The Children of Divorce: Costly Consequences
Quote in the Act

“If I have to pray thanking God with the arnalite on my hand and the prisoner on my side, I would be ashamed to pray.”

Fr. Giancarlo Bossi, PIME

“Chen Liangyu’s behavior totally betrayed the party principles and ideals that a Communist Party member and leading official should have. His outlook on the world, life and values gravely degenerated.”

Xia Zanzhong, deputy head of China’s Central Commission on Discipline, commenting on Former Shanghai party secretary Chen Liangyu who was expelled from the party and handed over to juridical investigators due to accusations of “engrained corruption.”

“We might see a rebound but it’s going to be like one of those boxers trying to get up after being knocked down.”

Lim Chang-geu, a fund manager at Samsung Investment Trust Management, describes the recent drop of Asian stock markets which suffered at its worst drop since the last global sell-off on February 27 this year.

“China is the Wild West right now because their regulatory system lacks the strong food and drug and cosmetic standards that were developed in the last 100 years.”

Sally Greenberg, senior product safety counsel with the U.S. Consumers Union, the publisher of Consumer Reports magazine, on the growing problem that came to head this summer after American consumers faced scare over Chinese products.

“They’re basically producing poisonous products, selling them to their own people and then selling them on to us.”

Peter Morici, a business professor at the University of Maryland and a former chief economist at the U.S. International Trade Commission; in late June the US banned five types of fish and shrimp from China after inspectors found traces of cancer-causing chemicals and antibiotics, including malachite green.

“What a SONA! By merely listening to it, one is transported to wonderland and beyond. But after thinking about it, one is brought back to the sad national realities — continuous killings, abductions and corruption, endemic lying, cheating and stealing, poverty, hunger and sickness, to mention a few.”

Archbishop Oscar Cruz, in his blog on the July 16 State of the Nation Address (SONA) of Philippine President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, which has been heavily criticized by a growing majority of Filipinos dissatisfied with the present state of governance.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>1 year</th>
<th>2 year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>Php 750.00</td>
<td>Php 1370.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metro Manila</td>
<td>Php 800.00</td>
<td>Php 1500.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>US$ 45.00</td>
<td>US$ 87.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle East, Australia, New Zealand</td>
<td>US$ 50.00</td>
<td>US$ 96.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA, Europe, Canada</td>
<td>US$ 55.00</td>
<td>US$ 105.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Africa, Caribbean, Latin America</td>
<td>US$ 60.00</td>
<td>US$ 110.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(2 years: 15% discount on 2nd year surface mail)

Impact is officially approved as general reference material for students in the Secondary and Tertiary levels and a general professional reading material for teachers in all levels on June 8, 1987.

Address e-mail subscription inquiries to: subscription@impactmagazine.net

Published monthly by

CBPC COMMUNICATIONS DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION, INC.
OSCAR V. CRUZ, D.D. • ART T. NG • JO IMBONG

EDITORIAL BOARD

PEDRO C. QUITORIO III
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

PINKY BARRIENTOS
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

DENNIS B. DAYAO
MANAGING EDITOR

EULY BELIZAR
ROY CIMAGALA • MIAMI EBLIANE
ROY LAGARDE • LOPE ROBREDILLO
STAFF WRITERS

ROWENA DALANON
SALES & ADVERTISING

ERNANI RAMOS
CIRCULATION

CORRESPONDENTS: India: Haranath Tadepally; Malaysia: Chandra Muazaffar; Pakistan: James D’Mello; Sri Lanka: Harry Haas; Papua New Guinea: Diosnel Centurion

CONSULTANTS: Mochtar Lubis, Indonesia; McGillicuddy Desmond, Ireland (JPIC) Millhill, London; Sulak Sivaraks, Thailand, (Communications); S. Santiago, India, (Community Development); Juan Tan (BATU), Philippines (Labor); Jessie Tellis Navak, India, (Women); Dr. Paulita V. Balciq, Philippines (Health); Maximo T. Kalaw Jr., Philippines, (Alternative Futures)

EDITORIAL OFFICE
3/F CBPC Bldg., 470 Gen. Luna St., Intramuros, Manila, Philippines
Tel (632) 404-2182 • Telefax (632) 404-1612
Visit our website at www.impactmagazine.net

For inquiries, comments, and contributions, contact:
inquiries@impactmagazine.net
comments@impactmagazine.net
contributions@impactmagazine.net
The State of the Nation Address (SONA) is something to look forward to—or so it used to be. This time, and probably in the last two or three SONAs, opening a radio or TV where, by force of circumstance, the Presidential address would be blaring, was not too inviting.

Maybe not by reason of apathy or sheer indifference that more and more people do not find the SONA so attractive anymore—as if it was so before. Perhaps, not even by reason of ideology or politics. It is just that people are getting fed up with unreality, clouds and smoke. But, of course, nobody should use the word lies, even if more honest, because such is very disrespectful for the highest office of the land that is replete with Catholicism and revered tradition.

But what have the Filipinos done to merit this misfortune? Barely two months ago, the whole 80 or so million Filipino people, were promised with the sky and the moon by politicians campaigning for the midterm elections. And then this July 23 at the SONA of the President the very same people were promised with paradise—albeit by 2030 yet! What a pity.

But the 2030 wait pales in comparison with what happened to the people of Israel. The Israelites had to wait 40 years in the desert before finally entering the promise land of Canaan. The only difference is the long wait of the Israelites hinged on the truth; the 2030 of Filipinos is totally about something else.

Reading the papers the day after the SONA, one discovers that there was something good with it after all—the parade of latest designs in couture. It was like watching the Oscars with people clapping and getting awarded from doing comedy, drama and fiction. The SONA is not too far-fetched.

This issue of Impact is about marriage. We have to run this on the belief that the most consequential institution in society is the family. Destroy the family and everything else gets destroyed. It is no secret that a lot of big and organized institutions today are up to destroying the family—lamentably, even the civil government itself. A growing number of members of Congress have been habitually, if insistently, filing bills that are proposed with sugarcoating and under the veneer of helping the sexes and women’s rights but in the end will result in the collapse of the family.

This issue opens with Fr. John Flynn’s “Family under pressure, disturbing trends in latest statistics.” But more disturbing is our cover story written by Atty. Jo Imbong. Read on.
Marriage and family life continue to suffer the inroads of contemporary society. From England came the recent news that the number of women giving birth outside of marriage rose by 22% in the last 5 years.

According to a June 29 report published by the Daily Mail newspaper, in 2006 a total of 327,000 children were born out of wedlock, 59,000 more than in 2001. In terms of a proportion of overall births, in 2006 no less than 43.7% of babies had unmarried mothers.

The Daily Mail quoted Patricia Morgan, author of a number of studies on the family, who accused the British tax system favoring single parenthood. “Two out of three of the babies outside marriage will have been born to couples with one eye on the benefit authorities,” she told the newspaper.

Her remarks were confirmed by a former Labour Party minister for welfare reform, Frank Field. He argued that the tax and benefits system “brutally discriminate,” against two-parent families, reported the Times newspaper, June 14.

Currently a single mother working 16 hours a week, after tax credits, gains a total income of 487 pounds a week, explained Field. By contrast, a two-parent family earning the minimum wage has to work 116 hours to gain the same income, as the tax credits system does not make allowance for the second adult.

The negative effects on families of such a system was confirmed by data published earlier this year by the British Office for National Statistics (ONS). According to an April 11 report by the Independent newspaper 24% of children in Great Britain lived with just one parent in 2006. This compares with 22% in 2001.

These children are more likely to live in rented housing and in “non-decent” homes, according to the ONS.

The report by the ONS also found that since 1971 the proportion of all people living in traditional family households of couples with dependent children has fallen from 52% to 37% of the population. In addition, the proportion of people living in couples with no children rose from 19% to 25%.

Lower marriage rates

Data on the numbers of marriages had family groups warning that the institution was under serious threats, reported the Telegraph newspaper, Feb. 22. Figures from the ONS for 2005 revealed that the number of people choosing to marry fell in 2005 by 10%, leading to the lowest marriage rates since they were first calculated in 1862. There were 244,710 marriages in England and Wales in 2005, down from 273,070 in 2004.

Families in Ireland are also declining, according to statistics recently published by the Central Statistics Office. Information released from the 2006 census showed that the traditional family unit has declined in all of the nation’s main cities since 2002, reported the Irish Times on June 1.

Moreover, unmarried cohabiting couples are the fastest growing type of family unit in Ireland. In 2002, the total number of cohabiting couples was 77,600. By 2006 this rose to 121,000, an increase from 8.4% of all family units in 2002 to 11.6% by last year. Lone parents, the vast majority of them women, accounted for 152,542 Irish households.

Commenting on the figures for the Iona Institute, John P. Byrne, author of a recent paper on tax and the family, said that the current tax regime penalizes single income married couples to the tune of up to €6,240 per annum.

“As a society, we need to examine how to make the economy more family-friendly,” he added in the June 28 press statement released by the institute.

Meanwhile, data published by Italy’s Central Institute of Statistics (ISTAT), revealed that from 1995 to 2005 the number of divorces sharply increased. According to a report by the Repubblica newspaper June 26, over the 10-year period divorces grew by 74%, reaching 47,036 in 2005.
Families Under Pressure Disturbing Trends in Latest Statistics

The number of separations increased by 57.3% in the 10-year period, reaching 82,291 in 2005. Under Italian law separation is the preliminary stage in being able to obtain a divorce, although not all couples that register their separation then go on to divorce.

One of the few bits of comforting information on the family came from the United States, where the divorce rate is continuing to decline, reported the Associated Press on May 10. The divorce rate peaked at 5.3 divorces per 1,000 people in 1981. It has continued to drop and is now at 3.6 per thousand, the lowest rate since 1970.

**Divorce data**

Nevertheless, an analysis in the May 21 edition of the Wall Street Journal of the report published by the Associated Press showed that interpreting the data is not that simple. For a start the statistics deal with divorces as a proportion of the total population, but don’t reveal what percentage of marriages end in divorce.

In addition, while divorces have declined, so too has the marriage rate per 1,000 people, by some 30% in the past 25 years. Therefore, with more couples cohabitating a part of the decline in divorce could be due to people living together so that the eventual separations are not counted as divorces. The matter is complicated by the fact that a decade ago the government stopped collecting more detailed statistics on marriage and divorce that would allow a clearer analysis of the situation.

Further data on divorce came from Canada, in the May edition of “Health Reports,” published by the government body, Statistics Canada. The agency calculated that in Canada, an estimated 4 marriages in 10 will end before the couple celebrate their 30th wedding anniversary. The most recent data available from the Divorce Registry is for the year 2003. It showed that nearly 71,000 married couples divorced in 2003.

The report then went on to detail some of the deleterious effects of divorce. Detailed studies from the United States and Europe suggest that, compared with people who remain together, those who see their marriage breakup are at increased risk of mental health problems, in particular depression.

Financial difficulties often follow marital dissolution, added the report. This is especially the case for women, who according to data from a 10-year study from 1994/1995 to 2004/2005 in Canada, are nearly three times as likely as their men to experience a major decline in household income following divorce.

The Canada study also confirmed the overseas experience that shows a link between divorce and depression. This association is present even when other events that often accompany a break-up, such as a drop in income and a decline in social support are taken into account. The study showed that it was men who were more at risk of experiencing depression following divorce than were women.

**Hearth of life**

Family life continues to be a frequent theme in Benedict XVI’s speeches. “The family was and is the school of faith, the training-ground for human and civil values, the hearth in which human life is born and is generously and responsibly welcomed,” he noted in his May 13 speech opening the 5th General Conference of the Episcopate of Latin America and the Caribbean.

The Pope also observed that the family is suffering adversity due to the forces of secularism, ethical relativism, poverty and legislation weakening marriage. It is indispensable, he urged, for the Church to engage in vigorous pastoral care of families.

Moreover, the Pontiff continued, it is indispensable to promote family life through adequate public policies. “The family,” he said, “constitutes part of the good of peoples and of the whole of humanity.”

(This piece was lifted with permission from Zenit)
Marriage as an Inviolable Institution

By Dr. Bernardo M. Villegas, Ph.D.

STI has come out with studies undertaken by teams of sociologists, psychologists, educators, philosophers and other scientists demonstrating the many benefits conferred on society by monogamous and indissoluble marriages.

