



UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST IN THE PHILIPPINES

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COUNCIL OF BISHOPS

Let freedom, justice and peace reign in our land!

(A Pastoral Statement on the Commemoration of the 125th Philippine Independence)

It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery. You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh^[a]; rather, serve one another humbly in love. (Galatians 5: 1, 13)

We commemorate the 125th anniversary of the declaration of Philippine independence this 12th day of June. The Protestant branch of the Church that set foot on the country at the beginning of the 20th century came at the juncture of the newly-formed independent Republic from Spanish Crown and the snatching of that freedom by the American colonialism. Rising from the heaps of ravages of the revolution waged against the colonial powers, and the establishment of a national government, 125 years after, genuine independence and basic freedoms are still found wanting.

The Council of Bishops in view of the day's significance to the life and ministry of the Church and in solidarity with the basic sectors of society who are suffering from the impact of political and economic governance reiterates the following:

1. Affirm the sovereignty of the Filipino people and their right to self-determination, freedom from any external interference by modern empires encroaching in the country's territory and subvert people's political and economic rights (cf. COB, 19 March 1986);
2. Assert the Church's abhorrence and resistance to repressive and tyrannical governance of the nation and calls for the restoration and protection of all civil and political liberties of the citizens, the abrogation of the Anti-Terrorism Law (ATL) and the counter insurgency pseudo-state agency, such as the NTF ELCAC (cf. UCCP GA 1978, A Resolution on Civil, Political liberties);
3. Reiterate our stand for genuine and sustainable human development in the context of climate emergency and the global economic crisis, seeking solidarity with the people—the peasants, workers, urban poor, and other marginalized

sectors in their struggle for justice and liberation, (cf. UCCP GA, 1978, Epistles to the Christians of today);

4. Engage in various forms of Christian service to those who are victims of red-tagging, imprisoned due to trumped-up charges, offer spiritual comfort and pastoral care to farm and industrial workers seeking just wages and decent living, to the poor and underprivileged who need to feel the touch of Christ's love, (cf. UCCP GA 1974).
5. Nurture and educate our Church members to imbibe the biblical and Christian principles of freedom, justice and peace in all educational programs so that the Christian spirituality of compassion and love will be nourished and strengthened.

On this occasion, we pray with all Christian faithful that freedom that comes from Christ, enable us to pursue and exemplify the kind of life God intends for all people, within and outside the Church. May we strengthen our wills against the lure of the flesh--the sinful state of human beings, a power in opposition to the Spirit, so that the freedom we have will bring us closer to our people and to God in Jesus Christ. Amen. +

COUNCIL OF BISHOPS

12 June 2023



Bishop Melzar D. Labuntog
General Secretary



Bishop Joseph G. Agpaoa
North Luzon Jurisdictional Area



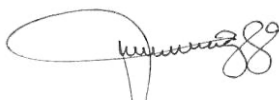
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Middle Luzon Jurisdictional Area



Bishop Victor Paller
South Luzon Jurisdictional Area



Bishop Jerby Salor
East Visayas Jurisdictional Area



Bishop Feliciana P. Tenchavez
West Visayas Jurisdictional Area



Bishop Ligaya F. San Francisco
West Mindanao Jurisdictional Area



Bishop Daniel Palicte
Southeast Mindanao Jurisdictional Area

Bishop Emeriti

Bishop Emergencio D. Padillo
Middle Luzon Jurisdictional Area

Bishop Jerome C. Baris
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Bishop Jessie Suarez
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Bishop Erme R. Camba
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Bishop Reuel Norman Marigza
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Bishop Rizalino Taganas
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Bishop Joel E. Tendero
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