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VOTERS' CATECHISM

A Project of the

PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL
FOR RESPONSIBLE VOTING (PPC-RV)

**ANG BUMOTO NG WASTO
AY TUNGKULING
KRISTIYANO**



VOTERS' CATECHISM

**A Project of the
PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL
FOR RESPONSIBLE VOTING (PPC-RV)**

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VOTERS' CATECHISM

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INANG KAWAWA KA NAMAN ... KAY TAGAL
MO NG NAGHIHIRAP...



... AT AKO ANG MAY KASALANAN NG LAHAT.
DAHIL BINENTA KO ANG AKING BOTO...
NAHALAL TULOY ANG BUWAYANG KANDIDATO.



... PERO NGAYON DI NA AKO PALOLOKO SA MGA
KANDIDATONG BALASUBAS. 'YUN LANG TUNAY NA
KARAPAT-DAPAT ANG IBOBOTO KO... ALANG-ALANG
SA IYO INANG BAYANG MAHAL KO





CATHOLIC BISHOPS' CONFERENCE OF THE PHILIPPINES

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Intramuros, Manila
P. O. Box 3601 Manila, Philippines

MESSAGE

May 11, 1992. A day of reckoning.

February 25, 1986. The hopeful emergence of a new breed of Filipinos with the general restoration of democratic processes: a new Constitution, a re-constituted bicameral Legislature, a hopeful rise of GNP, an apparent economic boom, the appreciation of the Philippine peso against the dollar, and trust and confidence in the present regime.

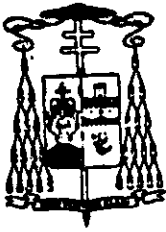
Nevertheless, these were equaled with landcams, a killer earthquake, the Mt. Pinatubo, the Ormoc tragedy, organized crime, Vizconde-Villa-Hultmann murders, the Marcos acquittal by an American jury and their subsequent return, 15% inflation rate, the ever-pervasive governmental bureaucratic red tape and graft and corruption.

January-February 1991. The celebration of the **Second Plenary Council** provides growth and renewal for the Church in the Philippine. Reformational resolutions re-align the Philippine Church with the teachings of Vatican II. There is a resolute call for full, conscious, and active participation of Christ's faithful in the life-witnessing of the Church.

The **Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting (PPC-RV)** prepares our people for May 11, 1992 -- a day of moral reckoning.

+ **CARMELO D. F. MORELOS, D.D.**

Bishop of Butuan
President, CBCP
14 January 1992




Cardinal's Residence
P. O. Box 52
Cebu City 6000
Philippines

MESSAGE

The observation often repeated a few years back that the majority of us Filipinos are baptized but not adequately evangelized is as true now as it was then, especially in social matters and particularly in political affairs. The Christian principles on politics are more unknown or ignored and violated than understood and observed. Violations of these principles are seldom considered as sins.

Consequently, the urgent need for a "Voters' Catechism" to be widely circulated, studied and practiced cannot be under estimated. PPC-RV's coming out with such a "Catechism" is most timely and praiseworthy.

With God's grace and Our Blessed Mother's intercession, this "Voters' Catechism" will hopefully lead to the development of a properly and adequately informed and formed Christian social conscience in our people - an indispensable requirement for the conduct of an honest, orderly and peaceful election of public officials who are committed to work not for their vested interests but for the common good.


+ RICARDO J. CARDINAL VIDAL
Archbishop of Cebu
11 December 1991



The Roman Catholic Archbishop of Manila

121 Arzobispo Street, Intramuros

P. O. Box 132

Manila, Philippines

FOREWORD BY HIS EMINENCE JAIME CARDINAL L. SIN

This **Voters' Catechism** is a very important aid in clarifying questions concerning the relationship between religion and politics during election time. This Catechism will serve as a guide for practicing Catholics and all other citizens as well, so that they may take the proper action come election time. This contains general principles and rules based on the Christian faith. It is hoped that this will help in forming and nurturing the Catholic's conscience for the successful fulfillment of his political responsibilities. The primary task of the Church is to preach the Good News of Christ and teach its implications for every aspect of human life. Politics is a very important part of life which must definitely be penetrated by Christ and his teachings. This is the mission that Christ gave the Church.

I am calling upon every Filipino and every Catholic: Fulfill your duties as law-abiding citizens. Go out and vote. But choose the right candidates. Avoid and reject all forms of fraud, especially the selling of votes. Try also to discourage others from indulging in any such practices.

