

CLEANLINESS IN THE CHURCH

In the General Order No. 13, President Ferdinand E. Marcos called upon every resident and citizen of the Philippines, all universities, colleges and schools and other similar institutions private as well as public; all commercial and industrial establishments, hotels, restaurants, hospitals, cinemahouses, public markets, transportation companies, and all establishments of any kind, to undertake the cleaning of their own surroundings, their yards and gardens, as well as the canals, roads or streets in their immediate premises.

The response of the citizenry has been notable. There is, indeed, an improvement in cleanliness and beautification.

Again, some people are asking if there is no need for a similar campaign for our churches. Concrete examples have been cited by concerned Catholics to prove the existence of churches and chapels full of dust, cobwebs and bats; of churches made ugly by ill-arranged statues and neglected furnitures; of church yards and plazas full of cogon grass. And this is not to mention dirty chalices and Mass vestments and altars.

St. John Evangelist said that we cannot love God whom we do not see if we cannot love our neighbor whom we see. Can it not be said also that we cannot keep our soul, which we do not see, clean and beautiful if we cannot keep clean that which we can see?

A clean and beautiful church attracts people and inspires them to pray and to be close to the God of cleanliness and beauty. A dirty and ugly church drives people away. One of the best sermons of a priest to his people is his effort to keep his church clean and beautiful.