

Mary, Untier of Knots
Maria, Tagakalag ng mga Buhol ng Buhay
Circular 2016-16

To: All Parishes, Religious Houses, and Schools

On September 28, 2016 is the feast day of Mary, Untier of Knots or as we formally call her in our Diocese: *Maria, Tagakalag ng mga Buhol ng Buhay*. As she is truly our mother, we fondly call her *Inang Desay*. This is going to be her first feast day celebration with us since we launched our devotion to her on December 8, 2015. It may be recalled that I issued a circular dated October 6, 2015, entitled: Devotion to Mary the Untier of Knots. In that said circular, I shared:

As we are positioning Kristong Hari as the future Shrine of the Youth, we try to address and reflect on the question: How do we bring the youth closer to Christ? We think of bringing them to Christ through the Blessed Virgin Mary. We ask again: What particular devotion of Mary that may be attractive to today's youth? We think of Mary Untier of Knots, for the following reasons:

1. It is new to the Filipino youth; hence, they can make this devotion personal to them.
2. It is close to Pope Francis whose popularity among the youth is strong.
3. It encourages creative expression of devotion like tying of life's ribbons around the "Rope of Mary" as they beg Mary to untie, or undo, or straighten their life's knots (struggles, issues, confusions, pains, hurts, etc.).

What is our hope? Position Kristong Hari as a Pilgrim Site of the youth with the devotion to Mary Untier of Knots.

It has been eight months ever since we welcomed *Inang Desay* to our Diocese and I am greatly pleased with the warm reception that we have accorded her. I am particularly happy to see the youth faithfully attending our Thursday Novena and Monthly Pilgrimages every 8th of the month, at her home in Kristong Hari Parish. I have seen how our Parish Youth Ministries (PYM) excitedly received *Inang Desay* in their respective parishes and vicariates, preparing ornate altars for her and intimately praying around her image/statue. It is heartwarming to see thousands of written prayers left hanging at her shrine in Kristong Hari.

Inang Desay has shown us that she is not only for the young. Many adults and children alike also come to her and beg her to help them untie the knots of their lives. The faithful, from different walks of life, have shared stories of answered prayers which they have attributed to her intercessions.

Grateful for Mary's constant prayers and protection, it is incumbent on us as a Diocese to make her feast day on September 28, meaningful and memorable. It is my hope that we support the Novena Pilgrimage on September 19-27, 2016. For each day of the novena, one or two of our eleven Vicariates led by the Parish Youth Ministries, welcome the first image of *Inang Desay* and gather for a celebration of the Holy Eucharist in an accessible parish church of the sponsoring Vicariate/s. May I kindly request our Vicars Forane and Vicariate Priest Youth Coordinators to help make her visit in the Vicariates memorable and well participated?

After the Holy Mass, it would be great if our parishioners particularly the youth can spend time to know *Inang Desay* more intimately by reflecting on the story of her devotion, offering of prayers especially for the country and maybe as a "love offering" make some presentation of talents before her. It is my hope that after her Feast Day that we shall start formally bringing her devotion to our parishes. I am glad to know that some parishes have already made plans to formally launch her regular devotion in their respective parishes.

It is important to remind ourselves that our dear Pope Francis is an avid devotee to Mary, Untier of Knots. In his reflection, he shares:

The first aspect of her faith is this: Mary's faith unties the knot of sin (*cf. Lumen Gentium, 56*). What does that mean? The Fathers of the Second Vatican Council took up a phrase of Saint Irenaeus, who states that "the knot of Eve's disobedience was untied by the obedience of Mary; what the virgin Eve bound by her unbelief, the Virgin Mary loosened by her faith" (*Adversus Haereses, III, 22, 4*). But we know one thing: nothing is impossible for God's mercy! Even the most tangled knots are loosened by his grace. And Mary, whose "yes" opened the door for God to undo the knot of the ancient disobedience, is the Mother who patiently and lovingly brings us to God, so that he can untangle the knots of our soul by his fatherly mercy.

Furthermore, it is worth noting that: "In 1986, the then Padre Bergoglio finished as rector in the seminary and was sent to Germany for six months. At the time, to borrow modern parlance, Fr. Bergoglio was not in a good place — the Dirty War had exacted a heavy toll on his nerves and he worried that the Jesuit community would never recover from the many mutinies that had taken place in their ranks (especially during his term as Provincial Superior of the Jesuits in Argentina)," he would regularly visit the Church of St. Peter in Perlack in Augsburg and venerate the painting of Mary Under of Knots.

Mary, the Untier of Knots (*Maria, Tagakalag ng mga Buhol ng Buhay*) has come to our lives as a Diocese and as a nation when we are facing many institutional, social and personal knots so heavy to bear and much more difficult to untie on our own. More than ever, we are in dire need of God's mercy and compassion through her intercessions.

May I, therefore, request all of you that on 28 September 2016, on her Feast Day, we gather around *Inang Desay* in Kristong Hari Parish at 6:00 PM.

In particular, let us bring before the Altar of the Lord and in the presence of His Mother, the many problems and disturbing concerns of our country. Let us, as a Diocese, beg our Mother Mary to help us untangle the knots that are suffocating our relationship with Her Son Jesus Christ. Let us make the Feast Day be a Day of Surrendering of Our Life's and Nation's Knots to Mary, the Untier of Knots.

If you have questions, please contact the Animator of *Inang Desay* Devotion in Novaliches, Fr. Roland P. Jaluag: 09178322630. You may also contact Fr. Alvin Balean (09081507070) and Mr. Marlon Peralta (09258322437) Director and Lay Coordinator of the Commission on Youth respectively.

Given in the Chancery in Fairview, Quezon City, 8 September 2016.

Most Rev. Antonio R. Tobias, DD
Bishop

Attested by:

Rev. Fr. Reynaldo Percival S. Flores
Chancellor