This short catechism will give you simple and correct answers to questions regarding the Christian way of voting and of selecting candidates. Read, study and share it with others.

I commend the officials and members of the **Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting** for their hard work and patience in establishing a Voters' Education Program in every parish. This is an effective step in the strengthening and development of true democracy and good government in our country. I am glad that this activity is being spearheaded by lay leaders because they are the ones who have the right and the ability for such an undertaking.

You have my prayers and my blessing. May you be firm in the work of the Lord.

With love in Christ,

+ JAIME CARDINAL L. SIN, D.D.

Archbishop of Manila

July 10, 1991

1. WHAT IS A VOTERS' CATECHISM?

A Voters' Catechism is a short explanation and answer to questions about nationalistic and Christian behavior that the faithful should follow during election time. It aims to impart general principles and rules based on Christian faith that will serve as a guide for the participation of Catholics in political activities like elections. It is a Catechism because the explanations come in the form of short questions followed by brief answers.



VOTE WISELY.

CHOOSE YOUR CANDIDATES.

2. WHO IS BEHIND THIS VOTERS' CATECHISM?

The Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting (PPC-RV) initiated this project which is a part of the Voters' Education Program of the Catholic Church for the coming elections. The PPC-RV is a non-partisan association composed of lay leaders of each Parish Pastoral Council. PPC-RV aims to help the parishioners, and the citizenry in general, to prepare for a responsible and truly Christian way of voting come election time. This preparation includes a widespread education campaign to:

- (1) improve the voters' ability for political decision-making, and
- (2) guide the faithful in selecting the right candidates.

This will be accomplished by disseminating posters and reading materials, conducting lectures and placing ads on TV, radio and newspapers. Also part of the PPC-RV's activities is the organization of parishioners into a body which will closely monitor ballot-counting after the polls and which will network with organizations of similar function like the NAMFREL.

3. WHY IS THIS CATECHISM NEEDED?

This catechism is necessary because many among the faithful are not aware or do not fully understand the relationship between politics and the life of faith. More often than not, the average citizen's basis for action in this field are a mentality and an attitude contrary to the Word of God and, consequently, detrimental to the common good. Such a mentality and attitude must be corrected through a clear exposition of the right teachings of the Christian faith.



4. WHAT ARE SOME EXAMPLES OF UNCHRISTIAN VOTING HABITS?

There are four maladies in our society's political life where elections are concerned:

First is the politics of vote-buying which deems gold as the supreme power.

Second is the politics of fear and force, wherein guns and goons reign over all.

Third is the politics of *kumparehan* wherein *utang na loob*, *hiya*, and *pakikisama* prevail.

And the **fourth** is the politics of personality where the bases for selecting candidates are superficial features and popularity instead of the issues confronting society.

It is no exaggeration to say that every Filipino suffers from all these. Such maladies have very grave effects on the common good. Most of the problems that our society faces today stem from our lack of concern about these maladies and our passivity which allows them to persist. It is time we become aware of this reality and erradicate it once and for all.

**USE YOUR VOTE.
IN THE GOVERNMENT,
IT'S YOUR VOICE**



5. WHAT IS THE IMPORTANCE OF VOTING IN THE LIFE OF A FILIPINO CITIZEN?

For a citizen, voting is the most direct and effective means of participation in the undertakings and decisions of the government. Through his vote, a citizen has a voice to express his desires and to state the kind of government he wants. Through his vote, he gains the opportunity to put into power the people who are worthy of the public's trust and remove from office those who are not. In a democracy, all powers of the state emanate from the vote, and the right to release such powers lies in the voter's hands. It is, therefore, his duty to use this power for the good of all.



6. WHAT IS THE VOTER'S PRIMARY RIGHT IN VOTING?

A voter's primary right in voting is the freedom of choice. Every voter is, by nature, free to choose the candidate he wants as dictated by his conscience. Nobody may violate this right, much less deprive him of it. But along with this freedom is the obligation to use it in the most intelligent and responsible way possible. In other words, personal desires shall not be the sole basis for selecting candidates. More importantly, he should consider the **COMMON GOOD**.

7. WHAT DOES CHRISTIAN FAITH SAY ABOUT SUCH POLITICAL ACTIVITIES AS THE ELECTION?

Our faith teaches that a political activity like the election is not only important but is an element which is part and parcel of Christian living. It is by God's will and man's very nature that we live in a world of politics. And it is every Christian's obligation to fully participate in this field in order to direct all political activity toward the common good and allow Christ and his teaching to reign supreme. It is wrong to consider politics dirty or evil. If politics does become dirty, it is not because of its aim or principles, but because men of ill will have bent it for their ends.

