



UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST IN THE PHILIPPINES

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THE NATIONAL COUNCIL

CHOOSE RIGHTEOUS AND SERVANT LEADERS A Statement of Appeal to the Faithful on the May 2022 Elections

*“When the godly are in authority, the people rejoice.
But when the wicked are in power, they groan.” --Proverbs 29:2, NLT*

Our country longs for godly leaders who champion the welfare and interest of the people, especially those relegated to the margins of society, and not for their own selfish desire for power and wealth.

We are weary of politicians who, after promising a reversal of people’s desperate situation during the campaign period, lead the people to the quagmire and hopelessness after winning the post. Many Filipinos have lost faith in the merit of election as solution to the insurmountable crises the Filipino people have been facing. We remember five years ago, then Mayor Rodrigo Duterte promised significant changes with his “Change is coming” slogan. Change did not come. Amidst us now are grim realities of backsliding of democracy, good governance and social justice made even worse during the Covid-19 pandemic.

It is upsetting that in the Philippine politics there is the proliferation of political dynasty and it is challenging to eventually stop it, unless the electoral laws of the land are changed and the practice of democracy is revolutionized that would prevent continuous political succession from families which have occupied political positions. Political dynasties that ascended to echelons of power do not have the monopoly of competency in governance and accountability. We renounce political dynasty in the Philippines as this concentrates power in the hands of the few.

History tells us that genuine change takes place with people aware of their unique role in affecting such a change as they seriously participate in the election process. It is an imperative of faith to inspire the citizenry to choose leaders of known rectitude and integrity, and whose track record demonstrates clear conviction and commitment to care for the victims of unjust social systems and structures operating in society.

Sharon Rose Joy Ruiz-Duremdes, former NCCP General Secretary in a Biblico-Theological Reflection titled “On Electing People to Office,” persuasively emphasized:

“The national elections is an arena where we can help to secure the election of candidates who are committed to working for the oppressed and the exploited. The elections may not bring about the needed changes, which the people have long clamored and struggled for. Therefore, the more important task for the churches is to accompany the poor in their journey toward their Promised Land, whether in season (election time) or out of season

(after election time). For when they shall have thrown off the yoke of oppression and entered their Promised Land, they will surely make the electoral process work for their good.”¹

Henceforth, in the spirit of humility and self-examination, churches are called to provide venues where members are empowered to choose genuine servant-leaders in May 2022 elections. The following activities churches can do to involve in the politics of change:

1. Conduct and participate in voter’s education campaigns and promote people’s issues and the need for genuine servant leaders, with special attention to political education among church people (i.e., duty of Christian engagement in politics);
2. Support efforts of people’s organizations in promoting and protecting people’s rights and welfare;
3. Promote candidates with known probity and integrity on human rights, good governance, love of country;
4. Reject candidates whose record and political party affiliation enable injustice, oppression and corruption;
5. Prepare Electoral Watchdog formations, conduct trainings against poll fraud in the automated elections as well as efforts to militarize communities. Volunteer especially in community-level formations;
6. Join and build alliances with the likes of Kontra Daya and People’s Choice Movement.

Our Church’s vision should remind us even as we engage ourselves in the politics of change, “...*a responsible, empowered, self-reliant and caring community of Christian believers committed to the pursuit of a transformed church and society towards an abundant and meaningful life for all.*”

Let us all do so conscientiously, studiously, and prayerfully, for ourselves, for our people, and for our future as a nation. Let us not allow anymore wicked rulers to govern our country to end the misery of our brothers and sisters well-loved by God our Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer.

May the unchanging God of change, freedom and mercy be upon us as we exercise the God-given right to suffrage! Amen!

THE NATIONAL COUNCIL

11-14 October 2021

Malate, Manila


Mr. Keith Arleigh Quebral
Chairperson


Bishop Melzar D. Labuntog
General Secretary

¹ NCCP, A Guide for Politics of Change and Meaningful Elections, National Council of Churches in the Philippines