In a publication entitled *The Public Good of Marriage*, a team of social scientists put together a wealth of empirical evidences from various sciences demonstrating that marriage plays a vital role in preserving the common good and promoting the welfare of children. The book stresses the fact that in virtually every known human society, the institution of marriage provides order and meaning to adult sexual relationships and, more fundamentally, furnishes the ideal context for the bearing and rearing of the young. The health of marriage is particularly important in a free society, which depends upon citizens to govern their private lives and rear their children responsibly, so as to limit the scope, size, and power of the state. In study after study, it has been shown that marriage is an important source of social, human, and financial capital for children, especially for children growing up in poor, disadvantaged communities who do not have ready access to other sources of such capital. Thus, from the point of view of spouses, children, society, and the polity, marriage advances the public interest.

Unfortunately in the last forty years, in Europe and North America especially, marriage and family have come under increasing pressure from the modern state, the modern economy, and modern culture. Family law in all the fifty states of the U.S. and in most countries in the Western world has facilitated unilateral divorce, so that marriages can be easily and effectively terminated at the will of either party. Changing sexual mores have made illegitimacy and cohabitation a central feature of the social landscape of Western societies. Films, telenovelas, and other products of the entertainment world often appear indifferent to, if not hostile towards, the norms that sustain decent family life. New medical technology has made it easier for single mothers and same-sex couples to have children not only outside of marriage, but even without sexual intercourse. Taken together, marriage is losing its preeminent status as the social institution that directs and organizes reproduction, childrearing, and adult life.

In the U.S., the retreat from marriage has been particularly devastating for the most vulnerable communities. Out-of-wed-
lock birth, divorce, and single motherhood are much more common among lower-income African Americans and, to a lesser extent, Hispanic Americans, in large part because they often do not have as many material, social, and personal resources to resist the deinstitutionalization of marriage. The latest social scientific research on marriage indicates that minorities and the poor pay a disproportionately heavy price when marriage declines in their communities, meaning that the breakdown of the family only compounds the suffering of those citizens who already suffer the most.

A research that I intend to carry out with a team of social scientists in Barcelona is to determine the impact of these influences on the families of the Filipino overseas workers in Spain. Thanks to the enlightened policy of the Spanish government to allow entire families to enter the country, my first impression from anecdotal evidence is that Filipino families here are generally intact and are actually serving as models of unity and fidelity to other national groups and to the Spaniards themselves. Filipino households have more children on the average and retain many of their traditional practices of childrearing learned in the Philippines. In the same way that Filipino Catholics in Spain and other European countries are helping to reinvigorate the parishes here, there is hope that generally intact Filipino families can help to bring back marriage to its preeminent status.

Those of us in the Philippines who value marriage as a public good cannot be complacent just because of the constitutional provision that marriage is an inviolable institution. Already, there are attempts of a few legislators to legalize divorce. There are also some proponents of gay marriages. We should be vigilant to protect the institution of marriage from unwise legislation or mistaken jurisprudence. As the study of The Witherspoon Institute warned, too often the rational case for marriage is not made at all or not made very well. Appeals to tradition are rarely decisive in themselves, as some Filipino intellectuals are quick to ape Western practices.

We should learn from the sad experiences of other countries that are already reaping the harm done by the attacks against marriage and the family. Taking the cue from such think tanks as the Social Trends Institute and The Witherspoon Institute, we should be engaged in scholarly discussion of the ideal of marriage, defended with reasons that are comprehensible in public debate and that draw upon the full range of social scientific evidence and humanistic reflection. At issue is not only the value of marriage itself, but the reasons why the public has a deep interest in a socially supported normative understanding of marriage. We should expect marriage to be attacked conceptually, in university communities and other intellectual centers of influence. To defend marriage will require confronting these attacks, assessing their arguments, and correcting them where necessary. We should be convinced that the case for marriage can be made and won at the level of reason. We can begin by studying thoroughly the evidences presented by the scientists who prepared the study for The Witherspoon Institute (see www.princetonprinciples.org/section1.html). For comments, my email address is bvillegas@uap.edu.ph.

Dr. Bernardo M. Villegas, Ph.D., Professor Emeritus, University of Asia and the Pacific; Chairman, Center for Research and Communication Foundation; Visiting Professor, IESE Business School (University of Navarra), Barcelona, Spain.
Reflections on a Catholic Education

By Dr. Mardet de la Rama and Ming Roxas

The poet, W.B. Yeats described education as “not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire”. One interpretation of that phrase could be that education enkindles the fire of curiosity, the fire of exploration and discovery, the fire that fuels a quest for knowledge, for insight, for learning. The natural curiosity of a child is given focus, direction and discipline through education. Formal education, in particular, means studying in the classroom the various disciplines of science, mathematics, philosophy, history, literature, the arts and the social sciences in preparation for life in the world, in a career or profession.

Robert Hutchins (1899-1977), educational philosopher, former President and later Chancellor of the University of Chicago called education “a kind of continuing dialogue, and a dialogue assumes, in the nature of the case, different points of view.” The quest for answers leads to discussion, debate and dialogue among different interested parties thereby en-
riching them and extending the range of possibilities. Thus, education also helps us to deal with all the struggles of life, not just the outer journey through life but the inner journey of our thoughts, emotions, psycho-spiritual issues and concerns.

In a sense, formal education in Western Europe after the fall of the Greek and Roman Empires was rooted in the Church. In the Middle Ages, it was the Church that preserved the foundations of a classical education because the monks studied Latin, Greek and classical studies in the monastic schools and universities. Education for people who did not become priests or religious consisted in training to be apprentices and for the more privileged, training in the ways of chivalry and knighthood. It was only in the Reformation that formal schools were established to teach the classics and mathematics and opened to all who desired and could afford the education, which meant mainly but not exclusively for boys at that time.

Protestant and Catholic schools and universities were formed but the curricula conformed to the idea of a classical education. In the 19th century, more methods and materials were produced as a result of scientific discoveries. Opportunities for education were widened when elementary and secondary schools were established and education became available to all. As education became accessible to more and more people, private education and parochial education became choices and options available to those who desired it and could afford it. Even today, among the palette of choices of parents is whether to send their children to UP or UST, FEU, Ateneo, CEU or La Salle; co-ed or a Catholic women’s college like Assumption, Ateneo, CEU or La Salle; an explanation from which education in the Assumption College’s commitment to transformative education according to Stephen Pope (1997) is Christocentricity – a Christ-centeredness that permeates the daily life of teachers and students, administration and staff. St. Marie-Eugénie of Jesus, the newly canonized foundress of the Religious of the Assumption, states it unequivocally: “Jesus Christ is the foundation from which education in the Assumption College receives its vision and power”.

What is it that sets a Catholic education apart? Stephen J. Pope, a professor of theology at Boston College identifies the aim of Catholic higher education as development of the intellect and the nurturing of Catholic and Christian virtues such as love of God and neighbor (1997). The inculcation of the Gospel values goes hand in hand with lectures on philosophy, sociology, history and literature, as well as in curricular and extra-curricular activities.

The best way of teaching Gospel values is in the witness of one’s life, in showing it through one’s actions on a personal as well as an institutional level. At the institutional level for example, Assumption College, a small college exclusively for women located in the heart of Makati in Metro Manila, has refocused its Education program to better reflect its fidelity to its charism of education for social transformation, its strength and experience in teacher training.

One way the College is accomplishing this is introducing a new field of specialization in its Education program: a Bachelor in Secondary Education major in Religious and Values Education. This new major epitomizes Assumption College’s commitment to transformative education because this course will emphasize Christian spirituality, values education, psycho-spiritual development, responsible citizenship, peace and global education, information technology and human development. This course will not attract the many but the chosen who are interested in pastoral work, youth ministry formation, becoming catechists or teaching religion and values.

Teaching and working in a Catholic college or university makes one more aware of trying to set an example of how to live the Gospel values in one’s day to day experiences. It is a common belief that students will forget what is said in the classroom but will always remember the impact of the teacher as a person. One is always conscious of “walking the talk” and showing by example what one teaches in the classroom.

Another characteristic of a Catholic education according to Stephen Pope (1997) is Christocentricity – a Christ-centeredness that permeates the daily life of teachers and students, administration and staff. St. Marie-Eugénie of Jesus, the newly canonized foundress of the Religious of the Assumption, states it unequivocally: “Jesus Christ is the foundation from which education in the Assumption College receives its vision and power”.

Reflections on a Catholic Education
Assumption spirituality fosters one’s personal relationship with Jesus because of a solid faith formation through the Theology courses, liturgy, retreats and other such activities. Students go on retreat once a year during their four-year education and the faculty and staff are likewise given the opportunity of an annual retreat. Spiritual growth and development of faculty, staff and students is equally if not more important than academic and professional growth and development. The foundation of each curriculum in Assumption is the liberal arts and humanities program but the anchor of that program is Theology. St. Marie-Eugénie of Jesus articulated further her vision of an Assumption education “where characters are forged by the force of the Gospel, where souls are set on fire by the TRUTH of God and for his KINGDOM, where the wisdom revealed by the Son of God Himself and the knowledge of the unity of all beings in Him become the principle and the goal of education.” She saw the goal of education as being able to send out into the world Christian women “able to carry Christian ideals, thoughts and practices into the midst of their families and their societies.”

A natural consequence of a strong faith and spiritual life is expressed in action. Living according to Gospel values has a social effect. Therefore, an important component of a Catholic education is a commitment to society, a compassion for the poor. A student who graduates from a Catholic college or university must have a greater awareness of the needs of the marginalized in society, a keener sense of social responsibility born out of the Gospel, out of Christ’s love for the poor and outcast in society. A graduate of a Catholic education must stand out not merely for the quality of the mind but most especially for a greatness of heart. Each Catholic school has its own way of manifesting this social optic. Many schools, colleges and universities have been working with organizations and NGOs like Caritas, Bantay Bata and Gawad Kalinga, have organizations and offices that mobilize relief in times of natural disasters, calamities and national emergencies and adopted poor communities in and around their localities.

In addition, students go on immersion where they live with a poor community to get them out of their comfort zone and actually experience how the poor live.

Assumption College has a summer program that combines academic learning with the immersion experience where the students apply their knowledge in the community they are immersed in. This immersion experience can be a transformative experience that will influence students’ choices and decisions for the rest of their lives. Many students bond with their host families and go back to visit after the immersion is over.

Almost if not all Catholic colleges and universities have or are allied with volunteer programs where students can become missionaries for a specific period after graduation. Ateneo has the Jesuit Volunteers of the Philippines, Assumption, the Associate Missionaries of the Assumption spirituality fosters one’s needs spiritual enrichment, one naturally needs the unity of all beings in Him become the principle and the goal of education.”

Let us end with a question: What then is the relevance of a Catholic education today? All education provides us with a thirst for truth and knowledge; a Catholic education transforms it into a crusade to make truth and social justice available to all people not just to the rich and powerful. Education disciplines the mind and develops the intelligence; a Catholic education illuminates the mind and the intelligence with the light of faith and Gospel values. Centers of learning teach good citizenship and love of country; a Catholic education adds love of God and Jesus Christ to the learning equation. Finally, on a personal level and from personal experience, a Catholic education provides an anchor—the dimension of faith and spirituality—that gives you inner reserves on which to draw when life gets tough. You do not notice it until you need it and dig deep into your soul to strength. A Catholic education provides a focus—Jesus Christ—to follow and emulate and develops a personal relationship with Him to guide and support you. A Catholic education integrates an expansive mind with greatness of heart that results in wholeness and completion. Then you discover within you the freedom to explore, to discover, to spread your wings and fly.

Dr. Mardet de la Rama is Chair of the Education Department at Assumption College. She has a Ph.D in Clinical Psychology from Ateneo de Manila University. Ming Roxas is Officer-in-charge of the Communication Department at Assumption College. She is currently taking her M.A. in Education major in Media Literacy at the Paulines Institute for Communication in Asia and Assumption College.
For a time human rights defenders spent a lot of time probing the role of non-state actors (NSA) in terms of culpability with regards to human rights violations. Even now, HR activists all over are demanding that NSAs be held accountable, more so, if peoples and communities become victim instead of beneficiaries of ‘development’ efforts.

A lot more reasons contributed to the scramble of finding, both the legal and moral upper hand, to pin down the alleged perpetrators. But the dialogue was practically pushed to the open when globalization spawned development aggression instead contrary to what it claimed. At the forefront of this onslaught are the global financial institutions (IMF-WB, WTO, GATT and the likes) and transnational corporations (TNCs), too many to mention, espousing neo-liberalist-capitalist economic philosophy that sowed havoc to peoples’ economic, social and cultural rights particularly in the countryside.