8. WHAT IS THE MORAL BASIS FOR THE OBLIGATION TO VOTE?

Voting is a moral obligation of every Catholic and is, therefore, an obligation before God, non-fulfillment of which is a sin. This obligation is rooted in God's command to love our neighbor. At election time, a Christian's responsible way of voting is the concrete manifestation of one's love for neighbor because this is the most effective way of achieving and safeguarding the common good. In other words, ignoring such an obligation for no valid reason is a great sin which will affect not only one's soul but society as well.

9. AMONG THE MEMBERS OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH, WHO MUST DIRECTLY PARTICIPATE IN POLITICS, AND IN WHAT WAYS?

According to the documents and official teachings of the Church, the laity have the obligation and the right to direct participation in political activities. Such involvement is possible by:

- (1) Running for a position in government if this is what the circumstances require;
- (2) supporting worthy candidates, whether Catholic or not; and
- (3) carrying out the duties which come as a result of election or appointment.

This type of work is the appropriate vocation for the laity. And in carrying out their mission in the world of politics, they live out their Christian faith and help bring about the reign of God on earth.

10. WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE CLERGY IN THE POLITICAL SCENE?


The clergy is tasked with preaching the Word of God and applying it to every aspect of human life, including the world of politics. Part of their mission as shepherds and teachers is to concretize the principles of the Gospel and make them real and relevant to the human situation in this world. To do this is to teach and set the moral standards concerning politics, standards which will serve as a guide in nurturing the conscience of the faithful. These moral standards shall also serve as the gauge for the selection of worthy candidates.

11. IS SUCH AN INFLUENCE ON THE VOTER'S CONSCIENCE NOT A VIOLATION OF HIS FREEDOM OF CHOICE?

The freedom of choice does not nullify the standards which voters must follow. Deciding according to Christian standards is not a violation of one's freedom of conscience. Rather, it is the correct and responsible way of using one's right to vote.

12. CAN THE TEACHINGS OF THE CHURCH ON POLITICS BE CONSIDERED INTERVENTION?

Church teaching is not an act of intervention in politics. The truth of the matter is that the preaching of the Gospel and the application of its principles to every aspect of life is a task appropriate to the Church. This is the mission given her by Christ. Although the world of politics is autonomous, it is not exempt from God's moral laws. It remains subject to ethical considerations which must be based on God's commands and the lessons of the Gospel. It is for this reason that the Church maintains an active role.



**THOU
SHALT
NOT
STEAL.**

13. ISN'T THIS A VIOLATION OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISION FOR THE SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE?

The separation of Church and State does not mean non-involvement of the Church in political matters. The provision neither prevents the Church from preaching the Gospel nor its members from getting involved in political activities. Reality does not support a literal understanding of the term "separation". The life of faith and political life cannot be torn apart for the simple reason that 'both lives' are lived by a single individual who is believer and citizen at the same time. Thus a separation in the literal sense is impossible. But such is not the real intent of the law. In its truest sense, the provision states that no particular religion may be imposed nor favored by the state. Equal treatment must be accorded all religions. Through this provision, the state protects the religious freedom of every citizen of any group of believers. This provision also implies that the State, like the Church, has duties and functions that are uniquely its own, and should not be interfered by anyone.

14. WHY DOES THE CHURCH PROHIBIT ITS BISHOPS, PRIESTS, AND RELIGIOUS FROM SUPPORTING ANY CANDIDATE OR POLITICAL PARTY?

Canon Law prohibits priests and religious (i.e. members of religious orders) from participation in partisan politics because, being representatives of Christ, they must serve as points and centers of unity for the whole Christian community. Active public support for one party or candidate usually promotes division in the community. The disciples of God must persevere in their duty as shepherds and fathers to the whole Church regardless of the political affiliations of individual believers. Nevertheless, the priest, as a citizen, must not be denied his right to vote for the candidate of his choice and to preach the principles and guidelines involved in the Christian way of voting. If in the process of teaching these principles particular candidates are favored or disfavored, this is part and parcel of his duty as teacher and pastor, and thus does not constitute partisanship on the part of the Church.

