

# CBCP Pastoral Exhortation: Rejoice and be glad!

**“Blessed are the peacemakers,  
they shall be called sons and  
daughters of God.”**

**-Matthew 5:9**

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, do we not all aspire for the grace to be called “sons and daughters of God?” If we do so, then we must constantly strive to be peacemakers in these troubled times in our country. And that means to always strive to bring love where there is hatred, pardon where there is injury, faith where there is doubt, hope where there’s despair, light where there is darkness, and joy where there is sadness (from the prayer for peace attributed to St. Francis of Assisi).

## **PEACE: OUR COMMON VOCATION AND MISSION**

Our enemies in this world are not fellow human beings, not “flesh and blood” (Eph 6:12). We do not fight our battles with guns and bullets. We do not seek protection from those who might wish to harm us by wearing bullet-proof vests, because the battles that we fight are spiritual. In these times of darkness, when there’s so much hatred and violence, when murder has become an almost daily occurrence, when people have gotten so used to exchanging insults and hurting words in the social media, we admonish the faithful to remain steadfast in our common vocation and mission to actively work for peace.

But make no mistake about it; even the master said, "Not as the world gives peace do I give you peace." (Jn 14:27). His peace is never the peace of compromise or capitulation to evil; it is also not about the absence of conflict and turmoil. Was he not rejected by his own townsfolk in Nazareth? (Lk 4:16-30) Was he not called crazy by his own relatives? (Mk 3:20-22). Was he not called a "prince of demons"? (Mk 3:22-30). Was he not called a drunkard and a lover of tax collectors and sinners? (Mt 11:19)

Did he not show us how to deal with adversities when he slept in the boat, or walked on water even in the midst of a storm? (Mk 4:35-40; Mk 6:45-52) But like the apostles, we are often so easily overcome by fear and panic. Even when we're already making baby steps on troubled waters like St. Peter, we find ourselves sinking because of our "little faith" (Mt14:31). There is nothing that can calm us down in these turbulent times except the quiet recognition of him who assured us of his abiding presence – "Be not afraid; it is I!" (Mt 14:27)

## **THE COST OF WITNESSING TO CHRIST**

What is new about priests being murdered for witnessing to Christ? What is new about modern prophets being silenced by the treacherous bullets of assassins? What is new about servant leaders who are maligned because they have carried out their duties as shepherds configured to the person of their Chief Shepherd? Have you forgotten that "the blood of martyrs is the seed of Christians"? (Tertullian) It is what has kept the Church alive after two thousand years. Be not afraid! Did not our master say, "Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather be afraid of the one who can destroy both body and soul into Gehenna" (Mt 10:28)?

We are no strangers to ridicule and persecution. What we are going through is no different from what the Psalmist describes in Psalm 64: "They sharpen their tongues like swords; they aim bitter words like arrows to shoot at the innocent from ambush,

shooting suddenly and recklessly.” But what does the Lord tell his disciples when they are persecuted or humiliated for his sake? He tells them to “rejoice and be glad” (Mat 5:12). These are the very words with which Pope Francis opens his apostolic exhortation “Gaudete et Exsultate”. They are the Lord’s words to those persecuted and humiliated for his sake. With the intention of calling us all to strive for a life of holiness, Pope Francis says the Lord does not want us “to settle for a bland and mediocre existence” (GE 1). How have we been taught to deal with persecution? Listen to what the apostle, St Paul, says, “When we are insulted, we respond with a blessing; when we are persecuted, we bear it patiently; when slandered, we respond gently. We have become the world’s refuse, the scum of all; that is the present state of affairs” (1 Cor 4:12-13).

