August 17, 2025

FOR: MBG ARCHDIOCESAN/DIOCESAN/PRELATURE/APOSTOLIC VICARIATE/MOP COUNCILS
MBG PARISHES IN DIOCESES NOT YET CONSTITUTED AS A COUNCIL
MBG SPECIAL UNITS
REF: ***"In hope we were saved." (Romans 8:24)***

My Beloved Mother Butlers,

The Peace of Christ Jesus be yours.

For one week now, a very severe type of flu infected me. Naku ang hirap… ang sakit. Mataas na lagnat, masakit ang ulo, walang tigil na paguubo hanggang para bang puputok na yong aking dibdib at ang hapdi na ng lalamunan. Pag pala dumaraan sa ganoong pasakit, dumarating din yong tukso na maglaho ang tiwala kay Christo, na ang umaasa sa Kanya ay di nakakadismaya. Kaya yong mga Readings this Sunday of the Twentieth Week in Ordinary time were so helpful in lifting up my spirit.

Kinuwento doon sa First Reading tungkol kay profeta Jeremiah. Dahil lagi niyang pinapaalala sa mga tao na sa kanilang pag-labag sa kasulatan ng Panginoon, at ayaw bitawan ang kanilang mga kasalanan, mamatay sila sa labanan o sa matinding gutom. Kaya yong mga kagalit niya tinapon siya sa malalim na balon na puro putik, kung saan tiyak na mamatay siya. Mabuti na lang meron nakakita at sinumbong ito sa hari. Agad inutos ng hari na ilgitas si Jeremiah. And the Responsorial Psalm of this Sunday's Mass, spoke to me and moved me to share this with you.

It was taken from Psalm 40… and the first lines said: "I have waited, waited for the Lord, and he stooped toward me. The Lord heard my cry. He drew me out of the pit of destruction, out of the mud of the swamp… he put a new song into my mouth, a hymn to our God… though I am afflicted and poor, yet the Lord thinks of me…" Ang ganda sa Tagalog, mas nakakapintig ng puso, "Ako'y naghintay sa'king Panginoon, at dininig niya ang aking pagtaghoy. Sa balong malalim at lubhang maputik, inahon niya at doo'y inalis…ligtas akong dinala …tinuruan niya ako pagkatapos ng bagong awiting papuri sa Diyos… mahina man ako at wala ng lakas, ngunit sa isip ng Diyos di ako nawawala."

And I thought of you, my cherished Mother Butlers. That even as you faithfully follow, obey and serve the Lord, often the visitations of pain, suffering, trials come your way. Pinagsisikapan na nga ninyo na sundin, mahalin at paglingkuran ang Panginoon at ang kanyang Simbahan, ngunit di nawawala yong pagsubok, pasakit, di pagkakasunduan na para bang balon ng putik na binabaon kayo.

Naalala ko si Gloria ng MBG Novaliches… ang saya-saya niya na makakadalo siya sa ating nakalipas na MBG National Convention sa World Trade Center noong July 11 and 12. Unti-unti niyang pinagipunan mula sa kanyang sueldo yong binayad niya sa kanyang registration fee.

Subalit isang araw bago ng ating Convention, sinabihan siya ng kanyang employer hindi siya pwedeng umalis. Kawawa… kay Gloria, yong ningas ng pag-asa para bang biglang kinitil.

But the Lord heard her cry, saw her pain. Like for Jeremiah, God stooped down to bring light to her darkness. In our MBG Raffle Draw on the last day July 12 of our Convention, out of some 250,000 raffle tickets, the winning number for first prize turned out to be Gloria's ticket. When she came to the office to claim her prize, she was crying. When I embraced her to say I was so sorry she missed our Convention, she whispered through her tears…"maliit po ang pagsubok, ang laki naman ng gantimpala… mabait po ang Diyos."

Perhaps the response of Our Lord to our pains and petitions may not always be as fast or as grand as that for Gloria, but believe, always believe that Jesus is there. He never leaves us. Jesus promised, "Do not be afraid. I am with you. I am with you always."

In the last encyclical "SPE SALVI" written by Pope Benedict XVI, he said it beautifully. That in several passages in the Bible, faith and hope seem linked together. That we attain "fullness of faith" through our hope that does not waver. That believing in God, no matter what deep wells we fall into, gives us hope that we will be saved. That we have a future. The future of happiness in Christ.

In the gospel of Matthew 19:29, Jesus promised… I will quote again in Tagalog: "At ang sinumang magtiis… alang-alang sa akin ay tatanggap ng makasandaang ibayo, at pagkakalooban ng buhay na walang hanggan."

Remember our Convention song "Ningas ng Pag-asa"? The first stanza…

Masdan mo ang ningas ng pag-asa, at ang await nami'y pakinggan
Na tunay nating makakamtan ang buhay na walang hanggan.

Mga minamahal kong Mother Butlers, awitin ninyo lagi ang Ningas ng Pag-asa. Awitin ninyo bilang papuri sa Diyos… bilang panalangin… bilang pagsasa-buhay. Bilang pagpatotoo na tayong mga tinawag at pinili ni Christo ay may kinabukasan… walang hanggang kaligayahan sa piling NIYA.

Take care. Try your best not to catch Flu. Keep well and be happy.

Love you all.

Sincerely,

Amb. HENRIETTA T. DE VILLA
National President