

"KAPLAG" Festival 2011

The Basilica del Santo Niño de Cebu and the Santo Niño de Cebu Augustinian Social Development Foundation, Inc. (SNAF) will celebrate the 446th anniversary of 'Kaplag' on Thursday focusing on Señor Santo Niño as the El Capitan General (Lord Admiral of the Sea).

The event will be held in collaboration with the Naval Forces Central, Philippine Coast Guard-Cebu District, Cebu Ports Authority, PNP Maritime Group, PNP Regional Police Office, Ocean Care Foundation, Cebu Yacht Club, and the office of Cebu City Councilor Margot Osmeña.

The 'Kaplag' commemorates the discovery of the image of the Child Jesus on April 28, 1565 by Juan Camus, a soldier of Miguel Lopez de Legazpi in a nipa hut in Cebu.

Today, the basilica stands on the very same spot where the hut once stood.

It is also believed that the image was a gift from Ferdinand Magellan to Queen Juana 446 years ago.

The event is commemorated with the usual early morning mass followed by a short procession to the Malacañang sa Sugbo.

The public is expected to experience traffic disruption around the basilica.

A festive welcome led by the Basilica Sinulog dancers will acknowledge the Santo Niño as the image heads back to the Basilica in the afternoon.

The day-long activity will include the naval honors for the Santo Niño as recognition of its rank as the most esteemed Captain General of the Spanish Forces in the Philippines. For the first time, the coat-of-arms of the Celentísimo Capitan General de las Esfuerzas Españolas en Filipinas will travel on a Philippine Navy ship.

Specifically invited are the navy, Coast guard, ports police, maritime police and the heads of bantay dagat in the whole region.

The festival will also be an occasion to formally launch this year's 'Duaw Santo Niño'.

The image will be going to the islands and coastal municipalities to promote maritime security, and safety and protection of the environment.

The highlight of this year's 'Kaplag' Festival is the sobriquet Capitan General of Señor Santo Niño to remind the public that as Captain General, the Santo Niño serves as a protector of all seafarers, mariners, and the patron of maritime environment and ecology.