



CATHOLIC EDUCATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF THE PHILIPPINES

2025 CEAP NATIONAL CONVENTION INSPIRATIONAL MESSAGE

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Greetings.

We are here to proclaim our hope. The past year has been besieged by events and issues that dimmed our hope. What is going on in conflict areas all over the world, tens of thousands killed in wars. The raging flood waters, forest fires, and heat waves engulfing populations, especially the vulnerable poor. The desperate plight of migrants and refugees displaced by conflicts, ever searching for warm and welcoming homes. Grinding poverty and hunger are afflicting millions amid a world rapidly advancing in all aspects except its attention to the marginalized and neglected—the unimaginable suffering of so many.

More and more people are lost in the meaninglessness of life, consciousness altered by drugs and other addictions, burdened by psychological unwellness, beholden to worldly gods and icons that enslave them. Leaders of nations are veering away from democracy and choosing authoritarian control, the abuse of power and impunity, rejecting human rights, corrupting not only institutions but hearts and minds, destroying culture and the soul of a nation. The plague of lying, deception, and disinformation is killing truth, honesty, decency, and community.

Our country bears all these burdens, plus more, like what is happening in our schools and educational system. Our learners are so very far behind per EDCOM2 findings. Our systems are broken down, needing major rehabilitation; our people disillusioned, the powers-that-be complacent and corrupted, needing radical moral recovery. Our people are ever struggling, suffering, spiraling in resignation and despair, needing relief, attention, and care. Last September 21, CEAP once more took a stand, joined Church and civil society, in righteous outrage over shameless and wicked stealing and cheating of people's money by bureaucrats and businesses that have left the poor drowning, desperate, and dying in misery and betrayal of public trust and accountability. As the days pass, we see how this uncontrolled greed has been so deeply entrenched, so tolerated, so systematic on an unimaginable scale, so crushing of our sensibilities.

Systems failure, moral failure, leadership failure, and perhaps, too, our collective failure as a Church, and as a nation.

This is the context of our hoping. To transform failure into hope. In times like these, we are forced to learn, yet again, what hope is about. We learn to fight for this hope — To organize for hope, to mobilize for it, to be disciplined to work and struggle for it.

And in CEAP, we do our part. We take guidance from our faith. Pope Francis has often said that education is an act of hope. Education is an act of hope. He also said that we cannot change the world if we do not change education. And he also exhorted us to be synodal pilgrims of hope. In the past year, and in this Convention, we heed these calls. In this Convention, we proclaim precisely this hope. Hope in our mission of education. Hope in our youth, our learners. Hope in us educators and formators. Hope in our togetherness, as synodal pilgrims, finding our way. Hope in our common journey toward the light of God, who lights this way of working for a better world, a better country, a better education for our people, the Catholic Christian way, the CEAP way.



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This past year, we embraced and lived out this hope as fellow pilgrims in CEAP, bold, courageous, even audacious, but grounded, humble, and discerning. **Ever holding on to Christ, the beginning and end of our longing, our yearning, our hoping. Christ, our leader, Christ, our teacher, Christ our only hope.**

Christ, who has impelled us to act this past year to proclaim hope in our work of education, forming values, building communities of faith, advocating for an education for truth and compassion, fighting for a caring society that mirrors the Gospel. Christ, who has moved us to follow Him, and imitate His way of transformation, peaceful, non-violent, bold, and unafraid. Christ, who asks us to trust Him amid darkness and despair, to simply trust Him. In Him alone is our hope. In each other, as a community bound by Christ, is our hope. In CEAP, in our mission and faith, is our hope.

In this Convention, let us celebrate this hope. This formidable, restless, tireless hope. A hope that does not give up. A hope that has brought us today again this year, as it did last year, and as it will always be for years to come, as a national association of 1500 members driven to hope, the hope of a stronger Catholic education in the country, borne from the very heart of the Church, shaped and formed by the Spirit, offered in thanksgiving to God our Father, co-laboring with our Lord Jesus Christ in building His Kingdom here, now, and forever.

This is what we proclaim, what we celebrate in this Convention, in this most blessed Church Jubilee Year of Hope. CEAP as a community of pilgrims, in the synodal path, hoping in Jesus who makes all things new.

In this wonderful, joyful, and vigorous spirit of newness, welcome to the CEAP National Convention!