And how are we to deal with divisions among ourselves? How are we to deal with fellow “Christians” who see nothing wrong about the killings, who just laugh when our God is blasphemed, and who take part in passing on fake news? Did not the Lord himself warn us that part of the exigencies of working for peace is having to go through the crucible of conflicts? (Lk 12:51-53) There will always be those among us who profess the faith in Christ but are so easily seduced by the empty promises of Satan. Remember him who once sold the master for 30 pieces of silver because he had allowed himself to be mastered by Satan? St. Paul is right in saying, “...there have to be divisions among you in order that those who are genuine among you may become known.” (ESV 1 Cor 11:19)

## **THE SUFFERINGS OF THE POOR**

Our sufferings as Church leaders are nothing compared to the sufferings of the poor in our country. Do we not hear the cry of poor slum-dwellers being jailed for “loitering”? Have they forgotten that for the homeless urban poor – the little alleys between their flimsy homes also serve as kitchens, bathrooms, recreation spaces, and playgrounds for their children? Have they forgotten that they live in tiny dwellings that are razed

quickly to the ground when fire strikes, because they do not have proper roads? Do we not feel the sufferings of drug addicts who are labelled as “non-humans”, and are stigmatized as criminals when their names end up in the dreaded “drug watch lists”? Yes, we are aware of the sufferings of those who have been victimized by substance abusers, but can we not see them also as sick people who are struggling with a disease? Should we not rather look at them also as victims who are crying out for help? Are we to remain as bystanders when we hear of people being killed in cold blood by ruthless murderers who dispose of human lives like trash? Do we not realize that for every drug suspect killed, there is a widowed wife and there are orphaned children left behind – who could hardly even afford a decent burial for their loved ones? Do we not care when poor people’s homes are searched without warrants, or when drug suspects are arrested without warrants, or detained without charges?

Do we not care about the misery of people charged of drug-related offenses and packed like sardines in extremely congested jails? Can we even bear the thought of seeing most of them languishing in jail, knowing that rehabilitation is what many of them need? Do we not hear of the sufferings of indigenous peoples who are displaced from their ancestral lands in order to give way to mining companies and dams? And how do we feel about communities that are forced to leave their homes for fear of being caught in the crossfire of conflicts between government troops and insurgents? How are we affected when our own troops die because of unceasing hostilities that have not been adequately addressed through peaceful dialogue? We have a saying in Tagalog, “Ang sakit ng kalingkingan ay ramdam ng buong katawan.” (The pain of one part of the body is felt by the whole body.) Alas, this is not always true! There is no way we can feel each other’s pains when some parts of the body are numbed by sheer indifference.

To those in this world who boast of their own wisdom, those

who arrogantly regard themselves as wise in their own estimation and the Christian faith as nonsense, those who blaspheme our God as stupid, St. Paul's words are to the point: "For the stupidity of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength." (1 Cor 1:25) And to those who ridicule our faith, we say with St. Paul, "God chose the foolish of the world to shame the wise, and God chose the weak of the world to shame the strong, and God chose the lowly and despised of the world, those who count for nothing, to reduce to nothing those who are something, so that no human being might boast before God."(1 Cor 1:27-29).

## **THE WAY OF JESUS**

We wish to remind those who have been angered by the insulting statements of people in authority; remember what the Lord had taught his disciples. He said, "But to you who hear I say... bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. To the person who strikes you on one cheek, offer the other one as well..." (Lk 6:27-29). Vengeance is never the way of Christ. It is not the way of Jesus to return evil for evil; no, we can conquer evil only with good (Rom 12:21). Up to the last moment of his breath, he had nothing but words of mercy towards his tormentors, "Father, forgive them for they do not know what they do" (Lk 23:34).

There are those who accuse us of getting involved in political moves to destabilize the government. Nothing can be farthest from the truth. Our concern is never the establishment of any earthly kingdoms. Worldly kingdoms come and go. We work only for God's kingdom which is beyond this world – so that we can start learning to live life "on earth as it is in heaven" (Mt 6:10). For the times in our history when we fell into the temptation of working for political power, we can only bow in shame and say, never again! We do not proclaim a false image of God, such as one who is just watching from heaven like a ruthless deity who threatens us of damnation in hell all the time. Ours is the God revealed to us in Jesus Christ – the God

who saves, a God “rich in mercy and compassion”, a God involved in our history, a God who – for love of us – emptied himself totally, and “became poor, so that by his poverty we might become rich” (2 Cor 8:9).

