



## Missionary Benedictine Sisters

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MALATE, MANILA, PHILIPPINES

# A STATEMENT OF GRAVE CONCERN

**W**e, the Missionary Benedictine Sisters of the Manila Priory express our grave concern about the culture of death that is creeping into our society and the violation of human rights that are related to the Administration's war on illegal drugs.

At the outset, we state our condemnation of the drug trade that has not been properly addressed due to corruption, indifference, and lack of political will. Powerful drug syndicates have succeeded in penetrating all levels of our society through bribery and corruption of public officials and law enforcers themselves. The effect is the corruption of our youth, heinous crimes, and the deterioration of the moral fabric of our society.

That is why a drug crusader like former Mayor Rodrigo Roa Duterte was elected President with a wide margin.

We are supportive of President Duterte's determined and single-minded crusade against the illegal drug trade. We are, however, appalled at the ever increasing extra-judicial killings that accompany this crusade perpetrated by law enforcers themselves or by vigilantes.

We believe in the fundamental ethical dictum that **THE END DOES NOT JUSTIFY THE MEANS.**

We believe that not only victims but even perpetrators have human rights and any judgment on them should go through due process.

We condemn the arrogation of law enforcers of powers that do not belong to them, namely as judge and executioners.

We believe that right to life is the most basic of human rights and is the foundation on which all other human rights are built upon. It is God's greatest gift and should be held sacred by all.

We do not believe in punishing criminals by becoming criminals ourselves.

We do not want our country to become "Asia's new killing fields."

We call upon the Administration to:

- state categorically that extra judicial killings are not a part of the campaign against illegal drugs;
- stop promising or giving rewards for people killed or giving quotas of arrests or surrenderees to law enforcers;
- investigate the killings to determine their legitimacy;
- punish those who are found guilty of summary killings.

For the same reason that we hold life to be sacred, we also **DECLARE OUR DISSENT TO THE REINSTATING OF THE DEATH PENALTY.**

We state that death penalty as means of deterrence for crime has long been debunked.

We believe that the death penalty is anti-poor **because the poor have no access to skilled lawyers to defend them.**

*As Pope Francis said: "The commandment, "Thou shalt not kill" has absolute value and applies to both the innocent and the guilty."*

**WE CALL ON ALL OUR ALUMNI, STUDENTS AND THEIR PARENTS, FACULTY, EMPLOYEES, HEALTH WORKERS AND MISSION PARTNERS AND ALL PEOPLE OF GOODWILL TO OPPOSE A CULTURE OF DEATH AND IMPUNITY AND PROMOTE A PROFOUND RESPECT FOR LIFE.**

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Prioress