



UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST IN THE PHILIPPINES

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“FREE THE PRISONERS AT THIS TIME OF GREAT HEALTH PERIL”

The United Church of Christ in the Philippines (UCCP) joins in the broadening appeal to the leaders of the Philippine government to make a timely, just, and compassionate action to free the elderly, sick and most vulnerable prisoners amidst the continuing threat of covid-19. We express utmost concern that the COVID-19 pandemic poses a serious threat to the thousands of prisoners held in various detention facilities in the Philippines which are mostly overcrowded and congested. Detainees with minor offenses that await trial but are languishing in jail should be among the priorities? We strongly support the families, lawyers and rights advocates in working towards sending the prisoners home from their high-risk prison cells. We also make an urgent plea to the Philippine government for the release of political prisoners, especially those suffering from enervating ailments and the elderly. Failure of the government to address these urgent appeals would result in further disastrous public health emergency and will add to the shattering loss of countless lives to this pandemic. The rights and welfare of detainees must be upheld and sustained especially as we now face this terrifying medical disaster.

No less than the Prophet Isaiah had called “*To open blind eyes, To bring out prisoners from the dungeon and those who dwell in darkness from the prison.*” (Isaiah 42: 7 NASB)

In keeping with the Prophet’s call, we reiterate our strong appeal to the government **TO FREE THE PRISONERS IMMEDIATELY** before they get infected inside their jammed prisons.


We also call on all our constituents to pray unceasingly for the healing of our nation and the whole world.

THE UCCP COUNCIL OF BISHOPS

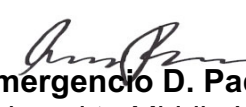
April 20, 2020




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General Secretary




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*Bishop Assigned to North Luzon
Jurisdictional Area*



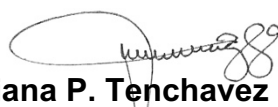
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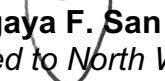
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