



MAY PAG-ASA PA BA?

A Pastoral Letter of the CBCP Calling
to a Pilgrimage of Hope in the Jubilee Year of 2025

(NB. In lieu of the usual homily, the priest is given the freedom to read the abridged or original version; this abridged version is for homily purposes only.)

Dear People of God,

During the 129th CBCP Plenary Assembly, we, your bishops engaged in communal discernment on the current realities affecting our nation and ask the Filipino people: “May Pag-asa pa ba?”

“Hoping against hope” (cf. Romans 4:18)

We experience frustration and anguish in the face of the following:

- In the sphere of morality, there is alarming confusion, indifference, apathy, helplessness, and loss of sense of sin
- In ecology, we are constantly traumatized by the effects of disasters and tragedies due to climate emergencies
- In the area of economy, the increase in poverty is manifested by the rise of unemployment and the price of commodities; the rich become richer, the poor become poorer, and the powerful become more powerful.
- In the political realm, the scandalous misuse of public funds and resources; the adjustments in the national budget; and the anti-poverty programs that promote a culture of patronage and mendicancy; popularity, dynasty, and patronage are again exploited, making politics into a family business.
- In the area of security and international concerns, our sovereignty and national security are threatened.
- In the field of communications, falsehood, misinformation, and disinformation are weaponized against the truth.
- In the area of governance, we wonder whether there are still checks and balances.

“May pag-asa pa nga ba? To whom do we turn to?”

Let us examine ourselves and pursue the path of personal, institutional, and ecclesial conversion in order to rediscover hope. This is the opportunity that the Jubilee Year provides us.

“... and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out into our hearts” (Romans 5:5)

Into the darkest and starkest situation of our country, we see Love piercing through darkness reveals glimpses of hope.

- in principle-driven leaders who champion good governance.
- in the idealism of young people and responsible citizens who do not sell their idealism and patriotism.
- in the spontaneous collaboration among NGOs, civic, and religious organizations with the government in times of disasters and calamities.
- in local initiatives and efforts to empower communities for change.
- in public, religious, uniformed, and civic leaders, and ordinary laborers committed to sincere service even without recognition or reward.
- in responsible business practices that seek to protect the environment and serve the needy.
- in those who stake their reputation, even lives, to fight corruption and pursue justice.
- in the Filipino spirit of resiliency, and in those who dedicate themselves to genuine service

Something is wrong yet at the same time urging us that something can and must be done within, among ourselves, and our institutions.

“... through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us” (Romans 5:5)

We feel these wounds of affliction, the disturbance and seeming paralysis dragging us into the pit of hopelessness. In this Jubilee Year of Hope, together we hold precious, the gift of hope sparked by the Holy Spirit. This hope is not simply optimism or a positive feeling. These are glimpses of the ***gift of hope*** that comes from the Holy Spirit urging us to act.

Any action of hope is sourced from the Holy Spirit. Allow the hope within you to be rekindled:

We call upon all leaders, as we fervently remind ourselves, to breathe the spirit of sincerity of God-directed service, breathe transparency and accountability.

We call upon our young people, to share your single feather to become your wings for a better world. Stand up for change and responsible leadership for the present and future of our country.

We call upon our dear faithful, in government, in business, in public or religious communities, be witnesses to our Christian values and fidelity to conscience.

Hope is not to be overcome by fear and despair. Hopelessness can paralyze and enslave us. ***Yet hope gives us courage and freedom.*** May we not give up on one another and our country, for God does not give up on us.

There is hope! May Pag-Asa! And St. Paul counsels us: *"And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap if we do not give up" (Galatians 6:9).*

In this spiritual revolution of hope, let us all walk together in this Pilgrimage of Hope towards the Father's Kingdom. We pray with Pope Francis: *"May your grace transform us into tireless cultivators of the seeds of the Gospel" (Pope Francis, Jubilee Prayer).*

We entrust our journey and pilgrimage, as Filipino People, with our afflictions and dreams unto the hands of Our Blessed Mother Mary, Our Lady of Hope, that she may accompany and guide us as we follow the Way of Jesus, Our Lord. Amen.

For the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines

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CBCP President

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Feast of the Presentation of the Lord

NB. Please announce that the original version is available online.