

OUR FIRST FIVE YEARS

By Pres. ELPIDIO QUIRINO

This is an entirely new afternoon of our Glorious Day as a nation. As we watched in proud review the massive power of the twin basic supports of the nation — the soldier and the worker — a sense of security crept into our being. We have been made to feel that there is added strength in our sines. And our hearts beat to one rhythm of faith.

In this beautiful spot symbolic of our new endeavors, overlooking the hallowed grounds made rich with the holiest memories of heroic deeds and noble acts of freedom, something enchants our soul. Undoubtedly our happy attendance here affirms the validity and vigor of the Republic we established five years ago, and the free institutions that give it substance and force.

We can now tell the world that in the first five years of its life, our Republic has successfully stood the doubts of bystanders and the untruths of its enemies. And the reason lies in the intrinsic integrity of the nation. This integrity has been in many instances misrepresented, but we have shown its indestructibility because it has been built of ample and devoted investment in blood, tears and treasure of all our generations past.

It is curious that we have been able to testify to the vigor of our Republic close on the heels of recent dogmatic predictions of its rapid deterioration and early collapse. Instead of discouraging us, those dire predictions exercised a potent effect in reinforcing our people's determination to prove the contrary. It simply reveals one peculiarity of our people, that we do not discover our latent reserves of strength and staying power until we are faced with the challenge to survive.

Day by day, we now realize that there is no special virtue in survival for its own sake. Thus we do not struggle just to survive; we seek to survive for the opportunity to remain free — free to fulfill our genius as individuals and as a people.

And the fact that we have survived so far makes it pertinent to affirm anew why we should continue to want to do so. An anniversary like this today therefore calls for a fresh statement of our long run outlook.

We aspire to live not for this age alone, nor by ourselves alone. If we are to retain the freedom that we

value and for which we want to survive, we must continually commit ourselves in daily thought and action to the duty of maintaining the healthy exercise of our civil rights and liberties, of upholding the dignity and worth of the human person, of restoring the full sense of community life among neighbors and among nations.

Fortunately, our Republic has won a respected place however modest in the family of nations. It is known all ways to have responded to its commitments as a responsible member. Because of its sense of community, it has identified its voice with every argument for self-determination of small peoples, for resistance to aggression, for broad human rights. Knowing that there can be no half-way house between slavery and freedom, it has ranged itself on the side of the free world and is contributing its share of the sacrifice to keep it free. This is why our boys are fighting in Korea.

We have no pretensions to impose on our neighbors by claiming any special wisdom. We tell no one how to run his own house; we just see to our own, set it in order and seek to show thereby the merits of our democratic system in which we hope to grow, developing our potentialities to the limit. We sponsor no hate drives. We organize no smear campaigns. We have always endeavored to maintain the friendliest understanding and cooperation. We take the chance when we can to form a positive basis for increasing common counsel on problems easier to resolve by common action. This is why we invited our neighbors to the Baguio Conference of 1950.

In desiring to achieve peace for ourselves and with our neighbors, we are resolved to make our social order a direct expression of the peace in our spirit, which we distinguish from mere insensibility and consequent stagnation. This means a continuing effort, a continuing conflict even — but a conflict productive of creative change, of creative peace.

Destiny has thrown us into a special relation with the United States. We can say for today that that relation has had something to do, in addition to our own efforts, with the large measure of our recovery from the war, with the security of our freedom and stability of our democratic institutions. There can be no false

pride about this fact, nor feeling of subservience to a friend who unselfishly recognized our right to be free and stay free. America and the Philippines have a common objective which we now regard as a mission — to extend the borders of democracy everywhere.

In a shrunken and shrinking world, people have to get used to the fact, not so much of independence absolute and complete, as of interdependence and mutual assistance that nourishes human dignity and self-respect. And this is why we are a loyal and active member of the United Nations.

We have looked upon the battle in Korea as a struggle for peace, the peace of the world, and the peace of mankind. Our world community life can only be maintained in an atmosphere of universal tranquility; and as long as one group of nations disturbs that tranquility for any motive, economic, military, or ideological our individual life as a nation will always be menaced.

We long for the day, the arrival of that moment, when once and for all, in the battlefields of Korea, the belligerents may come to an honest understanding — with the interests of peace safeguarded and the unification and liberation of the Korean people assured. We are, therefore, for the immediate cessation of hostilities and the honest settlement of the issues that have made our present world one of turmoil and senseless loss of life, property and human values.

