

# ON WORSENING CORRUPTION: A CALL FOR CHANGE

20 November 2008

We support the call of the five senior bishops led by Jaro Archbishop ANGEL LAGDAMEO that the time for radical reforms to rebuild our country economically, socially and politically; and to conquer complacency, cynicism and apathy, is NOW. We should NOW prepare for a NEW KIND OF GOVERNANCE.

We are justifiably alarmed that the span and depth of corruption has become so extensive that the people's and the world's trust and confidence in the country and government have been irreparably shattered. Corruption is bad for business growth, employment and long-term survival. It worsens poverty; steals from the poor; compromises public order and safety; mocks the rule of law; encourages bureaucratic inefficiency; and destroys society's moral fabric.

The world has not been oblivious to the culture of corruption in our government that is thriving with near-total impunity as surveys by reputable international agencies have shown. The dishonor of being the most corrupt in Asia and one of the worst in the world compels us to join the call for redemption.

Corruption has become a moral and social cancer. Despite the many celebrated cases of corruption in high places, who in this government has been held accountable? Who has been prosecuted? Who has undergone trial? Who has been jailed? Suspects are, in fact, perceived as being protected and even rewarded. We cannot understand government's inability or refusal to wield its vast powers to prosecute the accused.

The time for national transformation is NOW where all of us must do right as citizens – be it as parents, students, employers, employees, seniors, professionals or public servants. Doing right by our conscience, the law, the people and country is a sacred duty whatever our station in life may be.

A commitment to reform requires COURAGE to not only speak out against wrongdoing but also do something about it. It is the virtue that makes all other virtues possible. It starts with self. And it is only by our COURAGE that we will free ourselves from the shackles of corruption and redeem our honor and dignity.

We call on President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, the Congress and all our political leaders to demonstrate their patriotism and have the COURAGE to use the remaining 18 months of their term to do what is right for our country and our people, to put country above self.

We call on all other religious leaders, business groups and civil society to close ranks with Archbishop Lagdameo and the good bishops and be part of this movement for change, one that aspires for and results in good government and a just society.

We can no longer afford to do nothing. In calling for a corruption-free government, change, real change, must come to the Philippines NOW!

Our people, in desperation, can no longer wait.



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