## **CHURCH AND GOVERNMENT**

The Church respects the political authority, especially of democratically-elected government officials, as long as they do not contradict the basic spiritual and moral principles we hold dear, such as respect for the sacredness of life, the integrity of creation, and the inherent dignity of the human person. We are not political leaders, and certainly not political opponents of government. The Church has, throughout history, coexisted with countless forms of government. The Church has always been and will always be a partner of government (especially in the LGUs and barangays) in countless endeavours for the common good, especially in addressing the needs of the most disadvantaged sectors of society. Sometimes we qualify the collaboration as “critical”, mainly to distinguish our differences in terms of ultimate goals, even as we partner in some shared endeavours. Needless to say, on some specific issues, collaboration might not be possible because of our spiritual and moral beliefs, which we persistently propose, but never impose on the unwilling. In such instances, we can only invoke our right to conscientious objection. We do recognise the constitutional provision of the separation of church and state, mainly in the sense of distinction of roles in society. When we speak out on certain issues, it is always from the perspective of faith and morals, especially the principles of social justice, never with any political or ideological agenda in mind.

## **CHURCH OF SINNERS, CALLED TO HOLINESS**

We admit humbly that we are a Church made of members who are “wretched but chosen” (Miserando atque Eligendo, Pope Francis’ episcopal motto). We are a Church of sinners called to

conversion and holiness at the same time. We bow in shame when we hear of abuses being committed by some of our fellow Church leaders – especially those ordained to “act in the person of Christ”. We hold ourselves accountable for their actions, and accept our duty to correct them – as duly mandated by our own higher authorities in the universal Church. We humbly admit that we have many weaknesses and shortcomings, human as we are. We have no reason to justify our weaknesses on the basis of our participation in the human condition, because we profess faith in the God who embraced the human condition, precisely to set a new template of humanity in his son Jesus Christ. We draw a lot of strength from St. Paul, who desperately begged the Lord to remove his weakness but only got these words as assurance, “My grace is enough for you; for in weakness power reaches perfection. It is when I am weak that I am strong” (2 Cor 12:9).

#### **CALL TO PRAYER AND FASTING**

On July 16, 2018 on the feast of the Blessed Mother of Mt. Carmel, the mountain associated with the bold challenge of the prophet Elijah in defense of God (2 Kings 18), let us spend a day of prayer and penance, invoking God’s mercy and justice on those who have blasphemed God’s Holy Name, those who slander and bear false witness, and those who commit murder or justify murder as a means for fighting criminality in our country. We invite you to join us, your bishops, in three days of fasting, prayer and almsgiving from July 17 to 19, 2018.

We commend you, our dear people of God, to the maternal care of the woman to whom Jesus entrusted his “Beloved Disciple” and said, “Behold your son!” (Jn 19:26) We, for our part, behold her – our mother in faith – with filial love. Mary, mother of the Church, be near to us especially when we tend to despair and run out of the wine of faith, hope and charity (Jn 2:1-11). Teach us to do only what your Son asks of us. And when we lose heart in the face of persecution, may we stand by you at the foot of the cross and regain our strength from the

blood and water that flowed from the wounded side of your Beloved Son, our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. AMEN.

For the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines,

Signed by:

**Most Rev. Romulo Valles, DD**

Archbishop of Davao

President, CBCP

July 9, 2018

Article Sources: [CBCP New – CBCP Pastoral Exhortation: Rejoice and be glad!](#)

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## **Feast of the Solemnity of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus 2018 Celebrations**

The parishioners of Santuario Eucaristico celebrated the Feast of the Solemnity of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus in a manner of Concelebrated Mass and **Lay Collaborators' Night** last June 8, 2018.

This year's Fiesta Theme is inspired by the 2018 Year of the Clergy and Consecrated Persons' theme: "Renewed Servant-Leaders for the New Evangelization." We had our preparatory Triduum Masses last June 5-7, 2018 graced by generous sponsors from different ministries and parishioners of the parish. Our community in RER Phase 2 Kauswagan also had their advance celebration of the Feast of the Solemnity of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus last June 7, 2018 at RER Phase 2 Clubhouse presided by Fr. Froilan R. A. Briones, SSS.