We want to live a life of substance so that we may be never a liability, but an asset to world prosperity and advancement. This is why we are engaged in total economic mobilization. Our initial efforts are bearing sufficient fruit to show we are on the right path in attacking poverty by organized production. The gradual conquest of poverty along with more equitable sharing of the fruits of production strikes at the root of social discontent.

Our efforts for the mobilization of our productive resources will continue to be planned, the state using its main strength to determine indirectly the broad level and conditions of economic activity and to make a success of projects clearly its own responsibility.

In striving to create plenty as a means to root out discontent, we are

not merely providing our people with a life of substance and contentment and a guarantee to the preservation of our freedom. We are creating the condition of our country's growth and continuance. A high living standard is, of course, not enough. Man will want more than bread to live by.

The future of a free social order in this country depends on the kind of men it produces. Judging by recent events reflecting social convulsions, there can be no telling whether tyranny may not enter upon this country. The only bar against it is a large breed of resolute men.

It is the greatest challenge and opportunity of our times to continue producing that large resolute breed, by whose consistent practice of democracy our sense of the value of the individual can be kept alive and strong, by whose loyalty to it our relation to our kind can remain square and fruitful and rich.

We are determined that our citizens will not be deprived of their meaningful role in our social order. We are determined to democratize the benefits of our free institutions, lifting those below to the level of prosperous civilized life. Democracy being a process, not a conclusion we accept our commitments to it as a continuing, endless experience. Thus our program of action, is of long-range, requiring resolute men of vision to carry it to fulfillment.

Democracy has often been taken by its enemies as another name for division. Indeed, a frequent threat to democracy is division. We cannot deny, that in our national life we have had and undoubtedly will have, moments of disconcerting division.

But it is also the virtue of our order that such moments of division are more apparent than real, and that, in the perilous hour, it is the free consideration of a generous diversity of outlook that best prepares us for decision and united action. We have shown our maturity in this regard.

Wherever democracy is a fighting creed, such diversity of outlook anticipates its most historic resolutions and decisive victories.

And so it is a part of our commitment to democracy that we constantly practice patience and tolerance with its seemingly slow processes arising from differences of opinion, conflicts to individual aspirations.

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clashes of personal or group motivations.

We want to establish that our unity as a people loyal to democracy and freedom will not be impaired by those diversities and differences. They may seem to obstruct quick action, but in effect they allow a wide margin for a just decision that can command the most ample adherence. What is essential is national discipline, the enlightened obedience to the will of the greater number in contrast to the will of a self-elected few.

We have just witnessed a show of the armed might of our young Republic. Disciplined and devoted to democracy, these men are gallantly doing their part in our nation-building. They have a leadership today that has strengthened the trust and security of our people. They are building upon a tradition of racial heroism whose loyalty to liberty is finding fresh affirmation wherever it is in extreme peril.

We are proud of their predecessors. We are equally proud of them who now are holding up the standard. Peace is not easily to be restored to our countryside. But it is on the way — because we have these men. Aside from talking the language of force, as best understood by aggressive subverters, they bear a positive mission of peace and production now being fulfilled in new settlements for the landless on our virgin plains.

Certainly, the local atmosphere has cleared because of the efforts of these men. You can now call them your real protectors and defenders. Agriculture, industry and commerce are receiving the proper incentives because a sense of security pervades the national atmosphere. This con-

dition has even enhanced our credit abroad.

Of course, we can not attribute to them exclusively the arrival of this new era. No one individual or any particular group of individuals can claim that our nation's recovery and progress since independence are their special work. But they have helped prepare the ground for our national achievement. This is the achievement of our people as whole by reason, and irrespective, of the diversities of outlook and approach which must of necessity be peculiar to a democracy like ours.

What we have heretofore accomplished is the manifestation of that national instinct which has incessantly prodded our people to face dangers, to rebuild our country every time that an invader destroys it, to rise every time we fall, to feel stronger every time we rise, never discouraged, never dismayed, never despairing of anything. There is an Unseen Hand that subtly guides and directs our national conscience in moments of peril and adversity. We only need to appeal to It in all fervor and sincerity so that It may touch and raise our long-suffering people with Its magic wand. That is the secret of our national strength, that is the virtue of Filipino genius; and that is our hope for continued national existence.

Our prayer today must be that we keep up that spirit and the good work. We can do that because we have a Republic that has a living faith in its right to live free and untrammelled. Like the kingdom of God, that faith and democracy lie in our hearts.

My beloved countrymen, again I beseech you: give me your hands that mine may be kept steady.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Because the Filipinos stand for the same principles, we hereby reproduce what 700 newspapers in the United States have been requested by the American Heritage Foundation to print in connection with the year of rededication which independence day inaugurates.

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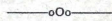
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