

CATHOLIC BISHOPS ON PLEBISCITE

To God's People and all Fellow-Citizens of Good Will Greetings:

RIGHT AND DUTY

The Constitutional Convention that we entrusted in 1970, with a mandate to write a new charter for our land, submits now to us for ratification or rejection in the plebiscite on January 15, 1973, the proposed Constitution. This choice is the most significant and basic exercise of our sovereign right and duty under a democratic society. Therefore now, more than ever, every qualified voter is bound in conscience to cast his vote intelligently, conscientiously and courageously in this plebiscite.

VOTE INTELLIGENTLY

Faced with this challenging responsibility it is imperative that we inform ourselves adequately on the merits and demerits of the this proposed Charter.

Let us subject this charter to the clear scrutiny of our objective and dispassionate judgment. Let us organize groups in every town, in every barrio and *purok*, to discuss this proposed Constitution in all its implications.

VOTE CONSCIENTIOUSLY

The more serious are our duties the more courage do they demand as we fulfill them. This is all the more so, therefore, when the welfare and future of our country are at stake. Thus, too, we must vote courageously in the plebiscite.

Any human act that is performed with fear or out of fear can hardly be, if at all, an intelligent and conscientious act. Yet, we have only to remind ourselves that full freedom of debate is guaranteed as we prepare for the plebiscite and when we cast our vote. Moreover, the sanctity and secrecy of the ballot remain inviolable.

THE TRANSCENDENCE OF THE PLEBISCITE

In casting our intelligent, conscientious, honest and free votes we make ourselves the ultimate architects of the future of our country. We shall be rendering an invaluable service to our land. The future of this Christian nation rests on our decision. Whatever our verdict may finally be, let it be said that we have made our choice impelled solely by love of country and the pursuit of the common good.

APPEAL FOR PRAYER

As we face this supreme test of patriotism and our christian conscience we need the guidance of the ever provident and loving God from whom all authority emanates.

We, the Filipino members of the Philippine Catholic Hierarchy exhort our faithful and all God-loving citizens to offer special prayers as we also declare the Sunday before the Plebiscite, January 14, 1973, a National Day of Prayer.

With faith and fervor let us invoke Him who guides the destinies of peoples and nations.

**FOR THE FILIPINO MEMBERS OF THE
CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE
OF THE PHILIPPINES**

✠ TEOPISTO ALBERTO, D.D.
Archbishop of N. Caceres