



AND GOD SAW THAT IT WAS GOOD...

CBCP Statement in Solidarity with Earth Hour

God saw all that he had made...and it was all very good! The Christian must nurture earth and care for creation, for so is the Creator paid homage and done reverence. Creation bears the Divine imprint, and they who deface it transgress against God's sovereignty.

For too long now, we have dealt with earth as a treasure-trove to be plundered at will, exploited to the hilt. We have been sufficiently warned: There is only so much abuse the environment can take before it pays us back in full. The right to a healthful ecology that the Constitution guarantees us all will soon become hollow words when our wells run dry, our fields become arid as wastelands, our air, heavy with lethal pollutants. In many cities of the world, these are realities. And in the Philippines, even as the rape of our forests, the pollution of our waters and the carbon footprint edges closer to irreversible proportions, many continue to pay no heed.

Laudato Si...this was Pope Francis' call to the world, bidding it open its vision to the magnificence, and the beauty, and the majesty by which creation bears witness to the munificence of God. But it was also meant to call attention to our selfishness, for the despoliation of earth is merely symptomatic of a dangerously pervasive self-centeredness that is familiar only with "use", but is a stranger to "care" and "respect".

By the Paris Accord we have agreed to contribute to the reduction of world temperature -- and therefore also to the elimination of the causes of this insidious though very real and verifiable warming of the earth -- with all its consequent evils. Government's commitment is not enough. It takes a renewal not only of our commitment to care for the earth, but of our faith, to be able to recognize the world we live in as God's gift...our common heritage as his sons and daughters.

The time to mark EARTH HOUR is once more upon us on MARCH 25 AT 8:30PM.

We your bishops ask all Catholics in the Philippines -- and wherever they may be -- to join in observance of earth hour. This way, we will also be reminding ourselves of how needlessly wasteful we can be -- of electric energy, water, and other resources that we thoughtlessly believe we have in abundance but of which we are, increasingly, in short supply.

When the darkness engulfs us, as we switch off our electric gadgets, we will allow the lights of heaven that God placed in the firmament to pierce through the veil of self-centeredness and destructiveness. We will also unite ourselves to all those who, in different parts of the world, have yet to enjoy the benefits of electricity, steady water supply, and reliable food sources. Truly, Earth Hour can be a chance for us to submit ourselves to the discipline of Lent and to the renewal to which the season calls us all.

From the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines, March 22, 2017

+SOCRATES B. VILLEGAS
Archbishop of Lingayen Dagupan
CBCP President