On the feast day, our parish had its Concelebrated Fiesta Mass at 6:00pm presided by His Excellency, Most Rev. Antonio J. Ledesma, SJ, DD together with the newly ordained Bishop of Tandag, Most Rev. Raul B. Dael, DD, Fr. Benjamin Mkeri, CCSP and our very own priests, Fr. Froilan R. A. Briones, SSS, Fr. Muriel A. Uy, SSS and Fr. Clifford B. Barrios, SSS and Rev. Kim Cabingas. During Bishop Raul's homily, he shared that Jesus' love is sustained and a beautiful Tagalog song of Rey Valera captures the nature of His love: "At kung hindi man dumating sa 'kin ang panahon na ako ay mahalín mo rin, asahan mong 'di ako magdaramdam kahit ako ay nasasaktan. Huwag mo lang ipagkait na ikaw ay aking mahalín." That even in times where we find it difficult to love Him, let us still allow God to love us. As we celebrate the Feast of the Solemnity of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, may we realize that the love of Sacred Heart will provide us the capacity and teach us to love continually even if love is not reciprocated. May we all be inspired to share and love unconditionally.

After the Mass followed our 2nd Lay Collaborators' Night and Thanksgiving Party of more than 150 ministers and volunteers at the Formation Center of the parish in gratitude to their love, service and commitment to Santuario Eucaristico.

A Happy Fiesta to all! We thank God for the gift of priceless volunteers here at Santuario Eucaristico. Our prayers are always with you!

Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on us!

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**Corpus Christi Celebration**

# with 1st Procession of the 12 Stations of the Eucharist

In celebration to the Parish Patronal Feast of the Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ, we had our Fiesta Mass and 1st Eucharistic Procession of the 12 Stations of the Eucharist around the parish last June 2, 2018.

Our fiesta celebration started with a Novena Mass last May 25 and ended with an Anticipated Concelebrated Mass on June 2 presided by Fr. Muriel A. Uy, SSS together with Fr. Froilan R. A. Briones, SSS and Fr. Clifford B. Barrios, SSS. After the mass, we had our **1st Procession of the 12 Stations of the Eucharist** from the parish to our areas: Zone 2 Carmen, Calamansi Drive, San Roque and St. Joseph Chapels in Patag and RER Kauswagan.

The 12 Stations of the Eucharist were installed in the parish last September 2016. The main purpose of this project is to promote greater devotion and understanding to the Holy Eucharist. We in Santuario Eucaristico, being the Holy Eucharist Shrine, are very much happy to provide our parish and the whole Archdiocese more information about the Holy Eucharist which is the source and summit of our Christian lives. This is living through the inspiration of this year's Theme of the Year of the Clergy and Consecrated Persons which is "Renewed Servant-Leaders for the New Evangelization," where we continue to evangelize people and through our 1st Procession, we introduce them to a new way and deeper understanding of the Holy Eucharist.

May the Most Holy Body and Blood of Jesus inspire us to help each other deepen both our understanding and appreciation of the Source and Summit of our Faith: The Most Holy Eucharist.

