

**NOVALICHES BISHOP ASSIGNED**  
**Circular 2003-21**

My Dear People of God in the Two Dioceses:

Today (November 25, 12:00 Noon in Rome/7:00 P.M. in Manila), the Holy Father has appointed me to the new Diocese of Novaliches. His will is God's command!

Deep in my heart I dreaded this possibility. At least not under the circumstances it was being offered! I ran to escape it with all the ingenuity I can muster. The Hound of Heaven caught up with me and I can only say in surrender "*Fiat*". Your will be done! Your Kingdom Come!

With this decision Rome shows that the good of the Local Church is more important than the personal problem of its shepherd. Personal issues may drag on but the Local Church must move on.

My thought goes immediately to my brother, Bishop Bacani! I pray that he will persevere in contemplation and prayer to reform and to reconcile himself to the Church and to the one he may have offended.

I embrace in God's love all the people of San Fernando, La Union, and of Novaliches. You have become a part of my life. I thank God for you! I now have only to wait a little while for the people of Novaliches to tell me when to come and start to journey with them. I am ready!

I have only one wish about the installation. Please keep it simple so the poor will not feel uncomfortable to come. I want to see the poor represented visibly as also the different religious sects throughout the Diocese. Novaliches has one of the biggest concentrations of the urban poor and the sects in Metro-Manila. To these the Church should be in dialogue.

In the meantime as I wait, I now stay more in La Union during my last remaining months to recap and tie loose ends before I turn over to the elected Diocesan Administrator. So I do not bid goodbye to La Union yet. I mean to spend the remaining time left with the Clergy and the Religious to clarify and give my final instructions.

To dispose us more spiritually to welcome or bid goodbye, I want that all parishes of La Union and Novaliches hold a Sacred Triduum before the Blessed Sacrament on December 4, 5, and 6, 2003 to thank God for the service of your outgoing Bishop and to pray God to bless and help the new Bishop.

Please pray for me that I may be a good shepherd after the hearts of Jesus and Mary.

Given in the Chancery of Novaliches, this 25<sup>th</sup> day of November in the year of our Lord, 2003

**Most Rev. Antonio R. Tobias, DD**  
Apostolic Administrator, s.v.

Attested to by:

**Rev. Fr. Jaime Z. Lara**  
Chancellor