It was at this phase of the discourse, that advocates found hard to reconcile between obligations of both state and non-state actors. Since fulfillment of humans rights were primarily framed on the States, as ‘state party’ to the international human rights treaties they have acceded, thus the distinct legal implications on their side.

What HRVs denote

For HR advocates, when one talks about human rights violations (HRV), clearly, the perpetrators would be state agents, as UN human rights documents would elaborate. These would either be the police, military, paramilitary, and government officials. In this context, HRV then means, violations committed by state parties either through acts of omission, on its duty-bound obligations to respect, protect, and fulfill the human rights of its constituents. But the annoying question would always surface—how would these NSAs be made answerable to human rights?

Adding to the perceived dilemma is the rise of human rights atrocities. These were committed by armed non-state actors like the New Peoples’ Army (NPA), which is contrary to their pronouncements—that they are espousing human rights. Take the Bondoc Peninsula peasant communities struggling for land reform as an example. The Partnership for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development Services (PARRDS) have documented cases in the area wherein, alleged NPA members, in collusion with certain influential landed elites, have denied legitimate AR beneficiaries of their right to adequate food and means of subsistence. Again, the proverbial question hounds, how would such entities be held liable to human rights?

Some reflections

While the task of making NSAs accountable of their human rights abuses is just and a must to counter impunity, it would be first necessary to distinguish the kind of NSAs involved. To some degree, it would be beneficial dichotomizing non-state actors, whether these are armed or unarmored, being third party to the non-enjoyment of both individual and collective human rights of peoples and the communities affected. This would help identify the appropriate legal setting to lodge a complaint against the alleged perpetrators.

The onset of the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law (CARHRILH), a consequence of the GRP-NDF longstanding peace talks, provides a venue for filing a complaint concerning violations of both parties. Such is a welcome development for rural folks, specifically the marginalized peasants who usually bear the brunt of the armed conflict. While a case has already been filed with the Monitoring Committee concerning the Bondoc Peninsula HR atrocities, yet, such mechanism remains to be tested and maximized to fully appreciate its effectiveness and worth.

Seeking justice with regards HR abuse of unarmed NSAs on the other hand is covered within the local justice system and would be hard put at the United Nations Human Rights (UNHR) mechanisms level. Though corporate responsibility has been among the top issues on the discussion table the past years, it failed to prosper essentially because, NSAs are non-UN entities unlike member states. Thus the outcry to make these NSAs—the transnational private corporations accountable within the UN human rights system would be futile.

No need ‘turning around the bush’

The government then has the critical role to assert the state’s sovereignty. It should be running after abusive corporations who are determined on emaciating the country’s natural reserves. These conglomerates relentlessly assail people’s human rights in the guise of economic advancement.

Same premise could be articulated involving armed NSAs whether members of revolutionary groups or private armies of landlords, found to have committed abuses and violations of peoples human rights.

That is why, people’s organizations and non-government organizations promoting agrarian reform and human rights has the prerogative to engage every state agencies involved. This is to remind the government bureaucracies of their fundamental obligations and exercising the same, consistent with the Constitution and the universally accepted human rights standards.

By Armando L. Paragat

Human Rights Accountability of NSAs

(Paragat is presently the Agrarian Reform and Human Rights Program Officer (AR-Hr) of Partnership for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development Services (PARRDS).)

Volume 41 • Number 8
The word is out and we have to actively spread it around. Now that the elections are over and the public officials have been sworn in, we have to focus on the delicate and demanding task of governance.

This is a serious matter that needs to be studied thoroughly and pursued relentlessly by all of us.

We cannot allow the running of towns, cities and provinces, let alone, the whole country to go to the dogs of mere popularity, alleged charisma, strong connections, clever publicists, pressure groups, lobbyists, and the like.

We cannot allow the governance of our government units to be spoiled by useless politicking, shameless maneuvers to wrest power for oneself, etc. I hope we can outgrow this, or at least, that we have enough people who have the weight to correct things when they tend to go the politicians’ crazy ways.

Thanks to our progress in communications technology, more and more people can now have their voices heard, and a greater and quicker consensus on issues, can be achieved.

We have to go beyond feudalism, improvisations, amateurism and knee-jerk reactions to problems and challenges. In this, we have to understand that everyone is involved: the officials and the citizens in general, as well.

We have to retrieve the idea of governance from being an exclusive concern of some people alone. At this time, governance has to be a concern of everyone. Not, of course, in the sense of an anarchic free-for-all.

While it’s true that the public officials are given the mandate to lead, the beauty of a democratic state is that everyone is encouraged to participate in any way one can in the governance of state affairs in the different levels.

In short, while leaders and officials have to improve on their governing skills, there should also be effort to involve more and more people in the task of governance.

Everyone should support this. Surely, a lot of due education and formation is needed here. And it’s truly welcome to have a mushrooming of institutions developing in a scientific way this craft of governance.

Even the remotest “barangay” cannot afford to be marginalized in the global march for development in all its aspects. We have to get our act together. Failure in this, given the present context, can constitute a grave criminal act.

The institutions promoting this art have devised ways of how leaders can develop a vision for their respective unit, translating it into workable plans, with clearly specified means, resources and timeline.

Standards are made, developments and improvements are monitored, accomplishments are certified. This may look like an elementary exercise in the beginning, but then once the take-off point is reached, things can really become different and exciting.

It obviously will be a growing art, subject to the vagaries of trials and errors, and so we also have to learn to be patient and to coordinate. But the objective need is there. We cannot wait until things get irremediably bad.

In this regard, it should be noted that on the leaders and officials is invested a sacred trust they should try their best to carry. Their personal qualities and dispositions play a crucial part in determining the kind of leadership they are going to make.

They should try their best to sharpen their talents, develop those where they find themselves lagging in, always conscious that a continuing improvement of their own selves is at the beginning of any good transformation in society.

The virtue of prudence is especially crucial. Leaders and officials should sharpen their prudential skills—consulting, dialoguing with different parties, studying, making decisions, reviewing, adapting, etc.

Besides, the Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church reminds us that the first thing everyone should do to effect a change in society is “to renew oneself interiorly.” (552)

We are persons, not machines, and therefore not ruled by impersonal determinism but by the right use of freedom. This, to me, is indispensable. Regardless of how savvy one may be in the technical part of governing, if he fails in this first requirement, things won’t go very far. Power and its cohorts can easily spoil persons.
Every day hunger kills 6,000 children in India

MUMBAI, India, July 26, 2007—“It is shameful to see children die of hunger whilst the country prepares to celebrate its diamond jubilee, 60 years of independence. Some may celebrate economic growth and success, but others do not have enough to eat. Dying from malnutrition is not limited to rural areas, but takes place in urban areas as well, like India’s commercial capital of Mumbai,” said Fr Nithia Sagayam, national executive secretary of the Commission for Justice, Peace and Development of the Catholic Bishops Conference of India (CBCI). He told AsiaNews that this is the paradox “of deaths from hunger in a land of plenty.”

A paradox made the more tragic by the fact that the country has stockpiles of surplus grains, which are sometimes destroyed because they were excess production.

For this reason on ‘Justice Day,’ the Sunday that follows Independence Day, the Indian Catholic Church will try to shake the conscience of Christians and non-Christians alike on the inherent human right to eat. This year’s chosen theme is Freedom from Hunger.

Hunger is not a hypothetical problem but one that haunts the daily lives of millions of people in India. Just last week a six-month-old baby died from malnutrition in Goregaon a Mumbai suburb; a story like that of two seven-year-old twins—Rohit and Rohini—hospitalized as “severely malnourished.”

Their names are but a few drops in the bucket. According to a National Family Health Survey conducted between December 2005 and August 2006, more than 6,000 Indian children below the age of five years die every day from malnourishment. Moreover, India is home to 57 million (more than a third) of the world’s undernourished children.

In 2001 alone, starvation deaths were reported in more than a dozen Indian states. But in July 2002 it was announced that India’s surplus stocks had reached 63 million tonnes, a world record level.

It becomes patently absurd then that in the land of plenty an estimated 440 million Indians should languish at the bottom of the country’s economic and social ladder without enough to eat. (AsiaNews)

Maoist guerrillas violate agreement with United Nations

KATHMANDU, Nepal, July 24, 2007—Despite tight surveillance and security provided by the United Nations, Maoist fighters have escaped with their weapons from a camp where they had been confined.

Seven Maoist guerrillas fled the encampment in Yangsila, Morang District, in eastern Nepal, where they had been confined. In doing so they violated an agreement reached with the United Nations, which called for a two-phase verification of weapons and personnel under UN supervision.

The first phase to count weapons ended four months ago. The second phase was postponed upon request by Maoists to settle internal political matters.

The latest incident comes at a time of tensions and strong differences of opinion between Maoist forces and the United Nations monitoring group. There is a real risk that the two-year transition period established by the Security Council may not be met.

The Nepal Communist Party (Maoist) fought a decade-long war against the Royal army of King Gyanendra in order to set up a Communist republic.

Following the king’s decision to give up direct rule the party accepted a multi-party agreement that required they disarm completely under UN supervision. (Kalpit Parajuli / AsiaNews)
**OMB chair seeks Church’s help in fight vs. child porn**

MANILA, 26 July 2007—Optical Media Board chair Edu Manzano asked the Catholic Church’s help in its fight against the spread of pornographic videos involving minors.

Manzano has met with Catholic Bishops’ Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) spokesman Msgr. Pedro Quitorio Thursday to discuss the gravity of the problem in the country’s growth areas, specifically Metro Manila.

The meeting stemmed from previous reports of the proliferation of hard-core sex videos and other perverted activities.

Porn films are having more outlets, especially in Metro Manila, which according to Manzano is already a manifestation of a growing nationwide problem.

Since the OMB does not cover the fight against pornography, Manzano underscored that it’s more of a personal crusade against pornographic materials containing children forced in deplorable sexual acts.

Both CBCP Media Director Msgr. Quitorio and OMB Chair Manzano agreed to work together and create an ad hoc committee to curb the prevailing threat to minors and adults alike through sex videos.

Quitorio said the fight against pornography has long been a crusade of the Church because it affects the youth’s core values.

“We support their fight against pornography and even anti-piracy campaign which is another issue,” he said.

He said that the CBCP media office will be drafting a proposal to formalize the joint effort and its advocacy strategies.

Manzano said the OMB is a witness not only to the rampant and “mortifying” child pornographic materials easily accessible to the general public.

He said that in all their enforcement operations, they always seize optical media products containing child pornography.

“We are outraged because these materials depict children as young as three years old being sexually abused and recorded on film and later peddled into the streets,” he said.

Manzano said there are even materials where minors are forced bestial acts which is a glaring example of exploitation and abuse. “Yes, with animals,” Manzano said.

“Daily, we witness how children are degraded and treated as objects that can be used and abused by adults,” he concluded. *(Roy Lagarde / CBCPNews)*

---

**Islamic leaders criticize attack against Carmelite centre**

JAKARTA, Indonesia, July 25, 2007—Police must protect everyone’s right to express their religious faith. It should have moved against the radical Muslims and stop their hostile actions against the Lembah Karmel Cikanyere, the Carmelite Prayer Centre in Cikanyere Hill, Cianjur Regency (West Java), this according to Syafi’i Maarif’s, who heads the Muhammadiyah (Indonesia’s second largest Muslim organization). In no uncertain terms he condemned the recent protests by Muslim radicals.

“The [radicals’] rally has tarnished the good image of Islam. As Muslims, we know that Islam is a good, peaceful and loving religion,” he said.

There is no good “reason to use and abuse (Islam) in an effort to legitimate harmful actions against other religious beliefs, to express dislike about them or conduct any unfriendly gestures” to scare them (Catholics), said the eminent Muslim scholar.

Siti Musdah Mulia, who is the secretary of the Indonesian Conference for Religion and Peace, was equally critical. She chastised police for not nipping in the bud such “hostile actions”, but also other religious leaders for doing nothing to stop the violence.

Her criticism is especially harsh for those Muslim clerics who say nothing about the growing nightlife (which can attract young people) but are all up in arms if a new Christian church is built and even egg young people on to attack it because it was built without a permit.

“There is something definitely wrong with these clerics,” she said, but then she is no stranger to criticizing radical Muslim views. For instance, she came out against polygamy saying that it was “absolutely no good.”

Fadly Al Asady, from the Indonesian Muslim Student Organization, slammed the stupidity of certain Muslim hard-liners.

“Using Islamic religious symbols to attack Christian home-churches will only harm Islam” he said.