15. HOW CAN THE INTEGRITY AND PERSON OF A CANDIDATE BE KNOWN?

This is truly a difficult task. But to be able to make an intelligent choice, one must know the candidates very well. Such knowledge can be gained by listening to the candidates talk about themselves, by comparing observations and opinions with others and by scrutinizing his public service record. It is also important to know the candidate's family background as well as his moral standing in private life. A great amount of information will come out during the campaign period. The voter must be very critical and careful in sorting through this information. He must examine the data thoroughly before believing it to be true. An intelligent vote is dependent on accurate and adequate knowledge of the candidates.

**PAGKATAO AT LAYUNIN
MASUSI MONG KILATISIN
REKORD NIYA'Y BULATLATIN
BAGO MO SIYA TANGKILIKIN.**



**SAY "NO"
TO
GUNS, GOONS AND GOLD!**

16. WHAT QUALITIES MUST WE LOOK FOR IN A CANDIDATE?

First of all, it must be made clear that the following considerations are general and do not pertain to any particular candidate. As a practical guide, the Catholic voter must find the following qualities in the candidate he is to vote for:

- 1) personal integrity,
- 2) that neither he nor his immediate family has any record of involvement in graft and corruption,
- 3) experience and leadership ability,
- 4) industry and dedication to duty,
- 5) achievement in public service,
- 6) a clear and credible platform of government,
- 7) a sound stance on critical issues whether political, social or moral,
- 8) the ability to pull together the splintered sectors of society in the interest of unity and peace,
- 9) fear and genuine faith in God, and
- 10) exemplary moral conduct in private life.

17. AREN'T THESE QUALITIES TOO MUCH TO EXPECT OF ANY ONE CANDIDATE?

True enough, these qualities are highly ideal, but a candidate does not have to possess all these perfectly. These qualities may be possessed in varying degrees and the selection of a candidate must be based on the sum-total of his qualifications. Simply stated, the candidate who comes closest to our ideal is the one who deserves our vote.

18. ARE THERE ISSUES OR POLITICAL POSITIONS WHICH CAN GUIDE THE FAITHFUL IN THE CHOICE OF A CANDIDATE?

There are some stands on issues and political positions which the Catholic voter must look for in any candidate who is after his or her vote. First among these is the candidate's economic program, which must address the plight of the poor and the disadvantaged sectors of society. For example, the candidate's view of and previous involvement in the areas of land reform, the rights of the urban poor, labor and other marginalized groups in society must be known. Does he or she have an economic program that is pro-poor and partial to the welfare of the greater majority? On the other hand, it must be known whether he or she respects the rights of legitimate private ownership and freedom of initiative of individuals in business. His loyalty to the constitution and democratic processes must be beyond doubt. He must actively support moves towards "people empowerment" and foster citizen's initiative in the governance and development of the nation. The candidate's record with regard to human rights and the ecology must be looked into. Likewise, the voter must inquire about the candidate's views on issues like population control, divorce, and other moral concerns and make sure that these views are consistent with Christian morality.



19. DOES THE CHURCH SUGGEST ANY "MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS" FOR THE CHOICE OR REJECTION OF A CANDIDATE?

The Church does not have any clear position on this matter because it is extremely difficult to measure the positive characteristics of any candidate. The set qualifications are all general in nature. Thus they cover a wide spectrum of meaning and are open to varied interpretations. Every voter has his or her own way of weighing and prioritizing these characteristics. This is recognized and respected by the Church, and for this reason, she may not single-out or favor any one candidate among those who are worthy of public office. But the Church has a clear stand when it comes to candidates who should not be elected. Based on what are known as negative guidelines the following are the candidates whom the Church has determined unfit for any elective position:

- (1) those candidates who cheat in elections or use guns, goons and gold;
- (2) those who have records of involvement in cases of graft and corruption or who have been implicated in criminal acts; and,
- (3) those candidates whose personal conduct is immoral and who thus cause public scandal.



20. BUT HOW CAN AN ORDINARY VOTER BE SURE THAT THE ALLEGATIONS AGAINST A CANDIDATE ARE TRUE?

There is no easy answer to this question. More so if candidates should use black propaganda and the media to discredit each other during the campaign. Nevertheless there are situations which will show the bad deeds or intentions of a candidate, like the use of armed goons and the release of large amounts of money to influence the outcome of the elections. In the case of graft, corruption and personal morality, voters must be attentive to and critically evaluate the available information on the candidates. One practical guide in this matter may be the opinions of credible people who have adequate knowledge of the candidates.

21. WHAT ARE THE USUAL VIOLATIONS OR ANOMALIES WHICH OCCUR DURING ELECTION TIME?

There are different violations of the law and kinds of cheating during election time. There is, for example, cheating in the counting of votes, harrassment by armed groups and repeated voting by ghost voters. But the most prevalent anomaly in an election is the buying and selling of votes.

