



Catholic Educational Association of the Philippines

Heeding the Escalating Clamour for Truth and Justice

"Unless ye do penance, ye shall likewise perish." (Luke 13:5)

The Office of the Ombudsman, as the protector of the people, is constitutionally tasked to promote integrity, efficiency and high ethical standards in public service. By express mandate, it must act on complaints filed against officers or employees of the Government, promptly and without bias.

The ineptitude of Merceditas Navarro-Gutierrez has sullied the Office of the Ombudsman to an objectionable and disconcerting degree. Since her appointment in 2005, Ombudsman Gutierrez had been remiss in prosecuting controversial cases like the Department of Transportation and Communication's NBN-ZTE deal, the Department of Agriculture's fertilizer fund scam, the Comelec's Mega Pacific deal, the Hello Garci scandal, and the AFP's Euro Generals scandal, all of which have already been found and declared anomalous either by the Senate or by the Supreme Court. By its unjustifiable and obstinate inaction on the basis of a supposed lack of evidence, it has effectively tolerated the miscreants and washed its hands clean of the scandals, while leaving the truth-tellers Lozada, Esperat and now, Heidi Mendoza, in the lurch to fend for themselves. Paradoxically, the very Office of the Ombudsman which was created to be the "watchdog" of the people, has unfortunately been transformed into a major instrument in concealing the impropriety of corrupt government officials.

The blatant disregard of the Ombudsman in fulfilling her constitutional duty to prevent abuse of power in the government is a direct attack against the core values of public service. It is a breach of public trust.

The Catholic Educational Association of the Philippines (CEAP), as the largest educational association in the country with 1,290 member-institutions, recognizes that the present impeachment complaint lodged against Navarro-Gutierrez represents the **unceasing and escalating clamor for truth and justice** by the Filipino people. It is a **strong call for integrity, honesty and moral recovery.**

We, the members of CEAP, **strongly call for a speedy, fair and decisive conduct of the impeachment proceedings. Corruption must be impeached mercilessly.** We commit to continue efforts at transformative education, and to take a pro-active role in the formation of future leaders steeped in Christian faith, steadfast in moral convictions, transparent and accountable to the Filipino people.

We call on the members of the congress to apply the full extent of the law and not politicize this judicial process. We call on engaged citizens to press for the restoration of public confidence and moral ascendancy in the Office of the Ombudsman. **We urge Ombudsman Gutierrez to be truthful to herself and the people she swore to serve by facing the impeachment proceedings without evasion and consider her resignation as a moral choice. Today, Ash Wednesday, CEAP reminds Ombudsman Gutierrez of the call to all Christians, to take up the cross and follow Christ.** The need to repent is a prerequisite in receiving the Lord into our lives. The message of the Church today is simple - if we do not reject the spirit of the world, we have chosen another master.

CATHOLIC EDUCATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF THE PHILIPPINES
9 March 2011