



## **FLOODS — GOD'S CALL**

The Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines reiterates its appeal for prayer and sacrifice in the unprecedented disaster that has befallen our people. If prayers are indispensable every day of our lives, their need is more urgent still in this time of special trial, especially in the greater challenge ahead of rehabilitation and reconstruction.

There are those who see in the floods a special punishment of God. Certainly Holy Scripture leaves no room for doubt that even in this life God punishes sin, and it may be that what is happening is in some measure allowed by God because we have turned from Him. It is, however, risky and presumptuous to identify any given affliction as the punishment of a definite sin (Jn. 9:2; Jer. 12:11).

It could also be that God permits such sufferings in order to remind all those who rightly seek reforms in our society in favor particularly of the poor and less privileged, that this cannot be achieved should we abandon God and forget the life hereafter.

It is not unlikely that God also is rebuking Christian spiritual leaders both those who have ceased to see the need of prayers as well as those who fail to translate their prayers into works of justice and love.

This disaster could also be a call by God to a keener sense of community, to a deeper concern for our fellowmen, so that we may be one flock under one Shepherd, one family under the fatherhood of God.

**Bishop MARIANO G. GAVIOLA**  
Secretary General, Bishops Conference  
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## **FAILURE OF AUTHORITY**

An allied reason for the growth of violence is the failure of authority to exercise itself as a bulwark against crime. This failure is also due to the weakened faith of both civil and religious authorities. As the poet Yeats so well expressed this problem: "The best in society seem to lack all conviction, the worst are full of passionate intensity". For violence proliferates with the breakdown of authority. And authority breaks down