

FOR IMMEDIATE PRESS RELEASE

October 22, 2009

Letter from the Archbishop

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ:

Thank you for your prayers and support during these challenging days. While we remain steadfast in our stance against Bill 185, there are a few clarifications I would like to make that have surfaced in public conversations that I believe need to be addressed.

In response to my pastoral letter that was released last Sunday, I want to make it clear that persons with same-sex attraction were not the target of my pastoral letter, nor was it meant to condemn anyone in any way. If I have hurt anyone, please forgive me. Our Lord Jesus Christ has given your archbishop and clergy, and all of us, the mission to proclaim God's unconditional love for all God's children especially those who are struggling to experience the freedom that only chastity can give. The Lord has been raised from the dead and exalted to the right hand of the Father so that he could send us the pledge of his love - the Holy Spirit. This Spirit comes to assure us that in the moment of doubt, suffering, and confusion we are not alone.

Our loving God will not abandon us in our time of need. To each and every one, the Catholic Church welcomes, embraces, and loves us. Moreover, the Catholic Church will continue to love and embrace us, no matter how many times we have sinned and how great the sin is. The Catholic Church desires that each of us experience the love and joy that only our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, can bring to all of us.

Additionally, a number of charges appeared in the media regarding the care with which the Archdiocese guards children against sexual abuse. I want to assure everyone that the Archdiocese takes seriously its responsibility to ensure a safe environment for all minors who are in the care of Archdiocesan personnel. A policy with clear procedures for action is in place and will be quickly enforced when reports of an improper behavior on the part of Archdiocesan personnel are received. Proper investigative authorities will be immediately notified if and when allegations of abuse or improper conduct are imposed. Again, the Catholic Church does not and will not tolerate any kind of sexual abuse.

I want to thank the faithful and the people of Guam for all the prayers that they have offered during this time of difficulty. We pray for healing for all who have been hurt throughout our island. We pray that the Holy Spirit will steer us in the direction of unity. We pray, above all else, that we all receive the greatest gift given us, the ability to love one another through Jesus Christ.

Let us ask Santa Marian Kamalen, our protectress of Guam, Blessed Diego and Blessed Pedro to intercede for us so that the unconditional love and peace of Christ will guide us in everything we say and do.

In closing I would like to invite all of us to reflect on the words of St. Paul, "Praise be God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all consolation; he comforts us in all our afflictions and thus enables us to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the same consolation we have received from him. As we have shared much in the suffering of Christ, so through Christ do we share abundantly in his consolation." 2 COR 1:3-5.

Servus tuus,

Most Rev. Anthony Sablan Apuron, OFM Cap., D.D.
Metropolitan Archbishop of Agaña