



## LASALLIAN EAST ASIA DISTRICT

### OFFICE OF THE AUXILIARY VISITOR

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OAVC-1718-044  
12 May 2018

Dear Lasallians,

**We mourn today.** The decision of the Supreme Court on the quo warranto case against Supreme Court Chief Justice Ma. Lourdes Sereno is in the words of a dissenting justice, a "legal abomination". The decision is spawned by the petition of a political appointee of the president. The majority of the justices who swore to defend our Constitution instead, have chosen to give assent to the presidential appointee's plea.

**We mourn today and we grieve.** The decision is a death sentence for our continually beleaguered political institutions. The Executive who promised change has failed us for under his watch, the mechanisms that would have ensured accountability have been crushed. The only change that has transpired is our downward regression into political disorder. In the Upper House, the president has incarcerated his fiercest critic. In the Lower House, the president using spoils, has created a subservient supermajority. As the Chief Justice echoed the need to subscribe to the law and respect the fundamental rights of citizens, the President publicly declared her his enemy. In response to this unequivocal expression of the president's desire, his subordinates have taken all steps necessary and in all forums available to ensure that the Chief Justice is eased out of her position.

**We mourn today but let our grieving be brave.** Some of our justices may shun from their responsibility to protect our democracy - but we will not. Ours is not a battle for or against the president for the matter at hand is far greater than him. We take up this battle for the young people whom we hoped would never have to witness the dark days of authoritarianism. We who have witnessed how past presidents manipulated the law to serve their interests; we who have witnessed how past governments have turned public institutions away from their mandate to protect the people; we will not be so easily silenced and we refuse to give up.

**We mourn but not alone.** May our mourning give way to solidarity and our solidarity give birth to hope. Let us work tirelessly to raise up men and women who can be principled and virtuous in their service of others. Let us march arm-in-arm for our children so they can live in a society where their fundamentals rights are respected. Let us fight to expose all attempts at concentrating power and in muting legitimate opposition. And even if others will not, let us take this opportunity to stand by the side of every Filipino who cherishes democracy. May our choices show forth the proud Filipinos that we are – excellent and noble and honorable and brave.

Fraternally,

  
Br. Jose Mari Jimenez FSC  
Auxiliary Visitor for Philippines, LEAD