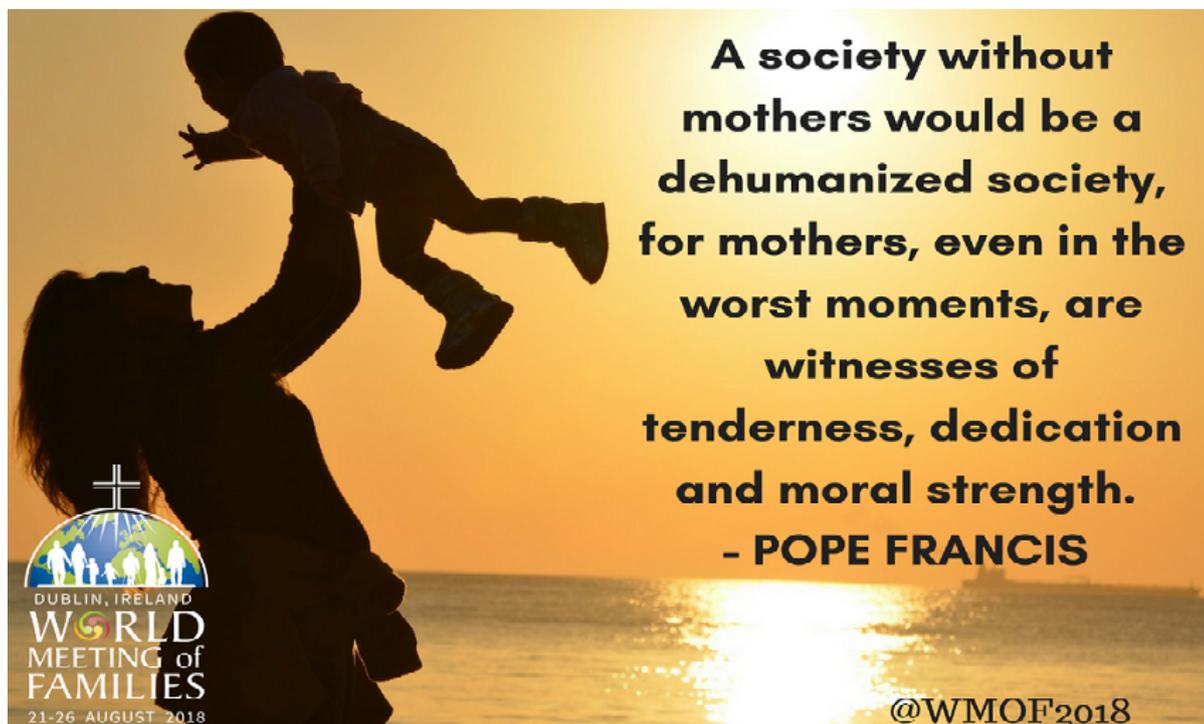
For more details about the Stations of the Eucharist, please

click [here](#).

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## [A Beautiful Testimony About Mothers by Pope Francis](#)

**We celebrate Mother's Day here in the Philippines on Sunday, May 13**



***A beautiful testimony about mothers by Pope Francis shared in one of his General Audience addresses.***

Every human person owes his or her life to a mother, and almost always owes much of what follows in life, both human

and spiritual formation, to her. Yet, despite being highly lauded from a symbolic point of view – many poems, many beautiful things said poetically of her – the mother is rarely listened to or helped in daily life, rarely considered central to society in her role. Rather, often the readiness of mothers to make sacrifices for their children is taken advantage of so as to “save” on social spending.

It also happens that in Christian communities the mother is not always held in the right regard, she is barely heard. Yet the centre of the life of the Church is the Mother of Jesus. Perhaps mothers, ready to sacrifice so much for their children and often for others as well, ought to be listened to more. We should understand more about their daily struggle to be efficient at work and attentive and affectionate in the family; we should better grasp what they aspire to in order to express the best and most authentic fruits of their emancipation. A mother with her children always has problems, always work. I remember there were five of us children at home, and while one was doing one thing, the other wanted to do another, and our poor mama went back and forth from one’s side to another, but she was happy. She gave us so much.

Mothers are the strongest antidote to the spread of self-centred individualism. “Individual” means “what cannot be divided”. Mothers, instead, “divide” themselves, from the moment they bear a child to give him to the world and help him grow. It is they, mothers, who most hate war, which kills their children. Many times I have thought of those mothers who receive the letter: “I inform you that your son has fallen in defense of his homeland...”. The poor women! How a mother suffers! It is they who testify to the beauty of life. Archbishop Oscar Arnulfo Romero said that mothers experience a “maternal martyrdom”. In the homily for the funeral of a priest assassinated by death squads, he said, recalling the Second Vatican Council: “We must be ready to die for our faith, even if the Lord does not grant us this honour.... Giving

one's life does not only mean being killed; giving one's life, having the spirit of a martyr, it is in giving in duty, in silence, in prayer, in honest fulfilment of his duty; in that silence of daily life; giving one's life little by little. Yes, like it is given by a mother, who without fear and with the simplicity of the maternal martyrdom, conceives a child in her womb, gives birth to him, nurses him, helps them grow and cares for them with affection. She gives her life. That's martyrdom". End quote. Yes, being a mother doesn't only mean bringing a child to the world, but it is also a life choice. What does a mother choose, what is the life choice of a mother? The life choice of a mother is the choice to give life. And this is great, this is beautiful.

