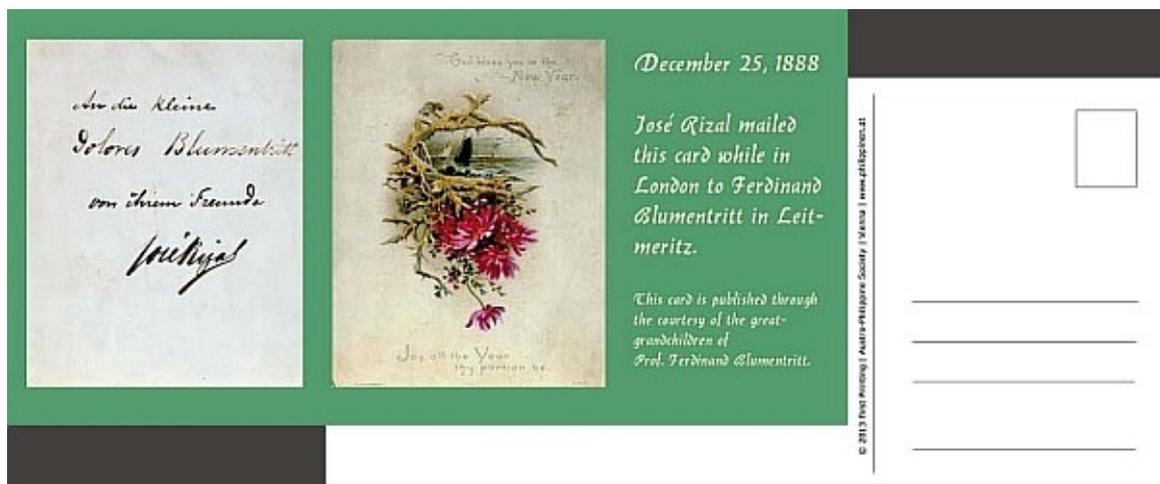


# José Rizal's New Year's greeting card

José Rizal together with Maximo Viola arrived on the 13<sup>th</sup> of May 1887 in Leitmeritz (Litoměřice, Czech Republic) to meet Ferdinand Blumentritt. Leitmeritz (Litoměřice) was at that time part of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. The four-day sojourn established an exemplary friendship between two intellectuals from two different continents.

A year later while in London, Rizal transcribed the book *Los Sucesos de las Islas Filipinas*, an early Philippine-Spanish history published by Antonio de Morga in 1609.

At Christmastime, José Rizal sent a New Year's greeting card - which was quite a popular practice at that time - to the eight-year old Dolores Blumentritt in Leitmeritz. One hundred twenty-five years later, a facsimile of this card is produced through the courtesy of the great-grandchildren of Ferdinand Blumentritt. The original card was produced by Wolf Hagelberg's printing company in Berlin. It was one of Europe's leading Fine Art Publishers from 1858-1890s. The company established a branch office in London in 1885.



Rizal wrote on the 25<sup>th</sup> of December 1888 to Ferdinand Blumentritt:

*Today is Christmas Eve. This is the feast that I like to celebrate best. It reminds me of the happy days not only of childhood but also of history. Whether Christ was born or not exactly on this day, I don't know; but chronological accuracy has nothing to do with tonight's event. A grand genius had been born who preached truth and love; who suffered because of his mission, but on account of his sufferings, the world has become better, if not saved. Only it gives me nausea to see how some persons abuse his name to commit numerous crimes. If he is in heaven, he will certainly protest! Consequently, Merry Christmas! Let us celebrate the anniversary of the birth of a Divine Man!*

*Let Augustus be my Christmas gift to you! Christ was born in his time and under his empire.*

*I shall write you again.*

*Greet your beloved and good lady – the best wife – in my behalf. As I have just arrived, I have nothing for my little friends – the little Blumentritt.*

*I embrace you.*

*Yours,  
Rizal*