

March 25, 2008

TO THE WHOLE PROVINCE

**Re: Endorsement of GUIDELINES FOR COMMUNAL DISCERNMENT
AND ACTION TO ADDRESS THE NATIONAL CRISIS
to Jesuits and Jesuit Institutions of the Philippine Province**

With this letter, I wish to endorse to all Jesuits, Jesuit communities and Jesuit apostolic institutions of the Philippine Province, the attached *Guidelines for Communal Discernment and Action to Address the National Crisis*, produced by our Province Commission on the Social Apostolate.

The following *Guidelines* are *not* a “statement” or a “manifesto” of a “Province position or stand.” Rather, this document fills an important need in our emotionally charged and often confusing context: it provides a substantive analysis, based on Catholic moral and social doctrine, of our present national situation and the various options and courses of actions taken or advocated in response to that situation. It is hoped that the carefully reasoned assessments presented here will aid communal discernment and action.

There are four major sections to these *Guidelines*. After a brief introductory review of the present context, the *Guidelines* provide:

1. A presentation of the range of responses made by various groups to the present crisis;
2. A summary of “non-negotiable” guiding principles, drawn from the Catholic moral and social tradition;
3. An assessment of different options and positions, based on the non-negotiable principles earlier identified; and
4. An identification of possible action points for the future, in the light of the analysis in the previous two sections.

As I sincerely thank the members of the Province Commission on the Social Apostolate who labored generously on this document, I ask that individual Jesuits, Jesuit communities and institutions read, reflect, pray over, and discuss these *Guidelines*, toward the discernment of principled, responsible and effective action. These *Guidelines* may also be shared with others who are seeking direction and guidance.

Although I endorse this document as a very helpful and illuminating guide, no one, of course, is compelled to agree with or adhere to all the points made in the text. At the same time, I hope that the careful analysis offered in this paper is given a fair and thoughtful reception. Moreover, as I said in a similar letter I wrote three years ago, “if some, in conscience, differ with the positions taken here, let that dissent be presented with civility and intelligence, as input for the continuing task of communal discernment towards that which will serve the true good of our country.”

Finally, during this Easter season, we pray for our country in hope, and we pray too that the Lord may allow us to be his instruments of hope and new life for our people.

Fraternally in our Lord,

DANIEL PATRICK L. HUANG, S.J.
Provincial