

**Catholic Response to the *Iglesia ni Cristo* Crisis
Circular 2015-17**

To: All the Faithful in the Diocese of Novaliches

What do we do as Catholics as our brothers and sisters in the *Iglesia ni Cristo* regarding their on-going crisis during their first centenary of existence? I make as my own what our CBCP President, Archbishop Socrates B. Villegas of Lingayen-Dagupan wrote “We, your bishops, offer you these guidelines:

1. PRAY WITHOUT CEASING for a peaceful and just resolution of the present dispute, in a manner both pleasing to God and in conformity with the democratic convictions enunciated in our Constitution.
2. BE CHARITABLE AT ALL TIMES AND IN ALL CIRCUMSTANCES. Jesus, the Lord, willed His disciples to be known by their love. No Catholic should fan the flames of dissension by rumor-mongering and by inflammatory statements. Let all be kind in disposition, respectful in speech and prudent in action.
3. SEEK ENLIGHTENMENT. We appeal to our Catholic lawyers, jurists and law professors to contribute to the on-going discourse in a constructive manner, without condemnation. We seek to be enlightened on what the fundamental law of the land provides, the boundaries of the freedom of religion and the rights and the prerogatives of State.
4. RESPECT HOLY SITES. The EDSA Shrine is a Catholic center of worship. It is a church. There is a Catholic priest assigned to it. We ask that all respect the sacred character of the Edsa Shrine.
5. ABIDE BY THE LAW. Unless it is convincingly shown that a law offends moral precepts, obedience to the law is a Christian duty. Sons and daughters of the Church cannot be less observant of the law than other citizens of the Republic.
6. NO TO OPPORTUNISM. No politician should gain political ground by abetting dissension or, worse, fostering disregard of the Constitution and the law. Neither is it morally correct for any political party to aim at gaining an advantage by controlling a religious sect known to propose to its members a chosen set of candidates.

If we turn to the Lord in sincere prayer, then, we are firm in the faith that all wounds shall be healed.”

Given in the Chancery in Fairview, Quezon City, 19 September 2015.

Most Rev. Antonio R. Tobias, DD
Bishop

Attested by:

Rev. Fr. Reynaldo Percival S. Flores
Chancellor