22. HOW SERIOUS IS THE SIN OF THOSE WHO BUY OR SELL VOTES?

It is a grave sin in the eyes of God to buy or sell votes. This is contrary to the seventh commandment which states that, "Thou shalt not steal." It is stealing because buying a vote is a form of bribery, a means of taking something which is not yours in an ilegal and immoral manner. But more importantly, this act violates the Christian commandment of love for neighbor. The commandment of love demands that you not hurt or wrong your fellowman. Should you sell your vote to a dishonorable candidate, the consequences will be devastating. Do not allow your people to suffer for a measly sum of money.



23. WHAT MUST ONE DO WHEN OFFERED MONEY?

Reject the bribe, report him to the authorities and expose him to the public. Then campaign so that the people will not vote for him.

24. "I WILL ACCEPT THE MONEY, BUT I WILL VOTE FOR THE CANDIDATE OF MY CHOICE." WHY IS THIS MENTALITY WRONG AND CONSIDERED A GRAVE OFFENSE BEFORE THE EYES OF GOD?

This mentality is wrong because to accept a bribe is to tolerate an evil act. When money is accepted illegally, sin is committed not only by the one who offers money but by the one who accepts it as well. Even if you were not to vote for the candidate, it would still be inexcusable to accept the money. Good intentions cannot and will not purify what is, by nature, an evil act. When you get involved with a vote-buyer, you inevitably put yourself in a position of compromise, and it becomes difficult to vote as your conscience dictates. Moreover, you put yourself in danger by double-crossing the person you have sold your vote to. Any man who plays with the devil courts danger.

25. WHAT DOES THE CHURCH TEACH REGARDING POLITICIANS KNOWN FOR THE USE OF "GUNS, GOONS AND GOLD?"

It is the people themselves who best know what kind of person a politician is, and it is the people themselves who will judge these politicians. When it is clear that a politician employs guns, goons and gold, it is the sacred duty of every Catholic voter and every citizen to report him to the authorities. Such candidates must likewise be denied our votes come election time. Lay leaders must, with the help of the Parish Pastoral Council, organize to combat these politicians. Guns, goons and gold are no match to a united and vigilant citizenry.

26. ARE THE PERSONAL LIFE AND MORALITY OF A CANDIDATE IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS IN GAUGING HIS QUALIFICATIONS?

The personal and moral principles of a candidate are very important in judging his worth, especially when he is running for the highest positions in government. If a candidate is engaged in immoral practices like concubinage, gambling and drinking, he does not deserve any position in government. The members of his family must also be untainted by involvement in any such acts. If a member of the candidate's family has a criminal record or indulges in vice, this is a significant issue against him.

27. IS THE CANDIDATE'S RELIGION AN IMPORTANT CONSIDERATION?

For the Catholic voter, religion is not the most important consideration when choosing whom to vote for. However, it is but natural that a Catholic choose a candidate who understands and will defend the principles and teachings of his Catholic faith. The question of a candidate's religion will become a critical consideration only if there is a danger that the candidate will violate Christian moral principles, or inhibit the free practice of the Catholic religion once he is in power.

28. WHAT IS THE STANCE OF THE CHURCH ON ACTORS OR ACTRESSES WHO RUN FOR PUBLIC OFFICE?

The Church does not have a set position on this. Any qualified Filipino has the right to run for any position in government. The same standards must be applied to all candidates, whether they be actors or not. But a voter must be extra careful when the candidate involved is an actor. It is easy to mistake a character played by the actor in a certain movie for the real person, and thus attribute good traits to the actor-candidate, when these traits belong properly to the fictional character. The voter must always remember that movie-acting and politics are worlds apart. Movies are intended for entertainment, while politics deals with real life and the actual functioning of a government. Our nation would be the laughing stock of the international community if we were to choose leaders who are popular actors but are inept or immoral politicians.

29. IN THE FACE OF POLITICAL DIFFERENCES, PARTICULARLY WHERE PARTIES AND CANDIDATES ARE CONCERNED, HOW CAN THE SPIRIT OF LOVE BE PRESERVED?