In his opinion, the Indonesian government should take serious action to deal with this sensitive issue before it turns into a religious conflict.

Carmelite Prayer Centre spokeswoman Sister Lisa Martosudijo Pkarm expressed gratitude to the police, the military and moderate Muslims “who showed us friendship and protected our home from the demonstrators’ threatening violence.”

In a press release today the monastery expressed concern over excessive media coverage of the incident. Far from huge crowds as reported in some local media outlets, protesters were no more than a hundred. *(Benteng Reges/AsiaNews)*

---

**Islamic leaders criticize attack against Carmelite centre**

JAKARTA, Indonesia, July 25, 2007—Police must protect everyone’s right to express their religious faith. It should have moved against the radical Muslims and stop their hostile actions against the Lembah Karmel Cikanyere, the Carmelite Prayer Centre in Cikanyere Hill, Cianjur Regency (West Java), this according to Syafi’i Maarif’s, who heads the Muhammadiyah (Indonesia’s second largest Muslim organization). In no uncertain terms he condemned the recent protests by Muslim radicals.

“The [radicals’] rally has tarnished the good image of Islam. As Muslims, we know that Islam is a good, peaceful and loving religion,” he said.

There is no good “reason to use and abuse (Islam) in an effort to legitimate harmful actions against other religious beliefs, to express dislike about them or conduct any unfriendly gestures” to scare them (Catholics), said the eminent Muslim scholar.

Siti Musdah Mulia, who is the secretary of the Indonesian Conference for Religion and Peace, was equally critical. She chastised police for not nipping in the bud such “hostile actions”, but also other religious leaders for doing nothing to stop the violence.

Her criticism is especially harsh for those Muslim clerics who say nothing about the growing nightlife (which can attract young people) but are all up in arms if a new Christian church is built and even egg young people on to attack it because it was built without a permit.

“There is something definitely wrong with these clerics,” she said, but then she is no stranger to criticizing radical Muslim views. For instance, she came out against polygamy saying that it was “absolutely no good.”

Fadly Al Asady, from the Indonesian Muslim Student Organization, slammed the stupidity of certain Muslim hard-liners.

“Using Islamic religious symbols to attack Christian home-churches will only harm Islam” he said.

In his opinion, the Indonesian government should take serious action to deal with this sensitive issue before it turns into a religious conflict.

Carmelite Prayer Centre spokeswoman Sister Lisa Martosudijo Pkarm expressed gratitude to the police, the military and moderate Muslims “who showed us friendship and protected our home from the demonstrators’ threatening violence.”

In a press release today the monastery expressed concern over excessive media coverage of the incident. Far from huge crowds as reported in some local media outlets, protesters were no more than a hundred. *(Benteng Reges/AsiaNews)*

---

**Islamic leaders criticize attack against Carmelite centre**

JAKARTA, Indonesia, July 25, 2007—Police must protect everyone’s right to express their religious faith. It should have moved against the radical Muslims and stop their hostile actions against the Lembah Karmel Cikanyere, the Carmelite Prayer Centre in Cikanyere Hill, Cianjur Regency (West Java), this according to Syafi’i Maarif’s, who heads the Muhammadiyah (Indonesia’s second largest Muslim organization). In no uncertain terms he condemned the recent protests by Muslim radicals.

“The [radicals’] rally has tarnished the good image of Islam. As Muslims, we know that Islam is a good, peaceful and loving religion,” he said.

There is no good “reason to use and abuse (Islam) in an effort to legitimate harmful actions against other religious beliefs, to express dislike about them or conduct any unfriendly gestures” to scare them (Catholics), said the eminent Muslim scholar.

Siti Musdah Mulia, who is the secretary of the Indonesian Conference for Religion and Peace, was equally critical. She chastised police for not nipping in the bud such “hostile actions”, but also other religious leaders for doing nothing to stop the violence.

Her criticism is especially harsh for those Muslim clerics who say nothing about the growing nightlife (which can attract young people) but are all up in arms if a new Christian church is built and even egg young people on to attack it because it was built without a permit.

“There is something definitely wrong with these clerics,” she said, but then she is no stranger to criticizing radical Muslim views. For instance, she came out against polygamy saying that it was “absolutely no good.”

Fadly Al Asady, from the Indonesian Muslim Student Organization, slammed the stupidity of certain Muslim hard-liners.

“Using Islamic religious symbols to attack Christian home-churches will only harm Islam” he said.

In his opinion, the Indonesian government should take serious action to deal with this sensitive issue before it turns into a religious conflict.

Carmelite Prayer Centre spokeswoman Sister Lisa Martosudijo Pkarm expressed gratitude to the police, the military and moderate Muslims “who showed us friendship and protected our home from the demonstrators’ threatening violence.”

In a press release today the monastery expressed concern over excessive media coverage of the incident. Far from huge crowds as reported in some local media outlets, protesters were no more than a hundred. *(Benteng Reges/AsiaNews)*
To make life simpler, the time might come when the law should simply forbid marriage. This way, with no marriage, there could be no marriage to break, to void or annul before the civil courts. And divorce would become altogether irrelevant. There would be no question on legitimacy of children or otherwise, no issue on who supports whom, who pays what. With marriage forbidden, men and women relationship would be a free-for-all affair. This way, there would be neither concubinage nor adultery. Conjugal infidelity becomes a nonsense.

If forbidding marriage is ridiculous, if all the above are absurd, to get marriage and thereafter get divorce only to get married again—is no less a folly. It is in line with this funny thought that some men suggest marriage license with a given expiration date.

Fooling around with marriage is eventually undermining human dignity, demeaning marital relationship, devaluing conjugal life. This is not to mention denying children their right to integral parental love and care. The stability of marriages has much to contribute to the sound value system of individuals plus harmonious social interactions among families. Divorces do exactly the opposite.
Casting a looming shadow over what then was the just convened post-1987 Congress were the strong and unequivocal declarations in the newly ratified 1987 Constitution on the sanctity of the family as a fundamental unit of society, and the solemn mandate of the State to protect and strengthen it as a basic social institution.

It would have been expected then that the new legislators would put flesh and power into these proudly Filipino constitutional imperatives.

In the Eleventh Congress, however, bills were promptly filed in the Lower House to introduce Divorce in this country. Succeeding Congresses further saw the filing of proposals seeking to expand the meaning of “psychological incapacity” in Article 36 the Family Code. New grounds for nullification included “immaturity”, “constitutional laziness”, and even epilepsy. Others attempted to introduce a new Section in the Family Code on the subject of Divorce.

The bills’ Explanatory Notes had a common ring: that for “troubled” or problematic marriages, the answer is break the marriage bond and give the separated couples “another chance at happiness.”

The pro-family advocacy was then in its early beginnings. In fact, the first committee hearing on the Divorce bill unwittingly brought together and compacted numerous families and family groups around the country in defense of marriage. As though summoned by a trumpet blast, the same nucleus groups would soon metamorphose into what is now a formidable advocacy network in defense of authentic family rights.

The public hearings and countless fora that followed about the Divorce bill presented a signal opportunity for families to call attention to the social perils it had wrought and continues to cast on societies and families in the nations of the Western hemisphere where divorce is lawful.

But things lawful are not necessarily things good in themselves. Such is divorce. The social catastrophe that has swept across America and other Western nations as a consequence of divorce speaks for itself.

Patrick Fagan, (William H. G. FitzGerald Senior Fellow in Family and Cultural Issues, based in the U.S.A.) openly admits that American society may have erased the stigma that once accompanied divorce, but it can no longer ignore its massive effects. As social scientists track successive generations of American children whose parents have ended their marriages, he said that the data are leading even some of the once-staunchest supporters of divorce to conclude that divorce is hurting American society and devastating the lives of children.

In a paper co-written in year 2000 with Robert Rector (Senior Research Fellow in Domestic Policy Studies at The Heritage Foundation, U.S.A.), Pat Fagan lamented that each year, over 1 million American children suffer the divorce of their parents. In the ensuing years, with the liberal divorce laws in America, the authors foresaw that half of all children born to married parents will experience the divorce of their parents before they reach their 18th birthday. This to them was a strong signal for policymakers and those whose careers focus on children serious reason to pause.

That was seven years ago. Looking back at it all today, the dire landscape that swept America’s families was not just a reason for America’s policy makers to pause. It is all the reason also for us in the Philippines to look at the way we legislate—or fail to legislate—for the good of families.

The ambivalence in authentic protection and defense of family is unbelievable. With threatened attempts again in the 14th Congress to legislate towards easy separation and breaking of the marriage bond, we are openly granting license to tear asunder the root of a stable society. And with family bonds severed, we shall see society overturned, its roots up in the air, like a felled tree.

If that is not enough yet, a cultural shift is occurring, with elements around us purveying like propaganda, myriad messages that divorce “is okay.”

To Mr. Fagan and it is not. Mounting evidence in the annals of scientific journals details the plight of the children of divorce and their divorced parents. These subsequent findings clearly indicate not only that divorce has lasting effects, but that these effects spill over into every aspect of life.

Mr. Fagan has real cases to show.

- Children whose parents have divorced are increasingly the victims of abuse and neglect. They exhibit more health problems, as well as behavioral and emotional problems, are involved more frequently in crime and drug abuse, and have higher rates of suicide.
Children of divorced parents more frequently demonstrate a diminished learning capacity, performing more poorly than their peers from intact two-parent families in reading, spelling, and math. They also are more likely to repeat a grade and to have higher drop-out rates and lower rates of college graduation.

Divorce generally reduces the income of the child’s primary household and seriously diminishes the potential of every member of the household to accumulate wealth. For families that were not poor before the divorce, the drop in income can be as much as 50 percent. Moreover, decline in income is intergenerational, since children whose parents divorce are likely to earn less as adults than children raised in intact families.

This is interesting—religious worship, which has been linked to health and happiness as well as longer marriages and better family life, is less prevalent in divorced families.

The study adds that although none of the effects necessarily applies to every child of divorced parents, millions of children who see their parents divorce are nonetheless affected in serious ways by that act of rejection. There is no way to predict how each individual child will be affected or to what extent, but it is possible to demonstrate and predict the numerous and serious effects that divorce is having on society. Thus, it is said, the issue for researchers is no longer to determine what divorce’s ill effects are, but rather to understand the depth and persistence of these effects on children, their children, and even their grandchildren.

This brings to mind a landmark study done more recently by Judith Wallerstein, a noted and respected Psychologist. Ms. Wallerstein found that when divorce occurs in mid-childhood (between ages six and eight), a large portion of children experience persistent feelings of sadness and a need for constant reassurance about their performance in many of life’s tasks. For these children, anxieties run very high about their relationships with the opposite sex, personal commitments later in life (particularly during the late high school years), and marriage. These young adults are most acutely concerned about betrayal in romantic relationships, both present and future.

If divorce occurs when the children are teenagers (12 to 15 years of age), they tend to react in two very different ways: by attempting to avoid growing up or by attempting to “speed through” adolescence. Other disturbing outcomes for teenagers include increased aggression,
loss of self-confidence, and particularly a sense of loneliness. Boys are much more likely to be depressed than girls. Early sexual activity, substance abuse or dependence, hostile behavior, and depression also are more likely following a divorce. These reactions are more likely if the parents divorce before the child reaches age five, slightly less likely if they divorce after the child reaches age 10, and seemingly least likely during the years in between—a period sometimes called “the latency phase” by psychologists.

The divorce of parents makes romance and courtship more difficult and tenuous for the children as they reach adulthood. Older teenagers and young adults date more often, have more failed romantic relationships, and experience a more rapid turnover of dating partners. Not surprisingly, this leads to a greater number of sexual partners, which in itself creates a grave risk that one will acquire an incurable sexually transmitted disease. These effects on dating seem to be the strongest when the divorce takes place during the child’s teenage years, but they also carry into adulthood.

Notably, unlike the experience of their parents, the child’s suffering does not reach its peak at the time of the divorce and then level off. Rather, the emotional effects of the parents’ divorce can be played and replayed throughout the next three decades of a child’s life.

Wallerstein studied children years after their parents’ divorce: five years after, 10, 15, 20, 25 years after. The findings give us reason to be greatly disturbed. For you would think that divorce had opened a door to a “better” life for the children. On the contrary, divorce was only the beginning. When parents divorce, most children suffer. For some, this suffering turns into long-lasting psychological damage. This emotional distance between children and parents lasts well into adulthood and may become permanent.

