



**Solidarity in Prayer**  
[An Appeal and an Invitation]

Our brothers Archbishop Socrates Villegas, Bishop Pablo Virgilio David, Bishop Teodoro Bacani, Jr. and Bishop Honesto Ongtioco are now facing difficult days ahead. The processes related to the charges of the crime of sedition have now started to move. They are now asked to submit their counter affidavits. We ask ourselves as brother bishops, what can we do for them? In my previous statement about their situation, I said, "I am very saddened by this news and am greatly disturbed by this development. I know these bishops quite well. I had worked closely with two of them: I functioned as the vice president of Abp. Villegas when he was heading the CBCP, and Bp. David is currently my vice president in the CBCP. That they are accused of sedition and other criminal complaints is for me beyond belief."

I also said that I will "...pray for my brother bishops; this will be a very distressing situation for them, to say the least. I pray that they may remain calm and confident that in the end, they will be found innocent. I make this prayer to the Lord, with the Blessed Mother as our intercessor."

We entrust them to the Lord and to our Blessed Mother.

Thus, today, my invitation and my appeal to all of you, brother archbishops and bishops in the whole country – **Let us be in solidarity with them in prayer.** Let us invite our priests, our religious, our people to join us in this solidarity in prayer.

**On 6 August 2019, the Feast of the Transfiguration of the Lord,** let us remember them in our Masses. Let us pray for them, include them in our reflection and homilies, in the prayers of the faithful. Let us pray for them, our brother bishops, and beg the Lord to let them feel that they are indeed his beloved disciples. May they feel also that they are beloved to us, their brother bishops.

**On 15 August 2019, the Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary,** let us include them in the prayers in our Masses. Let us entrust them to the maternal protection of the Mother of God, the Mother of Jesus, and who is our Mother too.

Let us not forget to include in our prayers, during the abovementioned special days, the people in government who are involved in the processes regarding the cases filed against these bishops. We pray to the Lord for them, with the intercession of the Blessed Mother, that a deep sense of fairness, justice and truth will guide them.

+ **ROMULO G. VALLES, D.D.**

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