

**Ash Wednesday Fasting for HAPAG-ASA  
Circular 2010-04**

**To: All Priests, Religious, and Laity of the Diocese of Novaliches**

Hunger and malnutrition are very pressing concerns for the society. As Pope Benedict XVI said to the world leaders gathered for the UN Food Summit in Rome on November 16, 2009, “Hunger is the most cruel and concrete signs of poverty.” He said that the fundamental right of every human person is first and foremost the right to sufficient, healthy and nutritious food supportive of the essential right to life itself. He also called on churches to defeat hunger in a planned, responsible and regulated manner to support the sector-wide effort to eradicate it as a manifestation of solidarity.

In the last five years, the pernicious problem of hunger and malnutrition persists in the Philippines. Initial results of the 7<sup>th</sup> NNS conducted in 2008 show that there are still about three out of ten children who are hungry and malnourished! This translates to more than eight million Filipino children who are underweight and under height! HAPAG-ASA is a Christ-centered nutrition program and values formation that helps hungry and malnourished children through nutritionist-approved feeding, as well as their families through skills training and livelihood opportunities for parents. The promise of HAPAG-ASA is to have fullness of life through feeding the body and feeding the spirit.

On February 17, Ash Wednesday, may I enjoin you to make a special appeal to our communities for support by donating what had been set aside from their fasting and sacrifices to HAPAG-ASA Integrated Nutrition Program for the benefit of hundreds of thousands of hungry and malnourished children. Their and your support to HAPAG-ASA will go a long way in the efforts to care for hungry and malnourished children in our parishes.

Enclosed is the Pastoral letter in English and Filipino.

Given in the Chancery in Fairview, Quezon City, this 4<sup>th</sup> day of February, in the Year of Our Lord, 2010.

**Most Rev. Antonio R. Tobias, DD**  
Bishop

Attested by:

**Rev. Fr. Jerome U. Rosalinda**  
Chancellor