Children even 20 years after the divorce continue to suffer its psychological effects. Many could not muster the heart to enter into any permanent relationship. And the psychological effects factor into their social relationships. For instance, one longitudinal study tracked children whose parents divorced in 1946 and tested them two and three decades later. Even 30 years after the divorce, negative long-term effects were clearly present in the income, health, and behavior of many of the grown offspring.

**HOW DIVORCE AFFECTS THE FAMILY**

Not only do parents divorce each other, but they in effect divorce or partially divorce their children. The primary effect of divorce (and of the conflicts that lead to divorce) is the deterioration of the relationship between the child and at least one parent. That is not all. Divorce presents most parents with two sets of problems: their personal adjustment to the divorce and their adjustment to the new and different role of divorced parent. As many as 40 percent are so stressed by the divorce that their child-rearing behavior suffers. They frequently change from rigid to permissive behavior, and from emotionally distant to emotionally dependent. The quality of the relationship that divorced fathers have with their sons, often troubled before the divorce, tends to become significantly worse after the breakup. Moreover, the higher the level of conflict during the divorce, the more likely the distance between father and children afterwards.

The Fagan and Rector study tells us that the divorce of parents, even if it is an amicable decision, tears apart a family—the fundamental unit of society. It should be no surprise to find, then, that the prevalence of divorce is having profound effects on society. What may surprise many policymakers and other Americans is how strong the relationship is between family background and such widespread problems of crime, abuse and neglect, and addictions.

The harm does not end at the children and the spouses surviving a divorce. As a matter of fact, it is only the beginning count in the heavy social cost, for whether we realize it or not, divorce affects the entire community. How?

**Divorce and Social Havoc**

For example, Mr. Fagan cites Robert Sampson, professor of Sociology at the University of Chicago, had found that the divorce rate predicted the rate of robbery in any given area, regardless of economic and racial composition. Sampson studied 171 U.S. cities with populations of more than 100,000. In these communities, he found that the lower the rates of divorce, the higher the formal and informal social controls (such as the supervision of children) and the lower the crime rate.

And different studies in other countries where divorce is lawful confirm the general conclusions from the Wisconsin data. Children of divorced parents are significantly more likely to become delinquent by age 15, regardless of when the divorce took place, than are children whose own parents are married.

In a British longitudinal study of males aged 8 to 32, David P. Farrington, professor of criminology at Cambridge University, found that the divorce of parents...
before a child reached age 10 is a major predictor of adolescent delinquency and adult criminality.

A recent U.S. longitudinal study which tracked over 6,400 boys over a period of 20 years (well into their adult years) found that children without biological fathers in the home are roughly three times more likely to commit a crime that leads to incarceration than are children from intact families.

A major review of literature on divorce conducted by the government of Australia is added in the Report. There, it was found that divorce increases the likelihood that a child will feel hostility and rejection. It is worth noting that these findings on delinquency are not confined to boys: Among adolescent girls, there is a strong correlation between family structure, delinquency, hostile behavior, drug use, larceny, skipping school, and alcohol abuse.

**Divorce and Abuse**

Child abuse is closely related to delinquency and violent crime, and divorce is a relevant factor in an abused child's background. Not only do higher levels of divorce accompany higher levels of child abuse, but remarriage does not reduce the level of child abuse and may even add to it. Sadly, huge differences in the rates of fatal child abuse accompany family structure. After a divorce, mothers may marry again or acquire new boyfriends, but the presence of a stepfather or a boyfriend increases the risk of abuse, though at significantly different rates.

**Divorce and the Capacity to Learn**

Divorce impedes learning by disrupting productive study patterns as children are forced to move between domiciles, and by increasing anxiety and depression in both parents and children. Because of its impact on stable home life, divorce can diminish the capacity to learn—a principle demonstrated by the fact that children whose parents divorce have lower rates of graduation from high school and college and also complete fewer college courses.

The absence of the father lowers cognitive test scores for young children in general, especially the math scores of daughters. By comparison, a girl's verbal capacities increase when the father is present, especially when he reads aloud to her when she is young.

**Increasing Rates of Suicide**

Higher divorce rates in a society lead to higher suicide rates among children. As the work of Patricia McCall, a sociology professor at North Carolina State University, shows, the most frequent background characteristic among adolescents who commit suicide is the divorce of their parents. This link between the rise in adolescent suicide in the past three decades and parental divorce can be found again and again in the literature; and in cross-cultural studies of Japan and the United States, as well as Holland, the link between divorce and the frequency of thoughts of suicide is clear. Suicide is often triggered by the child's thoughts that his parents have rejected him or lost interest in him. Such a perception on the part of the child is sometimes based on reality.

**How about remarriage?**

Will remarriage improve the landscape for children? Hardly. Stepfamily life does not solve these problems. For one thing, the level of contact between the children and their natural parents is not restored to the level enjoyed by children in intact families. They have fewer enjoyable times with their children, more disagreements with them, and more alterations than intact families do. Between children and stepparents, failure in expectations and difficult adjustments further fuel behavioral problems and turmoil in both.

**Higher Probability of Divorce**

From the empirical evidence, it is clear that, to a large degree, the marital instability of one generation is passed on to the next. There are different estimates for the probability of divorce for children of divorced parents. Some have found the risk to be more than twice the risk for children of intact families. Daughters of divorced parents tend to divorce more frequently than do the sons of divorced parents, with
The Children of Divorce: Costly Consequences

The risk as much as 87 percent higher during the earlier years of marriage for daughters of divorced parents than for those from intact marriages. When the parents of both spouses have divorced, the risk of divorce is increased by as much as 620 percent in the early years of marriage, which declines to 20 percent by the 11th year of marriage.

The case for marriage

The continued presence of a married father in the home strongly predicts the happy marriage of the child. A 35-year longitudinal study found that the children of affectionate fathers were much more likely in their forties to be happily married and mentally healthy and to report good relationships with their friends. The child with a father present in the early and adolescent years is more companionable and responsible as an adult.

Men tend to fare better if married. A 20-year study of 20,000 men carried out at the University of Warwick has found that those with wives live an average of three years longer than single men, and earn an extra £3,000 ($4,700) a year, the London Times reported Jan. 29. Researchers think that the differences between married and single men is partly owing to the healthier lifestyle that marriage encourages and also to a desire to impress their partners and feather their nests.

Researchers at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine and the State University of New York-Oswego, studied data from 12,366 patients who participated in a “Seven-year Multiple Risk Factor Intervention Trial.” Of the 10,904 men who were married at the beginning of the trial, the researchers found those who stayed married were less likely to die from a number of causes than those who divorced. Those most adversely affected were patients experiencing both work stress and divorce, the study found.

“When people are married, they make an investment in each other’s lives,” says Jennifer Marshall, director of the Family Resource Council (U.S.A.) Family Studies Department. “When you’re in a less-committed relationship, it can get volatile because these kinds of relationships don’t carry the same commitment.” Another study led by University of Chicago sociologist Linda Waite, analyzed data on 5,232 married adults interviewed for the National Survey of Families and Households. The study showed that divorce did not enhance self-esteem or alleviate depression. Even those who remain in an unhappy marriage end up being happier than those couples who divorce.

A better community

Marriage is not only important for the individuals involved, but also for society in general, notes American scholar James Q. Wilson. In his book “The Marriage Problem,” Mr. Wilson wrote, “It is not money but the family that is the foundation of public life.” It is still marriage that produces the best outcomes for children, their parents, and the community. After all, isn’t that how it was made to be and ought to be, according to our true nature? (Atty Aurea Jo Imbong is the Executive Secretary of the CBCP Legal Office; she also teaches at the Ateneo University).
Towards a Second National Rural Congress

F orty years ago, the Church in the Philippines convened a National Rural Congress highlighting the call that “the Church must go to the barrios.” The involvement of the Church in rural issues was concretized in the formation of diocesan social action centers, rural cooperatives, advocacy groups for agrarian reform, and others.

To commemorate that event held in 1967, the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of the Philippines issued early this year the pastoral statement, “The Dignity of the Rural Poor – A Gospel Concern”. We made a call for a Second National Rural Congress (NRC II) to review the continuing issues confronting the majority of our people living in rural areas. “But this time,” we said, “our farmers must do the speaking by themselves, the discerning, the proposing of their own ideas, the planning of how we must as a people come together to work for the common good of the country…”

In this light, we are adopting a SEE-JUDGE-ACT methodology in convening this Second National Rural Congress. There are five objectives:

1. To describe the current situation of various sectors of the rural poor—e.g., small farmers, landless workers, indigenous people, small fishermen, rural women and youth, etc.;
2. To describe the role of Basic Ecclesial Communities (BECs) and church-based programs in rural development;
3. To review the impact of key social legislation and to engage government agencies in the implementation of ongoing social reform programs under the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law (CARL), the Indigenous People’s Rights Act (IPRA), etc.;
4. To apply the Social Teachings of the Church to the concrete problems of Philippine rural society and to arrive at recommendations and action plans; and
5. To collate and disseminate research findings through media channels, and to promote continuing dialogue among local churches, NGOs and academe in the social transformation of rural—as well as urban poor—communities.

The timetable comprises two phases

Phase I: (July-November 2007) in two parallel tracks:

A. Diocesan consultations on BECs in rural development (to be conducted by the National Secretariat for Social Action (NASSA), and the Offices for BECs and Indigenous People);
B. Sub-regional consultations on rural poor sectors and rural issues (to be conducted by the Philippine-Misereor Partnership (PMP), the Association of Major Superiors of the Philippines (AMRSP), and the Rural Poor Solidarity (RPS) coalition of non-government and people’s organizations.

Phase II: (First Quarter of 2008) – convening of NRC II to discuss the collated inputs from the diocesan and sub-regional consultations. The Congress itself may take two-to-three days.

Overseeing the entire process under the CBCP Plenary Assembly is the NRC Central Committee with Archbishop Antonio Ledesma (Executive Chairman), Bishop Broderick Pabillo (Vice Chairman), Bishop Socrates Villegas, Bishop Sergio Utleg and Sr. Rosanne Mallillin, SPC (members).

The Central Committee is to be assisted by the Episcopal Advisory Council, which is composed of Gaudencio Cardinal Rosales (Luzon), Ricardo Cardinal Vidal (Visayas), Archbishop Orlando Quevedo (Mindanao), and Archbishop Angel Lagdameo (CBCP).

The ad intra secretariat for the diocesan consultations on BECs includes: Sr. Rosanne Mallillin of CBCP-NASSA (Coordinator), Msgr. Elmer Abacahin of the CBCP-BEC Office, and a representative of the Episcopal Commission on Indigenous Peoples. The ad extra secretariat for Sub-regional consultations on rural issues includes: Ms. Lourdes Cipriano of PMP (Coordinator), Bro. Hansel Mapayo of AMRSP, and Ms. Belinda Formanes of RPS.

An auxiliary arm of the NRC Central Committee will be composed of the CBCP Offices of Research (under Abp. Antonio Ledesma), Media (under Msgr. Pedro Quitario), and Secretariat (under Msgr. Juanito Figura).

Moreover, from time to time, there will be periodic consultations of notable lay advisers, research centers, and other Episcopal commissions. (cf. the organizational flow of NRC II in the Appendix.)

It is in this light that we make an appeal to all our diocesan social action centers, schools, and research centers as well as farmers’ organizations, NGOs, and government agencies to participate actively in a spirit of solidarity in the various activities outlined for the NRC II process.

The expected outcome of this NRC process, including Phases I and II, are:

1. SEE: a fuller description, both quantitative and qualitative, of the rural poverty situation;
2. JUDGE: a deeper analysis of the situation in the light of the Social Teachings of the Church; and
3. ACT: concrete proposals for action addressed to the rural sectors, local churches, government agencies, NGOs, and others.

Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit—the Spirit of Truth, Justice, and Love—and through the intercession of Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception, may we carry out these proposed activities in solidarity with our brothers and sisters in the countryside.

For the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of the Philippines;

+ANGEL N. LAGDAMEO, D.D.
Archbishop of Jaro
President, CBCP
16 July 2007
**CBCP Pastoral Statement on the 2007 National Elections**

We are grateful to the many people who worked hard for honest and clean elections last May 2007. In a special way we commend the lay groups under the leadership of the Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting (PPCRV), the National Movement for Free Election (NAMFREL), the National Secretariat for Social Action (NASSA), the Simbahang Lingkod ng Bayan, the Catholic Media Network, and the newly organized Legal Network for a Truthful Elections (LENTE). Their efforts undoubtedly contributed to the emergence of a new political consciousness among the electorate. In many cases, the voters were not naively allured by popular personalities or by those who gave away much money. We thank the thousands who, in various capacities, devoted themselves to achieving Clean, Honest, Accurate, Meaningful and Peaceful Elections (CHAMP).