A society without mothers would be a dehumanized society, for mothers are always, even in the worst moments, witnesses of tenderness, dedication and moral strength. Mothers often pass on the deepest sense of religious practice: in a human being's life, the value of faith is inscribed in the first prayers, the first acts of devotion that a child learns. It is a message that believing mothers are able to pass on without much explanation: these come later, but the seed of faith is those early precious moments. Without mothers, not only would there be no new faithful, but the faith would lose a good part of its simple and profound warmth. And the Church is mother, with all of this, she is our mother! We are not orphans, we have a mother! Our Lady, mother Church, is our mom. We are not orphans, we are children of the Church, we are children of Our Lady, and we are children of our mothers.

Dearest mothers, thank you, thank you for what you are in your family and for what you give to the Church and the world. And to you, beloved Church, thank you, thank you for being mother. And to you, Mary, Mother of God, thank you for letting us see Jesus. And thank you for all the mammas present here: let us salute them with a round of applause!

– Pope Francis

We would like to greet you a very Happy Mother's Day to all Mothers!

May God bless all mothers!

Source: [World Meeting 2018](#)

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## Pag-ampo alang sa Piniliay sa Barangay

Ginoo among Dios,  
mianhi kami nimo sa okasyon sa umaabot na Piniliay sa Barangay.

Diha kang Kristo, gitagaan mo kami og modelo sa usa ka sulugoon nga naghilad sa iyang kinabuhi alang sa iyang mga karnero.

Hatagi kami sa kaalam sa pagpili sa mga babaye ug lalaki nga kinsa magserbisyo alang sa kamatuoran, hustisya, ug pagtuboy sa dignidad sa tawo.

Lamdagi ang among mga hunahuna ug kasingkasing – aron makakita kami og magbalantay nga naay kasingkasing sama sa imong Anak na magbantay sa among mga barangay.

Tudloi kami sa paagi ni Kristo sa pagtan-aw sa mga tawo – aron makahatag kami og tingog sa mga kabus, sa mga walay gahum, sa mga gibiyaan, ug sa mga dinaugdaug.

Ug sa katapusan, hatagi kami sa gasa sa pag-ila – aron maangkon namo ang maalamong paggamit sa gasa sa pagpili

isip pagpahayag sa among tinguha alang sa kalinaw  
ug paghigugma sa among isigkatawo.

Kini among gipangayo pinaagi ni Kristo na among Ginoo.  
Amen.

Maria, Rayna sa Kalinaw, *i-ampo mo kami*.

San Lorenzo Ruiz ug San Pedro Calungsod, *i-ampo ninyo kami*.

San Miguel ug mga Santos nga Angheles, *bantayan kami*.

To download PowerPoint, [click here](#).

Sources:

<http://cbcponline.net/prayer-for-barangay-elections/>

<https://twitter.com/cbcnews>

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## Prayer for the Barangay Elections

Lord God,  
we come to you as the Barangay Elections approaches.

In Christ, you have given us the model  
of a servant who lays his life down for his sheep.  
Give us the wisdom to elect women and men  
who will work for truth, justice, and  
the upliftment of human dignity.

We ask you to enlighten our minds and hearts –  
so that we may search for Shepherds after your Son's heart  
to watch over our barangays.

Teach us Christ's way of looking at people –  
so that we will be able to give a voice

to the poor, the powerless, the abandoned, and the oppressed.

And finally, grant us the gift of discernment –  
so that we may wisely exercise the gift of suffrage  
as an expression of our desire for peace  
and love for neighbor.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

Mary, Queen of Peace, *pray for us*.  
Saints Lorenzo Ruiz and Pedro Calungsod, *pray for us*.  
Saint Michael and all Holy Angels, *watch over us*.

**To download PowerPoint, [click here](#).**

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