

## **A Letter From Our Bishops\***

**To Our Beloved People of God:**

The church is committed to the defense and preservation of human rights in all areas of life, and to the principle that the supreme concern of the state is to keep those rights sacred. On the other hand, the Bishops of the Philippines recognize the right and duty of civil authorities to take appropriate steps to protect the sovereignty of the state and to insure the peace and prosperity of the nation within the law.

We have on several previous occasions expressed our concern for social justice, our anxiety over graft and corruption in government and business, our opposition to godless ideologies. We are keenly aware of the social ills of the country which continue and even grow in a climate of abuse that has raised doubts in the minds of some about the relevance of Christianity and democracy in our nation and day. We wish to emphasize that the responsibility for the present crisis rests in no small measure on those citizens who, while they profess themselves convinced Christians and lovers of democracy — particularly political, economic and religious leaders, are sorely remiss in their concern for social justice and, by the manner of their lives, are positive obstacles to morality, truth and love. We wish to urge that the present crisis be made a time for self-examination; how far each one is contributing to the evils that beset our country and have given rise to the very issue of martial law.

We call upon all public authorities and instrumentalities entrusted with the implementation of martial law to exercise their duties with the utmost prudence and restraint with full respect for human dignity, and to avoid the least abuse in the discharge of their functions. Our faithful, on their part, should bring courageously to the attention of the proper authorities any

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instances of abuse, and we, the Bishops, in turn assure our people that we shall do all in our power to support such actions.

We cannot but lament the prevalence of hatred and violence in our country. It is a great deception to think that reforms are to be gained by such means and we exhort our Christian people to realize how alien hatred and violence are to the ways of Christ. On the other hand, we must repeat that those, too, must share the blame for this violence and hatred who have by their callousness to justice and indifference to the common good given occasion for it.

We were happy to read the assurance of the President that he was concerned not to prolong martial law unduly. We, too, echo this desire. We also feel that we express the sentiments of the Filipino people in this regard.

We ask our people to remain calm and law-abiding, and to pray earnestly that God may guide our country's leaders and the Filipino people.

In this time of trial let us turn to our Lord and His blessed Mother for aid.

**TEOPISTO V. ALBERTO, D.D.**

Archbishop of Caceres  
President CBCP Administrative Council

**MOST REV. CELSO GUEVARRA, D.D.**

Auxiliary Bishop  
Diocese of San Fernando

**MOST REV. PHILIP SMITH, D.D.**

Vicar Apostolic of Jolo

On the occasion of the Episcopal Consecration of their Excellencies Most Rev. Celso Guevarra (Aug. 28, 1972) and Philipp Smith (Sept. 8, 1972) the Boletin Eclesiastico de Filipinas extends its prayerful greetings and congratulations.