Nevertheless, we are mindful of the many evils that continue to plague our electoral exercise. As we have done in the past, we condemn the dirty conduct of elections in some provinces. The buying, padding and selling of votes have embarrassingly become systemic and threaten to become a cultural element of our elections. It has been reported that some voters went to the precincts only when first paid by some candidates. We also express our disapproval of candidates coming from the same family or clan, thus keeping power and influence within the family. We hope and pray that implementing norms be approved to arrest the spread of this malaise.

Likewise we protest against the injustice done to people as their right to choose their leaders was desecrated. We are horrified by the violence inflicted on innocent people during the campaign and election periods. But we are equally edified by the heroism of those who defended the sanctity of the ballot, even to the point of death.

It was an achievement in itself that elections were held on May 14, 2007. But given a climate of social distress and hopelessness, the challenge was how to restore credibility to the electoral process as a core democratic institution for resolving political conflict, and how to get the citizenry, especially the youth, to become politically engaged. On the whole, despite the deep flaws in the process and its administration, the last election may be said to have been a qualified success with the results generally reflecting the popular will (e.g. only 5 percent of the contested positions are being questioned).

**Vigilance, Volunteerism and Coordinated Action**

For the first time since 1992, the Church-based groups, PPCRV, NAMFREL, NASSA worked closely together and were better prepared and organized to make a qualitative impact on the elections, even in Muslim Mindanao. A new group, called LENTE (Legal Network for Truthful Elections) was organized on the initiative of One Voice with the Integrated Bar of the Philippines (IBP) as co-convenor—the first time that lawyers, paralegal volunteers were mobilized for electoral work. LENTE focused on the weakest link in the electoral process—the canvassing of votes at the municipal and provincial levels. These groups agreed to coordinate their work through a grouping called VforCE (One Million Volunteers for Clean Elections). The doggedness of these groups, despite the limited time to organize and coordinate, contributed to the deterring large-scale fraud. VforCE offered a framework for coordinated election.

The May 2007 elections indeed led to a manifestation of volunteerism and vigilance, underscoring the critical importance of collaboration and partnerships, and providing concrete opportunities for citizen engagement in various aspects of electoral process.

There also were signs of increased maturity among the electorate as the election results demonstrated that sheer popularity/celebrity status and huge media expenditures do not necessarily translate to election victory. These results may also be an indicator of some success in the voters’ education efforts. The citizen groups, including Church-based organizations, have worked on this for years.

But the last elections also showed the continuing dominance of the Philippines of a few political families, and revealed the persistence of vote-buying as a serious problem (including pay-offs not to vote) in a social context of widespread poverty and gross inequality, even if there were a few positive stories of reversals of these old trends. Much remains to be done in the area of political recruitment and financing of alternative candidates, and thus in the development of genuine political party system in the Philippines. That is why the flawed party list law and its problematic implementation is real cause for concern. There were also signs of alienation from the electoral process among the citizenry: a lower-than-usual voter turnout (60-65 percent of registered voters), including a very low level of participation from overseas absentee voters (14 percent).

**Agenda for Electoral Reforms and Continuing Political Involvement**

Both the positive and negative experiences of the last elections point to a number of important electoral reforms that needed to be pursued:

1. A full revamp of the Comelec, beginning with the appointment of a new chair and commissioners with unquestioned integrity and competence, especially in systems and management. These appointments are going to be in the hands of the President and the Commission on Appointments of the Philippine Congress, and it is our collective responsibility to monitor closely the process of selection, appointment and confirmation. There should also be serious efforts to de-politicize and professionalize the bureaucracy.

2. Holding those responsible for anomalies in past elections and the recently concluded ones accountable to the people. Good career people in the Comelec can be the catalyst for the renewal of the institution.

3. Modernization of the electoral system in time for the 2010 presidential election. There should be broad-based and transparent discussions on what type of poll automation is appropriate and how it is to be piloted and implemented.

4. Particular attention should be given to ARMM and the problem of warlordism, because it is of the scale that can affect the national elections. We also owe it to the voters in those areas who are effectively disenfranchised when elections are not meaningful, truthful and free. Historically, those in power have found it useful to rely on the brazen exercise of power through intimidation, violence and fraud.

5. A review of laws affecting the electoral system. Among the most urgent are the reform of the party system, party-list law, overseas absentee voting, political

---

**STATEMENTS**

CBCP Pastoral Statement on the 2007 National Elections

IMPACT • August 2007

National Elections p26
We live in troubled times, we live in miraculous times. As the world around us and inside us evolve, we feel called more often to reflect on our journey and we find ourselves, together, interconnected and needing each other. We are the Mission Partners of the Association of the Major Religious Superiors of the Philippines (AMRSP).

Gathered together these past two days to revitalize our commitment, we paused to reflect on the context within which we endeavor to do our mission.

The Signs of the Times

Globalization sweeps throughout the inhabited world bringing with it more death and destruction, further suffering and marginalization for the poorest of the poor and to earth itself.

Conservatism, crass consumerism, individualism, the selfish drive for profit and wealth engulf our communities and society.

Poverty, both urban and rural, continues to worsen and degrade the dignity of the human person.

Human rights violations on a scale comparable to martial law ravage the sanctity of life. Extra-judicial killings of human rights defenders, workers, farmers, fisherfolk, indigenous peoples, journalists, church people and lawyers are alarming and are reinforced and abetted by a culture of impunity.

Our environment is desecrated by extractive industries such as large-scale mining, the propagation of genetically-modified organisms and by disasters.

Our women experience further dehumanization by the phenomena of feminization of labor and human trafficking.

Within the Church, as institution and among its members, we observe and experience a growing conservatism.

There is a tendency to prefer the comfort zones of traditional works and non-committal silence to the experiences of injustice and oppression.

The wave of ambivalence that globalization brings is washing over the consciousness toward social transformative praxis, turning away from the challenge of aggiornamento that Vatican II and PCP II promote.

The Challenges We Face

Indeed, we are in troubled times but our coming together proves we are also in miraculous times.

We realize our weaknesses and rejoice in our strengths.

Our diverse persuasions have prevented us from genuinely coming together and working together in the spirit that we are all one in Christ our Savior.

We recognize that as Mission Partners, together with the AMRSP, we need to remember the rich tradition of service to the people and of prophetic witness to the struggles of the poor.

The greater demands of the worsening situation impel us to respond despite lack of personnel and funds.

We are saddened by the inadequate support from the congregations to the work of the mission partners.

We see there is a need for a sustained mechanism for exchange of ideas and coordination among mission partners.

In spite of this entire challenging situation, we affirm our passion and commitment as Mission Partners of the AMRSP. There is reason for joy and hope.

We find ourselves growing in our openness, acceptance, and appreciation of our diversity and more than willing to transcend our limitations towards a more effective and sustained service of the poor.

For the next two years, we commit ourselves to pursue the twin thrusts of expansion and consolidation.

Our common Agenda

We commit ourselves to joint advocacy on pressing issues – Globalization, Human Security Act, Charter Change, Mining, Global Warming and Extra-judicial Killings.

We shall undertake common study, formation and capacity building to creatively respond to the present situation.

We shall maximize opportunities for networking and advocacy among ourselves to stimulate and synergize our ministries.

We shall revitalize the dynamism of the Coordinating Council as a venue to create support and mutual cooperation.

We shall promote the Mission Partners to the different congregations in more creative and life-giving ways.

We shall re-assert our prophetic role and work hand in hand with the AMRSP for the realization of its Vision-Mission.

With renewed vigor and vitality, with joy and hope, with perseverance and sacrifice, we commit ourselves to these noble tasks, a sacred duty. In these times there are indeed no limits to what we can do when we work hand in hand. Parables and miracles continue to spring forth from the people’s historic struggle for total liberation.

“Let the heavens be glad, let the earth rejoice...we have told the glad news of deliverance in the great congregation.” (Ps. 96:11 and 40:9)

Rural Missionaries of the Philippines (RMP)
Task Force Detainees of the Philippines (TFDP)
Urban Missionaries (UM)
Task Force Urban Conscientization (TFUC)
Task Force Delinquent Persons (TFDP)
Urban Missionaries of the Philippines (RMP)
Justice and Peace and Integrity of Creation Commission (JPICC)
Women and Gender Commission (WGC)
I. INTRODUCTION

The PPCRV is a witness to Truth. This was the focus of the Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting for its watch of Elections 2007. For truth and in truth how did PPCRV hear, see and touch the mid-term elections? A brief revisit of our reason for being and becoming is in order.

A Brief History

PPCRV was born from the Second Plenary Council of the Philippines, PCP II— a synodal meeting of the Catholic Church in the Philippines on January 20 to February 17, 1991 which called for the transformation and renewal of Christian life and of Philippine society. Its participants composed of bishops, priests and religious included, for the first time, some members of the laity. The inclusion of the laity emphasized the significance for lay people to realize that their involvement and participation are necessary before any mission on transformation, whether ecclesial or societal, can be meaningfully done. PCP II pointed out that the way politics is practised in the Philippines looms as one of the major obstacles for total human development. To renew politics in Christ, the Council urged the lay people to take active part in changing the political order, actively promote the election to public office of men and women of integrity and competence, and help form the civic conscience of the Filipino voters.

Thus, PPCRV was born 3 months after the Council’s conclusion. It was launched formally on October 19, 1991 as the laity’s first concrete response to PCP II. Its first field of action as a movement of the “Church in politics” and an accredited Citizens’ Arm of the Commission on Elections was the May 1992 Synchronized National and Local Elections – the first regular electoral exercise after Martial Law and the fall of the dictatorship. PPCRV started as a laity movement, and continues to be inspired, headed, organized and propelled by the laity.

II. VISION AND MISSION (for Elections 2007)

Called to mission by God with His Son, Jesus Christ, and empowered by the Holy Spirit to build a society that is more humane, and as a community of disciples attain fullness of life through a renewed and transformed political order, particularly by exercising the right and responsibility to work for CHAMP – Clean Honest Accurate Meaningful Peaceful elections. To achieve CHAMP Elections, the PPCRV Elections 2007 Roadmap had five major landmarks …

1. Voters’ Education – A new Manual was designed, translated, tested and printed: Pinoy Voter’s Academy (Ang Drama sa Likod ng Halalan) which was launched in September 2006 and cascaded to all dioceses, vicariates, parishes, organizations and base communities from October 2006 up to May 2007.


3. Membership Mobilization and Recruitment – Designation of coordinators on the parish/vicariate/district/dioecesan levels began on the second half of 2006. Organizational meetings heightened in October 2006 and continued till elections 2007. Recruitment of 500,000 pollwatchers to safeguard 224,220 clustered precincts started simultaneously with the voters’ education sessions being held nationwide.

4. Internet-based Information and Communication System – Through our System and Web Provider, PPCRV Provincial Units were given the capacity to send/relay its Certificate of Votes (COV) and Pollwatchers’ Reports (PWR) quickly through the World Wide Web. PLDT and SMARTBRO were likewise partners in this program by providing us with the necessary telecommunications connectivity.

5. Advocacy and Networking – PPCRV advocacy and networking promoted activities preceding Elections 2007 which had several centerpieces.

- CHARTER CHANGE (ChaCha) – In April 2006 there were attempts to change the Constitution without giving the people ample time or information on the issues involved, thus threatening the holding of Elections 2007. In response, PPCRV organized in 6 pre-selected pilot dioceses a forum on what the people should know about the Constitution, the changes being proposed and the constitutional means for Charter Change. A corresponding Primer was published and distributed by PPCRV nationwide.

- COMELEC ACCREDITATION – On January 25, 2007 PPCRV was accredited by COMELEC as its Citizens’ Arm in voters’ education and pollwatching, including canvassing. Early accredi-
the PPCRV in its efforts for CHAMP in Elections 2007.

- Legal Network for Truthful Elections (LENTE), a newly organized aggrupation of lawyers and para-legal associates selflessly served as PPCRV’s legal arm in the canvassing of votes in the municipal/city and provincial levels.

