Holy Week celebration and vacation in Albany gave us a taste of what it is like to being a tourist. Well, it was a good break and we enjoyed it! Thanks Peter, Marya, Ruhama and Anthonly!

What made us sad in our Western Australia experience is the conflict we observed between the members of the Philippine Australian Solidarity Group (PASG) and Center for Philippine Concerns Australia (CPCA). Both are concerned with the struggles in our country. Both has the best of intentions in liberating third world countries. Both are advocates of justice and peace. But why can't they see eye to eye? How can we dream of

liberation and peace if in our own home, we can't do it? While our Australian speaking tour was a success, it would have been twice better if conflicts like this were resolved.

#### ADELAIDE:

"Yes, that's a century old church. "This used to be a church". "That church got burnt just recently". "This is a Uniting Church office where I work". "You will stay with the Mc'Arthurs in Eden Hills, they are church people".

Adelaide! The City of Churches! We discovered the church as PEOPLE! as COMMUNITY! not buildings! one of the highlights of our Australian tour is talking, sharing, being with church people. This experience is very unique in Adelaide. The Liturgies were very relevant and meaningful. The church people were interested and concern about our struggle in the Philippines. They inspired us and gave us the strength to go ahead. Thanks to the ecumenical spirits of Jonathan, Duncan, Catie, Janet and Romero Community. Having talked more with Protestant Church Assemblies than Catholics, I jokingly remarked: In the Philippines, I might end up a Uniting Church Nun!

We would like to commend the Filipino communities in Adelaide. We admire their unity and spirit of sacrifice. We felt their warm welcome and concern. Keep up the good spirit. Thank you Mario, Ben, Tonette and all!

What we considered as low point in Adelaide is our sharing at the Aboriginal community center, where a white employee was talking most of the time on behalf of the aborigine. Looking forward to the time when aborigines will speak for themselves.

#### MELBOURNE:

Tired and still groggy from a 3-1/2 hours flight from Adelaide we landed in the wet and cold Melbourne and went straight to the classrooms for our speaking engagements. That's the School Principal's order! ("Hi, Mate,! Can we pass by the loo, please?")

Well, the haste was compensated by an SBS TV COVERAGE as we were talking to a group of 150 students from St. Columba College, an elite exclusive school. Well, this became one of the highlights of our Melbourne trip since SBS's coverage is national so we were seen all over Australia. Thanks Mick and Margaret.

This was followed by series of Media Coverage: local TV, local and national radio and newspaper interviews. Thanks Melba, Andrew and Charlie and the group of "Kababayans" who welcome us warmly and were interested in our struggle. Mabuhay kayo!

One sad thing is Melbourne is the Center for Philippine Concerns, Australia (CPCA)-Philippine Resource Center (PRC) conflict which affected us personally and as a group.

#### HOBART:

Our flight to Hobart was 30 minutes delayed due to engine trouble, hence we missed the scheduled TV interview at the airport. The media people has to rush towards the arriving Dalai Lama. Thanks to the Filipino welcoming group who were patiently waiting for us. Salamat po Connie, Arnel, Nena, Allenby, etc.

Hobart will always be remembered for its well developed literacy program. Three years ago an Ayta leader was invited for a National Literacy Conference here. One of the highlights of our Australian tour was meeting with a group of literacy teachers. It was indeed a very enriching sharing. It was mutual learning. Both used the liberating education of Paulo Freire. We especially remembered this group when we met Paulo Freire in Brazil. Thanks Lou-Ann!

Another highlight is our integration and solidarity with our brothers and sisters aborigines in Resdon Cove as they struggled for land rights on their sacred sites. We stood with them in the protest camp. Thanks Rosie, etc.

Our low point in Hobart was when two Filipinos (maybe unconsciously) were selling us the idea of being a business partner in the Philippines to promote the American products under the brand of AMWAY. For us it was a shock because we had been fighting against transnational corporations who ruin our culture and economy.

#### SYDNEY:

"INDIGENOUS CULTURE - FEST" A Solidarity Welcome to the Aytas of Zambales, the People of Mt. Pinatubo. This is a very unique welcome! The first of its kind. This was participated by different tribes from different countries. A real cultural exchange in forms of songs, poems, dances, rituals, stories, drama, etc. There were around 200 people. We were very happy to promote our culture and at the same time learn from the varied cultures in other countries. Thanks to the organizers.

Another highlight of our Sydney visit is the marked unity, coordination and teamwork of all Philippines support groups namely: PASG, PACF, CPCA, Friends of the Atyas, PACIN, TUCAR, etc. They are amazingly working together peacefully without competition regardless of race, creed, and orientation. We hope this will serve as model for support groups in other states who have petty conflicts.

