



The Roman Catholic Archbishop of Manila

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8 September 2017
Feast of the Birth of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Dear Brother and Sisters in the Archdiocese of Manila,

I am pleased to inform you that after my letter of August 20, 2017 a multi-sectoral dialogue was held on August 25. It was attended by the bishops of the Ecclesiastical Province of Manila and representatives from DILG, PDEA, Commission on Human Rights, police, media, and the youth. A few days later we had a dialogue with people from different media outfits. I have personally met with some families of the victims of recent killings. Last week, I also spent an afternoon with fresh graduates of the Philippine National Police Academy to facilitate a recollection. These dialogues and encounters have provided venues for telling and listening to human stories and for establishing partnership with various sectors of society and government. I hope that this type of dialogue may continue on different levels, including the parishes.

As more stories of killing and sorrow unfold, we are invited to intensify our solidarity with those who have been killed and to extend empathy and spiritual support to their families. If there are cases of killings in your parish community, I ask our pastors and lay leaders to take time to go to the wake in order to bless the departed and to be one with the grieving families in sorrow and in hope.

With pain and horror we continue to get daily news of killings around the country. We cannot allow the destruction of lives to become normal. We cannot govern the nation by killing. We cannot foster a humane and decent Filipino culture by killing. As we denounce as inhuman and un-Christian an act willfully intended and planned to inflict harm or death on a human person, we call on those who harm or kill others to listen to their conscience, the voice of God that summons us to do good and avoid evil. Heartless violence can be conquered only by a change of heart and by discovering in the depths of our being the inclination to do good and to love our neighbor.

I also ask that beginning September 14, the Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross, there be a 5-minute tolling or ringing of our church bells at 8:00 in the evening to call on everyone to remember the dead and pray for them. The tolling of church bells in the evening to pray for the dead is an old Filipino custom that has almost disappeared. Now is the right time to revive it. Please inform your parishioners about this. Attached is a short catechesis and prayer that we could use to instruct our faithful.

We entrust our country and ourselves to Mary, Our Lady of Sorrows, Our Mother of Mercy, and Queen of Peace.

+ *Luis Antonio G. Card. Tagle*

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Archbishop of Manila