

Wake up, my people! Wake up!



Lingayen-Dagupan Archbishop Socrates Villegas issued a pastoral message on the [recent killings in the Philippines](#). Villegas ordered all priests in the Archdiocese of Lingayen-Dagupan to read this message in full on Sunday, September 4, in place of their regular homilies.

Below is the full text of Villegas' pastoral message.

We are here because it is Sunday. Sunday is the day of the resurrection. Sunday is the day of the descent of the Holy Spirit. Sunday is family day. Sunday is our day of rest.

On the first Easter Sunday, the apostles, gathered in fear inside a locked room, were talking among themselves about the events of the first Good Friday.

The Teacher was killed last Friday. It was a violent death in the hands of violent men. Blood, sweat, and tears intermingled on His mangled face and body so severe that he looked more like a worm than a man.

The apostles were downcast. They were afraid, frustrated, angry, ashamed, guilty, and anxious altogether. Are we next to die?

It is Sunday again. The killers of Jesus didn't kill on Sundays. Dead bodies had to be buried before Sabbath. Even killing took its rest on Sundays.

Will there be no killing in the streets today? Will today be different from the other days? Like the apostles, we are afraid to be the next. We are anxious that a loved one will die next. But does killing still jolt us? Have the statistics numbed us?

Bloodied soil, ruined lives

Sin has not stopped. Violence has not ceased. Murders continue. The ground continues to cry with the pitiful voice of the blood of our brothers and sisters. Their blood cries not for vengeance. Their blood pleads for an end to violence. Every person killed is a brother and sister. They may be offenders but they are God's children nevertheless. The plan of the Lord for them is not death but life.

Innocent lives, young lives, promising lives have been ruined by drugs. When dealers offer drugs to our children, they kill our children even before our children die. Drug pushing is murder because drugs do kill. Narcotics kill dreams and hopes, drugs ruin lives and families; drugs destroy society and nations.

To these sons and daughters struggling to be free from the chains of drug abuse, we offer the healing of the Lord. Peace to all whose lives drugs have destroyed.

Indeed we must protect our society from drug dealers. By killing them, there are many who think that such will prevent them from repeating their crimes. By killing criminals, justice will be restored to those they have been offended. By killing them, the other criminals will be discouraged from continuing their criminal activities.

So they think. But what does God think? Do we still care about God?

We offer hope, not despair

We can fight criminality without killing the law offenders. Who are we to judge that this offender is hopeless? Death ends all possibilities to change. We do not hold the future in our hands. There is no certainty that someone is beyond correction. The goal of justice is not revenge. The goal of justice is restoration of harmony. Hatred can only be appeased by love not vengeance. Who does not need mercy?

In our pursuit of criminals, innocent lives have become victims of mistaken identities. We know it. Nobody is perfect. Even those who work for peace and order can be mistaken. Our hearts grieve for the innocent murdered ones. Guns do not make mistakes. Trigger-happy vigilantes do.

It is Sunday. It is family day and yet there are nearly one thousand families grieving right now because the family is not complete. A parent, a promising child about to graduate, a wife or husband has just been killed. They are crying and they can see no light ahead. No one is there to console. No one is there to assure them their loved one's killing will be the last.

What shall we do?

We shall pray for those who have been killed. Innocent or guilty, they need our prayers. Whoever has no sin be the first to kill!

We shall pray for those who kill. With the best of intentions or not, they have violated the Fifth Commandment and their brother's blood cries out from the bloodied soil.

We pray for those ruined by drug dealers now dead even if they still breathe. Let the Lord be their hope and God's grace lift them up from darkness into light.

Shall we only pray?

If you agree with us that killing suspected criminals is a crime and a sin itself, why do you just stay seated there in comfort keeping quiet?

Whatever you do or not do for the least of your brethren, you do to Christ. At the sunset of life, the blood that has spilled all over our sidewalks and streets will judge us because when we could do something, we chose to be keep quiet.

There is no peace for cowards. The next life to be snuffed could be yours.

Wake up, my people! Wake up!

Ref.: Rappler.com Look more here www.war-on-drugs.aboutphilippines.ph