III. ELECTIONS 2007

LIGHTS – The May 14, 2007 elections was a celebration of volunteerism. A living testimony to this are the 439,693 PPCRV Volunteers. It was likewise a celebration of collaboration, partnership and dialogue. PPCRV capitalized on its historical breakthrough in ARMM, fielding pollwatchers there through its Muslim partners using its accreditation in the conduct of elections. LENTE was an invaluable muscle in safeguarding the tallying and canvassing of votes. To guarantee that the electoral exercise was sustained as one sacred seam-

less process, PPCRV opened itself into an informal partnership with NAMFREL for the collection of the 6th copy of the Election Return in most polling precincts nationwide. PPCRV was creative in seeking tri-media’s collaboration and support for its CHAMP programs, especially for voters’ education and pollwatching activities. The following are some election highlights that brightened its darkness:

1. Voters’ education was definitely gaining ground since popularity or celebrity status no longer guaranteed “winnability”.
2. A “fat” campaign purse, in vogue jingles, glamorous posters, well-oiled political machineries did not necessarily translate into votes.
3. Issues, platform of governance and programs were beginning to mark national elections rather than personalities and party loyalties.
4. In the voting, counting and canvassing, the vigilance of watch dogs, like PPCRV, LENTE, NAMFREL, NASSA and other volunteer groups undoubted reduced cheating and other election fraud.
5. Media’s activist role in the electoral process contributed to the positive gains of Elections 2007.
6. The noteworthy accessibility, openness to cooperation and congruent response to inquiries of some COMELEC officials and election officers led to better working relationships among election stakeholders for the good of Elections 2007.
7. The moral guidance, trust, and support of the bishops, clergy and religious were invaluable incentives to the PPCRV and other lay movements for clean, credible and truthful elections.
8. Networking for the common good and responsible governance forged together groups coming from diverse ideologies, religious beliefs or political orientations into a committed minority to bring about a new type of Philippine elections.

9. In the light of a concerned citizenry’s crusade against graft and corruption, there emerged hopeful signs from Elections 2007 as manifested by the victories of some God-fearing, cause-oriented and civic-minded individuals, and the toppling of some age-old political dynasties in a number of provinces.

10. The commitment and devotion of a majority of the Board of Election Inspectors who served courageously to protect the sanctity of the ballot in accordance with the law and the dictates of their conscience.

11. The collective prayer of the people is still the unrivaled power for electoral triumphs.

SHADOWS – There were shadows still, a lot of shadows brushing the landscape of Elections 2007. An advanced exposure to political compromise, notwithstanding the gains of voters’ education and the good intentions of election stakeholders and reform-minded groups, was a hindrance to totally overcome systemic organized cheating and fraud embedded in our electoral system. The following are some glaring shadows that darkened the elections:

1. GUNS, GOONS, GOLD—the age-old 3 Gs—were unyielding in their stranglehold on the elections, especially in many critical areas.
2. Vote buying was rampant, undisguised even in many places including polling precincts. Its new and creative forms invaded legitimate election practices like the hiring of pollwatchers by candidates in massive numbers, buying entire barangays identified as bailiwicks of specific candidates to refrain from voting their opponents. Promising government positions and contracts was another sophisticated form of vote-buying.
3. Election-related violence such as the wanton killing of candidates, their supporters and other individuals were a continuing menace to free and peaceful elections, more importantly to the constitutional right to life and liberty. Moreover, these election-related violence highlighted the incapacity of law enforcers to safeguard peace and order, as well as the sanctity of the ballot.
4. Repeated occurrences of confusion, irregularities and delays in the implementation of election rules and instructions, to wit: late release of the computerized voters list and information on clustering of precincts that prevented many voters from voting; delayed arrival of election paraphernalia in election precincts on election day; lack of orderliness in the polling precincts and secrecy provisions in voting; lack of a swift and systematic dissemination of the COMELEC instructions/en banc resolutions; non-uniform compliance of election instructions by some PES/EOS/BEIs, etc., caused the voters’ disenfranchisement and cast doubts on the COMELEC’s management of the elections. The retention of scalawags in the COMELEC and known “operators” in its ranks blurred efforts at restoring its credibility and its campaign to reinforce moral values, and sadly negated the goodwill and the good intentions of the Commission on Elections.

5. The frustration and apathy of people in the elections due to apparent electoral fraud and the unanswered need for meaningful political change were evidenced by an over-all uninspiring voters’ turnout.

6. Chronic failure of elections in ARMM highlighted the failure of government and its corresponding agencies, the political leaders as well as the religious leaders in this region, and the nation as a whole to plumb the depths of their resources and political will to alter the reality that ARMM is “the cheating capital of elections in the Philippines.”

7. A considerable number of Board of Canvassers was able to evade investigation and prosecution of irregularities by flaunting the phrase, “Honest Mistake”.

8. The inexperience and complacency of some members of the Board of Election Inspectors led to glaring flaws in the conduct of election procedures at the precinct level despite the information and training given to them.

III. CONCLUSION

We, the 130 delegates of the PPPRCV Post Election National Conference held on June 20, 21, 22, 2007 at the Pius XII Catholic Center, Manila, Philippines asked ourselves whether Elections 2007 emerged as CHAMP – Clean Honest Accurate Meaningful Peaceful. Instead of an explicit reply lest we lose hope, we focused our gaze on our Faith on Fire that warmed the heart of our elections, our own hearts, and of those who tried hard with inexplicable force of will to vote and vote responsibly. We honor and salute our PPRCVR volunteers, even ourselves, who worked against an abundantance of fear and a poverty of resources in order to safeguard the rights of each and all voters to vote freely, to have each and all votes counted and canvassed accurately, to defy guns, goons, gold in exposing cheating and unlawful manipulation at the polls. There were many such women and men in Elections 2007. They gave us hope to dream and work again and again to inspire more volunteers for CHAMP in forthcoming elections. Because they impelled a breathtaking vigilance against fraud that, on hindsight, had the light of a redemptive act … our nation was actually blessed with the transforming power of Elections 2007 by God for whom inertia is impossible.

And so we move on … to the next election.

On The Human Security Act

We are all for the pursuit of peace and we condemn terrorism as a glaring obstacle to peace.

Republic Act No. 9372, dubbed as Human Security Act of 2007, signed into a law by President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo on March 6, 2007, is to take effect two months after the elections of May 14.

Many voices are apprehensive about this law on the basis of constitutionality and provisions that may legalize objectionable methods of fighting and quelling opposition to the obtaining government. Hence there are calls for bringing the Human Security Act to the Supreme Court for review and for studying and discussing further this law in its contents and repercussions. Some sections have caused lawyers and others to question the effectiveness of this law such as:

• The definition of terrorism in Section 3 is broad and dangerous. It may serve as a basis for discriminating against a wide range of people.
• Section 26 allows house arrest despite the posting of bail, prohibits the right to travel and to communicate with others.
• Provision for seizure of assets in Section 39 and surveillance or wiretapping of suspects in Section 7, investigation of bank deposits and other assets in Section 28 – raise many eyebrows of lawyers and others.

Since we as pastors have looked more into the morality of this law and make a pronouncement in that level, we feel that the atmosphere created by this law and its impending implementations calls on us to appeal to those concerned to review this law so that in consultation and dialogue we may have a law that is truly relevant in promoting the security of the nation and in the pursuit of authentic peace.

For the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of the Philippines:

+Angel N. Lagdameo, D.D.
Archbishop of Jaro
President, CBCP
July 8, 2007

National Elections from p22
dynasties, the “legal” entry of nuisance candidates, and the formulation of an agenda for institutional reform.

6. The development of mechanisms for deepening the political education of voters (e.g. Pinoy Voter’s Academy and Gabay Halalan), fostering public accountability of politicians to the electorate (e.g. Bantay Pangako) and sustaining coordinated political engagement especially among the youth, the citizens’ groups, and Church-based organizations (e.g. VforCE).

7. Cleansing and publication of the voters’ list long before the day of election.

As we appreciate and thank the men and women of good will and courage who influenced our last election, so do we thank the Lord for continuing to guide the journey of the Filipino people.

For CBCP:
+Angel N. Lagdameo, D.D.
Archbishop of Jaro
CBCP President
July 8, 2007

IMPACT • August 2007
Barbarism

It is not easy to accept that in this civilized age of well advanced science and much developed technology, there are still downright barbarians in this country. It actually has no reference to race, color and creed. Barbarism is in reality a sick mind frame and a sickening actuation pattern in civilization, no space in decent society, no reason for being.

It is not enough for them to kill people. They consider necessary to still decapitate them. They even felt the need to desecrate the bodies of their dead victims. This is inhumanity at its worst. This is barbarism at its best. Even people in the deep far jungles of distant parts of the world are already becoming gradually conscious of how they should relate with one another for their own good and their common welfare.

What was done to the Filipino soldiers by people living in the Philippines and benefiting from Philippine resources went beyond the area of understanding, the sphere of tolerance and patience. The atrocity rightfully demands the recourse and application of commutative justice. No. It is definitely not to answer barbarism with any equally barbaric move. This simply means that the government may not simply look the other way, make nice talks, shakes hands here and abroad.

It is neither enough to simply condemn the hideous incident and stop at that. This time, the demands of strict justice should be served by the pursuit of the perpetrators of a most hideous crime against the soldiers and by their pursuant punishment according to the gravity of their multiple capital misdeeds with gross inhuman elements. This is not vengeance but the basic demands of social order and national peace.

The most painful and pitiful impact of the barbarism in question has immediate and intense relevance to the families, the spouses and children of those thus massacred, mutilated and desecrated. They will bear the burden of this bloody and merciless atrocity all the years of their lives. And while it is not morally right, it however remains understandable that they bear anger and hatred, and may even want vengeance for their dear trampled-upon departed.

This disgusting and nauseating barbarism done against no less than 10 or even more Filipino soldiers serves as a grim reminder that there are individuals who look like people, pretend to be people. In reality, however, they belong to another species if not another planet as well. They have no right nor claim to be with people. Barbarians are a pre-historic species.

www.ovc.blogspot.com

SONA 2007

Once more—and hopefully the last—the country is about to watch the spectacle of another address on the glorious state of the nation with predictable assertions. There will be the usual fantastic claims of past achievements and standard quixotic predictions of future big socio-economic development all over the land. Both the alleged present and envisioned future state of the nation will be presented in impressive statistics and dramatic videos. In substance, however, it is the unbelievable SONA delivered by the same distrusted leadership heading the same discredited administration.

Millions of Filipinos will simply pay attention to their day to day work to earn a living. The SONA will come and go—either without them minding of it or without knowing it even. There will be however those who will watch and listen the SONA for different reasons.

There will be those who will follow the SONA because they want to know basically the pretensions and falsities in and behind it. Certainly, it will be a big sacrifice for them to watch the SONA. But they have to—especially in order to hear the words and see the gestures of the present Malacañang occupant. This watchful listening and observance might even tell them if the former is really bent in keeping Malacañang even after 2010.

And there are reasons to thus conclude. Remember the fearless forecast recently made by no less than the same Malacañang occupant that the Philippines will be a first world country after 20 years, i.e., in year 2030! Need more be said? www.ovc.blogspot.com
The Builder

A

n elderly carpenter was ready to retire. He told his employer-contractor of his plans to leave the house building business and live a more leisurely life with his wife enjoying his extended family. He would miss the paycheck, but he needed to retire. They could get by.

The contractor was sorry to see his good worker go and asked if he could build just one more house as a personal favor. The carpenter said yes, but in time it was easy to see that his heart was not in his work. He resorted to shoddy workmanship and used inferior materials. It was an unfortunate way to end his career.

When the carpenter finished his work and the builder came to inspect the house, the contractor handed the front-door key to the carpenter. “This is your house,” he said, “my gift to you.”

What a shock! What a shame! If he had only known he was building his own house, he would have done it all so differently. Now he had to live in the home he had built none too well.

So it is with us. We build our lives in a distracted way, reacting rather than acting, willing to put up less than the best. At important points we do not give the job our best effort. Then with a shock we look at the situation we have created and find that we are now living in the home we have built. If we had realized, we would have done it differently.

Think of yourself as the carpenter.

The Parable of the Marbles

O

nce upon a time, there was a foolish boy who had a bag full of beautiful marbles. Now this boy was quite proud of his marbles. In fact, he thought so much of them that he would neither play with them himself, nor would he let anyone else play with them. He only took them out of the bag in order to count and admire them; they were never used for their intended purpose. Yet that boy carried that coveted bag of marbles everywhere he went.

Well, there was also a wise boy who wished he could have such a fine bag of marbles. So this boy worked hard and earned money to purchase a nice bag to hold marbles. Even though he had not yet earned enough with which to purchase any marbles, he had faith and purchased the marble bag. He took special care of the bag and dreamed of the day it would contain marbles with which he could play and share with his friends.

