

Pasiyam and 40 Days: Filipino Tradition of Prayers for the Dead

Pasiyam and forty days of prayer for the dead are traditions to offer novena prayers at the home of the departed that ends with a simple meal. Both of them are reckoned from the day of the death of the loved one though some places people set it from the day of the first mass said for the soul of the dearly departed. The "ritual" simply consists of regular formulaic prayer, novena for the dead and several litanies that can be recited from memory by the "prayer warriors" probably due to almost everyday usage.



a group of elderly women volunteers to say the novena prayers for the dead

Why do Filipinos hold the pa-siyam or nine novena for the departed? One elder once mentioned it's for the departed to realize that he/she is already dead while the forty days prayer is similar to Jesus Christ's forty days stay on earth before the ascension, the dead's spirit is claimed to leave the earthly realm.



the meal at the end of the lengthy prayers shared by the "prayer warriors"



even the departed is offered food to share in the meal with a lighted candle



the star of the 40 days feast that day was grilled milkfish

On the first death anniversary another tradition marks the day called Babang Luksa, when mourning has to end.

Ref.: <http://www.backpackingphilippines.com/2009/12/pasiyam-40-days-filipino-tradition-of.html>