

walang ka- paris

BY NONON LAICO FLORES

--ang Laico sa laquacha. I learned from Bibot that this year alone Peewee stayed in Paris for a month, Jeff stayed for two weeks, and Jun, Mitos, Randy and I were there for a week. (Seems like I saw a sign there that said, "for directions ask a Laico"). It's been two weeks now since our return from that trip, and I'm feeling quite nostalgic so while writing this I'm having a French lunch of *saucisse seche*, (dry salami which I loved and brought back with me -- had I known that we would just walk thru customs without any inspection, I would have brought a bagful), French baguette, and the Bordeaux wine and garlic cream cheese, these two I saved from the lunch served on our flight. I learned this wisdom from Rory: ask for a bottle of wine, but don't drink it, just drop it in your carry-on for later. Good advice, Rory. Anyway, Jun and I really had a *C'est Magnifique!* time. We felt more relaxed since we could take it on our own stride, not being hurried and hustled by a tour group schedule, and we had the perfect travel companions, Mitos and Randy. The best *kaparis na walang kaparis*. They're such seasoned travelers and so nice to be with. They help you to see everything as fun and interesting. "Never a dull moment" -- like a favorite Laico saying goes.

One interesting fact is how we were able to see all the places of interest all over Paris without having to drive. How? METRO lang, Madame. That is their subway system which is accessible from any place you could be in Paris. I can't say it's as clean as the subway systems of London and Brussels, because some parts were *maparat* but it whizzes you off from one stop to another in 30 seconds at the longest, with just 8 to 10 seconds for loading and unloading passengers. Then you get entertained by the different themes featured on the walls of each stop. They correspond to the places of interest in that part of the city. Por ejemplo, the stop on Bastille has paintings of the Revolution; at the stop that brings you to the Metropolitan Opera house you see scenes from different famous operas; the Chatelet stop featured some



cultural presentations; at the Champs Elysee stop were different French fashion merchandise. Well, you've gotta be there to appreciate it, and of course we learned about the French people by watching the passengers in the Metro. At one time we had to part ways and take separate lines to get back to each other's hotel only to see each other again on opposite sides of the tracks -- *Bulaga!*

A Laico record breaker: one day we agreed to meet at 3:30 PM at the Madeleine Church, and guess what? At EXACTLY 3:30 PM we were both coming from opposite directions toward the meeting place. Now does Laico still mean "late"?

Talk about Ambiance -- we learned that if you sit on those chairs at the sidewalk cafes you pay more. It cost Jun \$10 for a glass of beer on our first day just because we sat on those chairs. Then another time when we sat in another sidewalk cafe, Mitos preferred to just have a soda from the soda stand. *Hala*, she was told she could not sit on those chairs -- poor Mitos was supposed to just stand by and watch us being served with ambiance, had not Randy pleaded for mercy - not *Merci*.

Well, this was another special blessing this year, aside from a new grand-daughter, and a *Merci beaucoup* to the one who showers us with these blessings -- the one who is really *WALANG KA PARIS*. 