

GMA to lead special Mass for Cory

President Arroyo will lead a special Mass today for the healing and recovery of former President Corazon Aquino, who is afflicted with colon cancer.

Deputy presidential spokes-

man Anthony Golez said the Mass will be held at 10 a.m. at the Palace Ceremonial Hall and will be attended by Cabinet members and other members of the official family.

Turn to Page 10

Gomez could not say whether members of the Aquino clan were invited.

There was still no word whether media coverage would be allowed for the healing Mass.

Mrs. Arroyo and Mrs. Aquino were former allies but had a falling out when the latter called for the President's resignation due to allegations that she cheated in the 2004 presidential elections.

Palace officials, however appealed to the public not to inject politics in the Mass for Aquino.

Meanwhile, Vice President Noli de Castro joined the healing Mass, the last day of novena for Mrs. Aquino at the Sto. Niño Chapel in Greenbelt, Makati.

In an interview, De Castro said he owed his career as broadcast journalist to Aquino.

De Castro said Aquino would recover through prayers.

"I believed that through prayers, President Aquino will still recover. Even, we, the media, owed it to President Aquino. Before or during martial law days and even before Cory's administration, the press was suppressed. Freedom of the press was restored only when the Cory administration took over, that is why we broadcasters have a big debt of gratitude to President

Aquino," De Castro said.

Emulate Aquino

Meanwhile, Bishop Teodoro Bacani yesterday said President Arroyo should emulate the good examples of former President Aquino.

Bacani, who led yesterday's Mass for Aquino, said the former president would leave a "big legacy" to the Filipino people, especially to politicians who are greedy for power.

He said Aquino did not abuse the power she had under the "revolutionary" government following the EDSA People Power I peaceful revolution that toppled the late President Ferdinand Marcos.

El Shaddai leader Mike Velarde, for his part, said yesterday that the country needs more Cory Aquinos amid the present problems, similar to the Marcos era, besetting the country and the Filipinos.

Velarde also joined the Mass for Aquino in Greenbelt.

He said Filipinos need a leader like Aquino to win over the oppression continuously imposed by the present administration.

Meanwhile, Rafael "Rafa" Lopa, Aquino's nephew, said Aquino is beginning to eat a little now.

"She is beginning to eat a little unlike in the past she is



El Shaddai leader Mike Velarde (left), Vice President Noli de Castro (right) and other close friends of former President Corazon Aquino attend the last day of the series of healing Masses held for her at the Sto. Niño de Paz chapel in Greenbelt, Makati yesterday.

not eating. She is forcing herself to eat, such as fruits and light soup," Lopa said.

Lopa, executive director of the Benigno S. Aquino Jr. Foundation which is named after Aquino's late husband, said the former president is communicating with her children and is updated daily on the Mass held for her.

"She is being informed about all these things daily like who are coming and she is extending her deep gratitude to those who are praying for her speedy recovery. I've been requested by my cousins to extend their deep appreciation for the overwhelming prayers you have shared and offered for Auntie Cory over the last nine days," Lopa said.

Lopa said Aquino is slowly recovering from loss of appetite. "Since her confinement last week, Auntie Cory is slowly

recovering after she lost her appetite and became weak due to the lack of essential nutrients in her body. I learned from my cousins that she is now taking small portions of food, though supplemental fluids (are fed) through IV (intravenous therapy)," Lopa said.

Lopa said the Aquino family is more comfortable now with the positive development on Aquino's health and the overwhelming support that they are receiving from relatives, close friends and other supporters of the former President.

Meanwhile, the leaders of "Kaya Natin," a national movement for good governance and ethical leadership, joined yesterday the whole country in praying for the swift recovery of Aquino from her bout with colon cancer.

- Paolo Romero, Jose Rodol Clapano, Perseus Echeminada