One low point in Sydney was what happened in Wellongong. There was a miscommunication with the Filipino community who were celebrating the birthday of a VIP of their organization. Our coming was not communicated properly hence we appeared to be "gate crushers" to a party. We then decided to forego our talk. We just said "help" "happy birthday" and "good bye".

In NSW, we also had a chance to meet people in New Castle, Jervis Bay and Kiama. Thanks John, Jane and Delia.

#### CANBERRA:

We had the shortest stay in Canberra. The highlight of the visit was the tour of the Parliament House. Here we saw a deeply "hi-tech" Parliament House. Hopefully, the lawmakers are well equipped as well. Thanks Senator Wood.

We also met some people in AIDAB. We thank them for financing our trip to Brazil and United States, thanks Andrew and Jenny!

One low point in Canberra: we were unable to meet Filipinos.

#### LESSONS LEARNED/REFLECTIONS:

##### INTERNAL:

- deepened self-confidence
- deepened commitment to people and program (LAKAS ORGANIZATION)
- sharpened critical analysis of situations in other countries and of indigenous peoples
- learned to answer questions with quality, conciseness and precision
- learned to listen and ask relevant questions
- learned to adjust to first world lifestyle, food, transportation, use of machines, phase of life, etc.
- learned little English
- able to transcend/overcome inner shyness, some fear & nervousness
- deepened old friendships, establish new ones with indigenous and non-indigenous people
- experienced meaningful inter-cultural exchanges
- enhanced cultural pride and heritage as Aytas
- valued Atya's identity more and struggle for self-determination.



**EXTERNAL:**

- able to promote culture
- discover close similarities with other Indigenous Peoples especially in our common struggle for land, life and culture
- discover the wide gap between first world and third world countries
- overwhelmed at the progress of science and technology in Australia
- saddened by man's subjection to machines and his job insecurity that goes with it
- In Australia, wages are high, food commodities low, rich and poor more or less ate the same food
- In the Philippines, wages are low, food commodities high, rich ate much, poor starve
- No militarization in Australia but aborigines are victims of the so called "death in custody"
- Marked discrimination with aborigines in Australia by the Whites (Racism is rampant)
- The dole-out system spoiled Aborigines
- No house maids in Australia, unlike in the Philippines
- envied the old age pension plan in Australia but sympathized with lonely aged people
- Australia is a free country compared to the Philippines.

**CONFERENCE IN RIO DE JANEIRO, BRAZIL**

**SUMMARY REPORT**

**A) WORLD INDIGENOUS CONFERENCE OF ENVIRONMENT, TERRITORY AND DEVELOPMENT**

DATE : May 25 - 30, 1992  
VENUE : Kari-Oca Village, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil  
PARTICIPANTS : 400 Red Indian Leaders of Brazil's, 180 Indigenous Nations, 125 Indigenous Peoples from other countries, 100 non-indigenous peoples and 78 Media People

**LANGUAGES USED WITH TRANSLATORS:**

1. Portuguese
2. Spanish
3. English

**OBJECTIVES:**

- Prepare a document on Environment, Territory, and Development to be submitted to the Earth Summit - UNCED (United Nations Conference on Environment and Development)

- To be in solidarity with the Red Indians in their 500 years of resistance against the White colonizers.
- To establish and deepen linkages among Indigenous Peoples all over the World.

#### HIGHLIGHTS OF THE CONFERENCE:

- a document called the KARI-OCA Document was signed by all Indigenous participants of the conference. This document embodies the Indigenous Peoples' culture, beliefs, laws principles on environment and territory. It also discussed lengthily the Indigenous Peoples' concept of development. A committee was chosen to discuss this document to the Earth Summit (UNCED).
- Each country gave a situationers of their Indigenous Peoples, focused on issues of land, environment, development including problems of poverty, injustices, human rights violations, etc. (Palawig and Ben were given a chance to speak twice on different topics).
- Indigenous rites, rituals, dances, songs, poems, etc. were mutually shared by all. Varied indigenous arts and crafts' exhibits enriched each participant. Mutual sharing of varied skills like: healing, herbal medicines, food preparation, etc.
- It was a very colorful event. The place is an old Indian Village. It is a valley surrounded by green hills, mountains and rocks.

#### LOW POINTS OF THE CONFERENCE:

- KARI-OCA Village is very far from the city. Transportation was difficult, hence most of the participants came late for the conference.
- While we were talking in the conference about environment, care for Mother Earth, every now and then we could hear the Mining explosions in the nearby mountain of Kari-Oca Village. It was very disheartening to the participants.
- The organizers were not very disciplined in terms of time and schedule. Most of the time activities or conferences are late.
- The media people were very undisciplined. They disturbed conferences or workshops by taking pictures or video tapes.

