



VIGILANCE, THE CALL OF THE TIMES

DaKaTeo Statement on the Ousting of the Chief Justice

We firmly believe in and worship the God of Truth. The truth that we have in mind is the very foundation of our social and societal relationships and makes possible the generation and strengthening of trust and harmony between and among the citizens. This is the truth that reflects God's will for all of us. It was fully reflected in the life of Jesus whose message of peace (John 14:27) challenges us to live a life of justice, honesty and integrity.

We believe that as his disciples, we are called to continue and participate in his work of building God's Kingdom (Matthew 28:20; John 20:21). As Filipino Catholics, we have the responsibility of building a society where human rights take precedence over political expediency (*Pacem in terris*, 45), where loyalty is to the rule of law (Pope Francis, Address to the UN General Assembly 2015) and not to any false idols, and where plurality is celebrated as an integral part of nation-building. In light of recent events, we fear that our country's democratic institutions and processes are under attack from persons and groups who do not have the common good in mind.

We, *Damdaming Katoliko sa Teolohiya* (DaKaTeo), the Catholic Theological Society of the Philippines, view with utter dismay the recent Supreme Court ruling which ousted the sitting chief justice. We are neither for or against personalities in this issue. We are alarmed by the manner in which this was done. Eight justices of the Supreme Court were responsible for what their dissenting peers described as a "legal abomination," a "re-writing of the Constitution," a commission of "*seppuku* – without honor" and "an impermissible short-cut." The majority did it despite the pre-ruling manifestation of the 40,000-strong Integrated Bar of the Philippines, the 130 law deans and professors in the country, civil society and human rights groups, and constitutionalists opposing the *quo warranto* petition filed by the Office of the Solicitor General.

We need to be ever more vigilant in order that the dark forces of evil in our society may not prevail. We cannot and must not remain silent in these trying times. We join our voice together with other Filipinos of good will as we exclaim, "We dissent."

We re-affirm our strong belief and continue to worship the God of truth and justice. For God's truth and justice are the hope for all of us believers (Isaiah 30:18-19; Psalm 65:6). Despair, dissension and conflict will eventually wither and, through our faith-informed struggles together with other citizens of goodwill, the light of God's truth will eventually shine in all its splendor (John 16:33; 1 John 1:5; Revelation 21:3-4).