Alas, the foolish boy with all of the marbles didn’t take care of the marble bag itself, and one day the bag developed a hole in the bottom seam. Still, he paid no attention and, one by one, the marbles fell out of the bag.

It didn’t take long, once the foolish boy’s marble bag developed a hole, for the wise boy to begin to find those beautiful marbles, one at a time, lying unnoticed on the ground. And, one by one, he added them to his marble bag. The wise boy thus gained a fine bag full of marbles in no time at all. This boy played with the marbles and shared them with all of his friends. And he always took special care of the bag so he wouldn’t lose any.

And, what about the foolish boy? Because he was selfish and careless, he lost all of his marbles and was left holding the bag.
Wood for the Fire

70 Prayer Exercises to help us Pray with our Hearts

Ramon Maria Luza Bautista, SJ

In this book, Fr. Bautista likens praying to igniting a fire. To set a fire ablaze, something is needed to start it off. In the case of prayer—a gospel passage, a simple reflection, or simply a prayer exercise to awaken in us that deep yearning for God. As the title suggests, this book offers to readers these kindling materials. And what are these? 70 prayer exercises to help us pray well and meet our God in the stillness of our hearts. Patterned after the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius, Fr. Bautista brought together texts from Scriptures and perceptive prayer exercises to help individuals open themselves to God in prayer. Immersed in the retreat ministry, Fr. Bautista, who has a doctorate in spirituality from Heythrop College, University of London, has been in formation work for lay people, men and women religious, and those preparing for ordination. For Christians who take their prayer life seriously, this book offers an excellent guide.

Jesus’ Ways to Success

Biju Michael, SDB

Contemporary society defines success on how much money one has in the bank, how profitable one’s business is, or how high one’s position is in the corporate world. In other words, success is defined in terms of fame or prosperity. Jesus, however, defines success as the “fulfillment for which we were created—that is—to know, love and serve God on this earth so as to be happy with him forever in heaven.” Drawing insights from various sources, the author, a Salesian priest based in Rome, offers helpful guidelines for the pursuit of happiness, including practical advice on how to give one’s best and put first things first in life. With his experience in teaching and youth ministry combined with academic knowledge, Fr. Michael offers readers a book loaded with treasures to discover and keep to nourish oneself to success: such as honesty, loyalty, compassion, kindness, generosity, humility, forgiveness, prudence and perseverance. Published by St. Pauls, Makati, this book is an excellent read.

Embracing Change

10 Ways to Grow Spiritually and Emotionally

Joseph F. Sica

There is nothing more engaging to read than a book filled with stories that resonate with one’s own experiences of daily living. Fr. Sica, a master storyteller and an accomplished public speaker, lists down 10 effective ways to help us grow spiritually and emotionally. Drawing from his well of experience as a retreat master and counselor, Fr. Sica invites readers to journey with him, offering them practical, easy-to-apply proposals, capped with insightful anecdotes that drive home the point. At first glance, the book looks like one of those self-help fix that we see around, but leafing through its pages, the reader is offered practical suggestions on how to change his/her life in a positive way. Recently published by Paulines Publishing House, the book is an excellent resource for anyone who wishes to change his/her life positively.

Managing Your Time, Energy, and Talent in Ministry

John P. Flanagan

This book offers helpful advice on how to use time, talents and resources effectively for the service of the Church. The author knows whereof he speaks. Ordained Permanent Deacon in 1981, Flanagan is married with five children and fifteen grandchildren. He was a veritable success in the corporate world before he committed his time, talents and energy to various ministries in the Catholic Church in New Jersey, USA. For over ten years he trained parishioners in different churches on the theology of giving—not in the Pondo ng Pinoy style though—but motivating them to contribute their talent, time and energy in practical ways. The blurb of the book says it all: “Time is short, our obligations are many, the needs of those we serve are often serious and urgent. How we juggle these disparate elements of our lives in such a way we don’t burn out in the process but are rather enriched ourselves in the ministry we perform is very important.” The book is an excellent read as it offers effective management methods in ministry drawn from the author’s well of experience.
Title: IN THE LAND OF WOMEN

Running Time: 97 mins
Lead Cast: Adam Brody, Meg Ryan, Kristen Stewart, Makenzie Vega, Olympia Dukakis, JoBeth Williams, Elena Anaya
Director: Jonathan Kasdan
Producer: Steve Golin, David Kanter
Screenwriter: Jonathan Kasdan

The opening scene shows 26-year-old soft-porn screenwriter Carter Webb (Adam Brody) being dumped by his girlfriend, Sofia Bunuel (Elena Anaya), a writer who happens to be a much better known literary figure. Going home in tears, Carter learns that his aging grandmother Phyllis (Olympia Dukakis) is critically ill and on the verge of senility. He decides to flee the big city to look after the old woman, who lives in Ann Arbor, Michigan—partly out of his sincere concern for his mother’s mother and partly for his desire to escape the pain Sofia had caused him. Serving dutifully as caregiver to his grandma in the leafy suburbs of Michigan, Carter meets their neighbor Sarah Hardwicke (Meg Ryan), pained by the twin discovery of her breast cancer and her husband’s affair. Sarah soon makes a confidante of the good listener Carter, whose low-key manner and sensitivity also soon attracts Sarah’s two daughters, the 17-year-old Lucy (Kristen Stewart) and the precocious grade-schooler Paige (Makenzie Vega).

A film debut of director and screenwriter Jonathan Kasdan, In the Land of Women offers a welcome break from frenetic thrillers, horror flicks and computer-assisted fantasy films. The beauty of this movie lies in its subtle and character-based exploration of the vulnerability and feelings of three generations of women—minus the melodrama. The movie does not pretend to present characters that make lasting impacts upon one another’s lives—rather, it shows a string of little scenes that, combined, may not amount to something earth-shaking but nevertheless have their way of discreetly touching the viewer, thanks to the heartfelt performances of the leads, particularly Brody, Ryan and Stewart. It seems there is also an attempt by Kasdan to break out of stereotypes by making his lead character, Carter, a contradiction in terms, so to speak. Carter makes a living out of writing soft-core pornography but is actually a sensitive, sympathetic soul who finds no trouble staying chaste despite his appeal to women. Can a character like that actually exist in real life? How are porn writers supposed to act or be anyway?

Women will resonate well with In the Land of Women while men ought to learn from it a thing or two about the virtue of true caring. Despite the closeness and tender moments shared by Carter and Sarah and Carter and Lucy, In the Land of Women is far from being a love story. It’s about a young man’s struggle to understand himself and the direction his life is taking—the encounters with the women did not prove to be distractions, but rather a process that aids his growth. There is some violence and crude language in the movie and references to pornography and adultery, but what clings to memory are the good scenes like the reconciliation between mother and daughter in the hospital, a young man’s resistance to a teenage girl’s sexual impulsiveness, a young man’s principled defense of a stranger, and a true-to-character conversion in a young man’s career.
CHINA

4 priests jailed in China

Four Catholic priests have been nabbed and jailed for refusing to join Patriotic Association, the government body that runs practice of religion in the country. The priests--Liang Aijun, Wang Zhong and Gao Jinbao, and Cui Tai were locked up in a cage for several days last month before they were transferred to a secret location. Cardinal Kung Foundation says at least five bishops are in jail and others are under house arrest and surveillance. About 15 priests and an unknown number of laypeople are also jailed.

VIETNAM

“Allow Farmers to Peacefully Protest”

The police suppression of a peaceful protest in Ho Chi Minh City on July 18 is a vivid demonstration of Vietnam’s “continuing intolerance” for government critics, a group said. Human Rights Watch (HRW) claimed hundreds of poor farmers were protesting government’s land seizures outside Ho Chin Minh City’s National Assembly building for almost a month when police tore Police tore down the demonstrators’ banners and signs, and took away some of the protestors on buses, according to eyewitnesses. “The crackdown on this demonstration shows Hanoi continues to curtail people’s rights,” the group said. “If Vietnam really has joined the community of nations, it should tolerate dissent, not crush it.”

INDONESIA

Logging may wreck orangutan forests in a decade

Illegal logging could destroy the last forest strongholds of orangutans within a decade and the world should do more to help Indonesia halt smuggling both of apes and of timber, a U.N. report said. “Burning of forests, sometimes to clear land to grow palm oil for biofuels, was adding to threats to endangered orangutans, which live on the islands of Borneo and Sumatra,” Achim Steiner, the head of the U.N. Environment Programme (UNEP), said and urged more funding for wardens and a global customs crackdown on illegal trade.

IRAN

HRW asks Iran govt to stop mass deportation

Human Rights Watch urged Iran government to halt the mass deportation of Afghan nationals and investigate allegations that its authorities have abused numerous deportees. It said officials should also ensure that Afghans faced with deportation are given the individual opportunity to seek protection based on conditions in Afghanistan that would threaten their lives or freedom. “Iran can deport people who are there illegally, but it has to give them the chance to contest their deportation or to seek asylum,” said Brad Adams, Asia director at Human Rights Watch.

JAPAN

Airlines transports dogs to vivisection labs

Covance, a company with a history of egregious cruelty to animals and the world’s largest breeder of dogs for use in experimentation, is using Japan Airlines to transport beagle puppies from New York City to vivisection laboratories in Tokyo, a group said. People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) said that in 28 hours travel, dogs are crammed into tiny transport cages, may not receive sufficient food or water during the long journey, and may be forced to sit in their own waste. It said cargo holds often lack adequate air conditioning, heating, and ventilation, so animals may “endure extreme discomfort” from temperature extremes or suffocate from insufficient oxygen.

PHILIPPINES

North Korea to end nuclear program

N. Korea’s foreign minister promised to abide by his country's pledge to end its nuclear weapons program, a Philippine diplomat said. Pak Ui Chun told Philippine Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo during the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) meeting held this month that six-party talks on North Korea's nuclear program were progressing well. Mr. Pak’s visit is a rare overseas trip by a senior North Korean official.

S. KOREA

Deaf-mute ordained priest

For the first time in the history of the Catholic Church in Asia, a deaf-mute has been ordained a priest along with 39 others in Seoul, this country. Fr. Benedict Park Min-seo lost his hearing at the age of two and felt the call to be a priest at a young age. While at a special school for deaf children he met Fr. Michael Jeong Sun-oh, parish priest at Beon-dong. Benedict was given special assistance to discern his vocation and during the years at the seminary and finally reached the important moment of his ordination. Benedict celebrated his first Mass on July 8 at Beon-dong parish church using sign language along with the 39 new priests.

INDIA

Dozens die in floods, millions stranded

More than 70 people were killed after heavy rains and floods across South Asia, while more than one million were left stranded by rising waters recently. Several days of torrential downpours, combined with melting Himalayan snow, caused flooding in low-lying areas of Nepal, India’s northern states and neighboring Bangladesh, with rivers expected to crest in coming days. India’s northeast was among the worst affected. According to area tallies, about 800 people have died in India since the onset of monsoon season in June.
BHURMABHURMABHURMABHURMABHURMA

Burmese AIDS Activist Freed

Free at last. An outspoken Burmese AIDS activist jailed since May for advocating the release of the country's top political prisoner has been freed. The release reportedly follows a scathing report on Burma's human rights abuses from one of the world's best-known humanitarian organizations. Phyu Thin's release recently comes six weeks after her arrest for attending prayer services aimed at gaining freedom for Aung San Suu Kyi, Burma's democracy leader.

CAMBODIACAMBODIACAMBODIACAMBODIACAMBODIA

UN: No end to land-grabbing in Cambodia

The United Nations accused the Cambodian authorities of letting elites to continue grabbing land illegally. The government, however, denies the allegation and said it's doing everything to stop the practice. Soaring property prices have resulted in an explosion of land-grabbing in Cambodia, leaving tens of thousands of people destitute. A report by the UN's Rapporteur on Human Rights in Cambodia said that land-grabbing has "a devastating impact" on the poor. It says that almost 15 percent of the land in Cambodia is now owned by a tiny elite.

The Children and the Media: A Challenge for Education

CBCPWorld, which has for its mission the making of the internet as a new forum for proclaiming the Gospel, is now on its 5th year.

It provides filtered broadband internet connectivity via VSAT and IP Radio systems to over a hundred catholic schools, dioceses, congregations and partners.

Other services:

> Training in Systems administration, Web Designing, Educational Technology and many more

> Web Design, and Free Web hosting for religious and educational sites

> Construction of local and wide area networks using WiFi technologies

Visit our website: www.cbcpworld.com or call (02) 404-2182 / 4041612