#### REFLECTIONS:

- Indigenous peoples all over the world have common problems: land rights, cultural alienation, self-determination, injustices, human rights violations, discrimination, etc.

- Meeting and knowing other indigenous peoples made us feel good and it strengthened our convictions.
- Indigenous peoples are the experts on environment and ecology
- If the so-called "Environment Experts" will not listen to Indigenous peoples, our planet is doomed for total destruction.
- The issue on Environment, Territory and Development could not be treated without touching on poverty, injustices, democracy, etc.

## B) GLOBAL FORUM 1992

DATE : June 1 - 14, 1992.  
 VENUE : Flamengo Park, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil  
 PARTICIPANTS : 200 Countries  
                   42,000 people  
                   2,000 Media people, Military Men, NGO's

### NATURE/PURPOSE:

- The Global Forum is the NGO counterpart of the Earth Summit UNCED. This is the forum for NGO's who are closely monitoring the activities of the Earth Summit but they can lobby their issues.
- There are many structures or working committees in the Global Forum who discussed varied issues related to Environment and Development and make treaties, statements, or resolutions to be submitted to the Earth Summit. Official representatives of the Global Forum are allowed to speak at the Earth Summit.
- There are also progressive delegates to the Earth Summit who came to the Global Forum and shared what happened in the Earth Summit and listened to the feedbacks of the NGO's.
- Different NGO's has exhibit booth within the Global Forum compound.
- Simultaneous talks on varied issues are being done in different NGO structure or auditorium. Simultaneous translation are provided in each structures or auditorium. Official languages are Portuguese, Spanish, French and English.
- Each structure is complete with audio-visual communications gadgets.
- The Earth Parliament and the International Indigenous Commission are two structures in the Global Forum. The former is more active than the later. We always come to the Earth Parliament.
- The Amazonia Village is a structure of the Earth Parliament that housed most of the Indigenous delegates. Palawig and Ben stayed in this village together with other two delegates from the Philippines.

## COMMENTS ON THE GLOBAL FORUM:

### POSITIVE:

- For the Indigenous Peoples, the Earth Parliament was a very good venue for sharing and discussion of issues.
- There were a lot of good speakers in the Earth Parliament and one of them is Paulo Freire, the hero of our literacy program. We were so excited to meet him and shared with him our literacy expertise coming from his methods.
- The Amazonia Village was another place where Indigenous Peoples gather, know more about each other.
- Not all of the Kari-Oca delegates stayed for the Global Forums, however, there were new indigenous delegates from other countries.
- Some progressive senators and government officials in other countries came to the Earth Parliament and dialogue with the Indigenous peoples.
- We were able to speak in these structures, two press conferences and two public gatherings of Indigenous peoples. We were also interviewed for TV news in relation to Paulo Freire's liberating education in the Philippines.
- One important and meaningful exhibit at the Global Forum was the Kuwait Booth where they displayed with the help of electrical gadgets the destruction of Mother Earth during the Gulf War. One cannot imagine the fire from oil wells flowing everywhere and destroying everything. WHAT DOES THE UNITED STATES SAY TO THIS?

### NAGATIVE:

- It was too expensive. The input doesn't equal the output. It was unnecessary lavish expenditure. Too many structures and booths and some were empty.
- It was only a show window of governments to impress the World that they are pro-environment, that they care for Mother Earth.
- Some NGO's were government NGO's (GO-NGO) used to camouflage the destruction of Ecology and Environment in varied forms.
- Rio de Janeiro is the sad victim of this lavish drama. To facelift Rio or to paint a good image, street children, beggars, sidewalk vendors, were maltreated, others were killed by the police. Lavish infrastructures were put up at the expense of Rio's poor.
- Lives of the poor in Rio are the price of the Earth Summit and Global Forum.
- Scheduled talks and activities in some structures were only on papers, not followed.
- The Global Forum compound later on became like a flea market, where goods and products from different

countries were sold, defeating the purpose of the conference.

#### EARTH SUMMIT (UNCED)

DATE : June 3-14, 1992  
VENUE : Rio Centro, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil  
PARTICIPANTS : 180 Countries

#### COMMENTS ON THE EARTH SUMMIT:

##### POSITIVE:

- It was a good beginning
- The World is getting aware of the plight of Mother Earth
- President Bush was shamed by his people in Rio
- Militant US activists shouting against US policies
- Progressive US Senators talked against President Bush in other forums outside of Earth Summit.

##### NEGATIVE:

- Lavish, unnecessary expenditure
- International show window of pseudo-environmentalists
- The poor in Rio are the victims of Earth Summary Extravaganza.
- Poverty and militarization were not discussed in relation to environment; Pragmatic approach to development
- Countries like Japan, United States who promised funds for forest rehabilitation program were not definite when to release their funds.

#### RESULT OF THE EARTH SUMMIT?

- ALL ON PAPERS!

#### COMMENTS ON RIO DE JANEIRO, BRAZIL

- Similar to the Philippines: Poverty, Militarization, Corruption, undisciplined traffic, horrible taxi driver, wide gap between rich and poor, etc.
- People in general, especially the MASSES are kind, friendly welcoming. They go out of their way to help you.
- Rio is rich in natural resources. There are still lots of trees around the City.

SPIRITUAL UNITY OF THE TRIBES  
GATHERING OF THE EAGLES

DATE : June 17-21, 1992  
VENUE : Black Hills, South Dakota, USA  
PARTICIPANTS : 1,200 Indigenous Peoples mostly INDIANS

OBJECTIVES:

- To come together to pray for the unity of all Indigenous Peoples in the World.
- To thank the great spirits of our Ancestors for the many blessings given to us.
- To call on our grandmothers and grandfathers to guide us in our efforts to save Mother Earth.
- We call on the great Spirits to help us stop all forms of injustices, human rights violations, oppressions, killings, etc. and give us PEACE! PEACE IN THE WORLD!

DESCRIPTION OF THE PLACE:

The place is a huge Indian Forest land. It was well organized. There is one area for parking. Another forested area for the tents, as all participants were on tents. Some Indians on their tippys. There's a place for children to play. A huge place for general assembly. Another place designated only for prayers, a wide open space with a fire place in the middle. Another place for meditation. Still another place for the kitchen, a place for food and varied commodities. Comfort rooms were well provided.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE GATHERING

- No Cameras, No Videos, No Tape Recorders! No Media! No Publicity. Structures were loose. There were time for sharing, individually or group.
- The opening ceremonies at 4:00 o'clock dawn in the freezing cold was indeed a real test. It started with the lighting of the huge fire in the middle of the sacred ground, followed by the Indian prayer songs in a drum beat, then the Eagle feathers ceremony followed by songs, then the ceremony of the pipe. Afterwards, individual prayers in varied forms and languages for those who wish to pray allowed. It ended with the ceremony of the ashes coming from the previous spiritual gathering. All prayers were done around the fire in circle. The incense from the sweet grass is directed toward North, South, East and West.

- The Spiritual Runners: These are the messengers of peace and dignity. They run to take the message of peace and dignity to the next state. This is done in relay. The runners come from the four corners of the World, symbolizing global unity. These runners are met in designated places and spiritual ceremony is done. One is a welcome and the other is a send-off.

- Community Assembly: Time is allotted for the Elders men and women to speak. Young leaders are also given time to speak. We spoke at the young Indigenous leaders assembly. There was cultural exchanges so we also shared our cultural dances. Our sharing touched on the Indigenous issues in our country: Economic, political and socio-cultural. It was very well taken by the assembly. I ended the community assembly with my chanted prayer.

- Sweat Lodge: This is used to purify both the body and soul. Steam is used as the medium for purification. Burning stones are placed in the middle of the lodge. Each participant is entitled to two burning stones. These stones are arranged facing the four directions: North, South, East and West. When everybody is ready, cold water is poured into the burning stones hence a strong, hot steam comes washing our bodies as we are sweating ourselves. This is repeated three times with alternate Indian prayer songs and admonitions and the participants individual prayer.

- Closing Ceremony: This was done towards the noonday sun. All of us gathered in a valley then we walk slowly up the mountain where the ceremony was held. The elder and the prayer leader led the procession, all of us were carrying stones and sweet grass. At the designated place, the Indian prayer ritual started: the fire, the Eagles feather and the pipe. These are all enlivened by the songs and rhythmic beating of the drums. This is followed by each participants offering of the stone together with his prayer. The stones are arranged on the ground in a huge circle, then the circle is divided into four, symbolizing the four corners of the World. Indian prayerful songs and drums accompanied this beautiful ritual.

#### LOW POINTS OF THE GATHERING:

On the third day, there was a strong rain, thunder and lightning that few of the tents gave way including our tent. We were then asked to transfer to a motel in the next town. We had to commute daily.

## REFLECTIONS:

- The christian rituals of fire, incense, penitential rites, etc. must have emanated from the Indigenous rituals.
- Spiritual bond of Indigenous peoples is very strong as it is rooted in our relationship with nature and our God.
- This was a very good ending for the many speaking engagements and conferences we attended in Australis and Brazil. A beautifully summing-up of events into the HOLY, the SACRED!

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