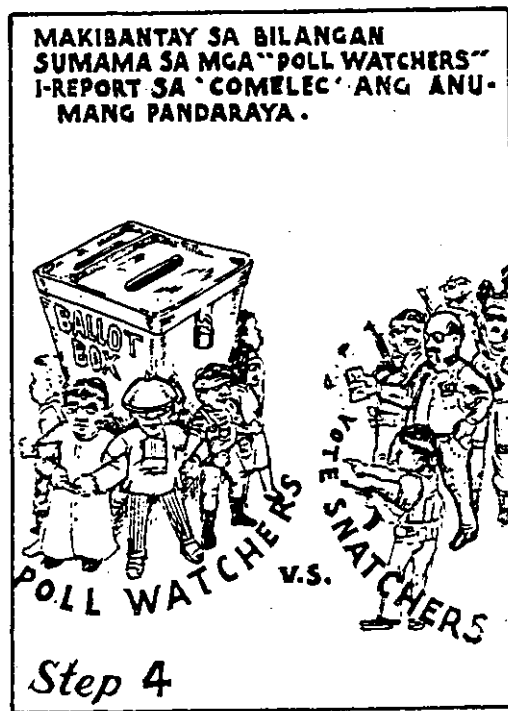
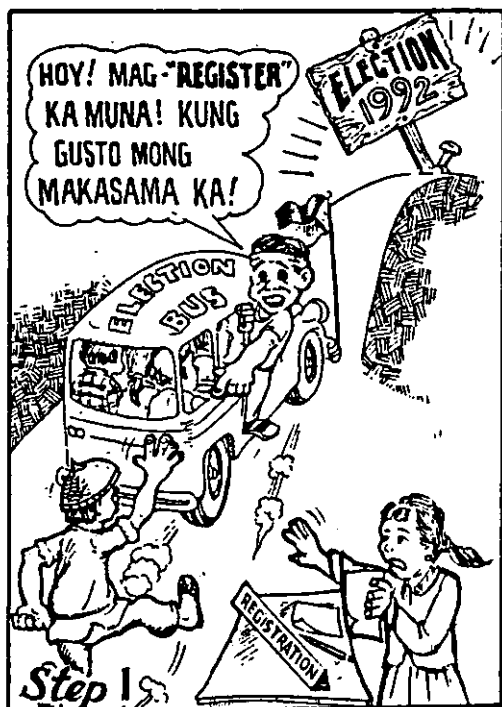
The most important rule in this regard is respect for each other's decisions. Opinions vary with people and so it is inevitable that the public will differ in their choice of political parties and candidates. Even if only one standard is used for the selection of candidates, it will be interpreted in different ways. Such diversity must be respected by all. In this way, Christian love and peace will endure.

30. WHAT MUST BE DONE AFTER VOTING?

Cheating remains possible even after the balloting. Foremost among these possibilities is the fraudulent counting of ballots. Anomalies may also arise by tampering with the results of the count. Citizens must be watchful and vigilant. They must watch over the counting and transportation of the ballots. In this regard, those who wish to work as poll-watchers should contact NAMFREL which has both the experience and integrity equal to the task.

Mga Hakbang sa Tamang Pagboto





**KAPAG BOTO'Y BINANTAYAN
NANG BOTANTENG MAKABAYAN
DI ITO MASASAYANG
LAHAT MAKIKINABANG**



**TAGABANTAY, TAGABILANG
DI MASUSUHULAN
MALINIS NA HALALAN
IGIGIIT ILALABAN**



VOTER'S PRAYER

Father,
Lord of our lives and our history,
You empower us to choose by our votes
those whom you wish to govern us.

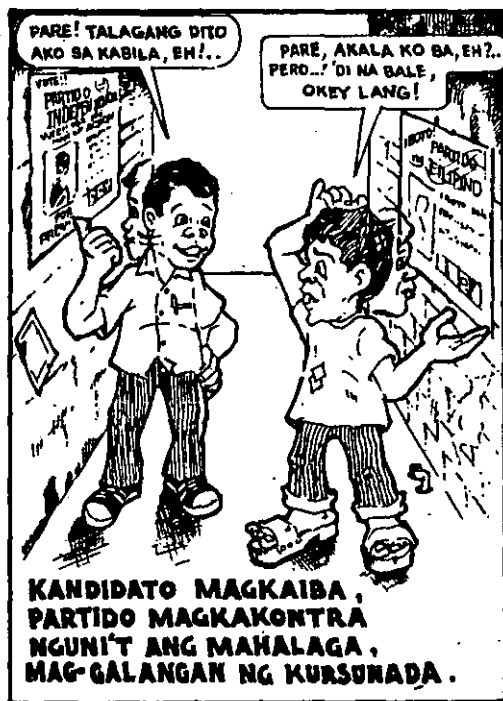
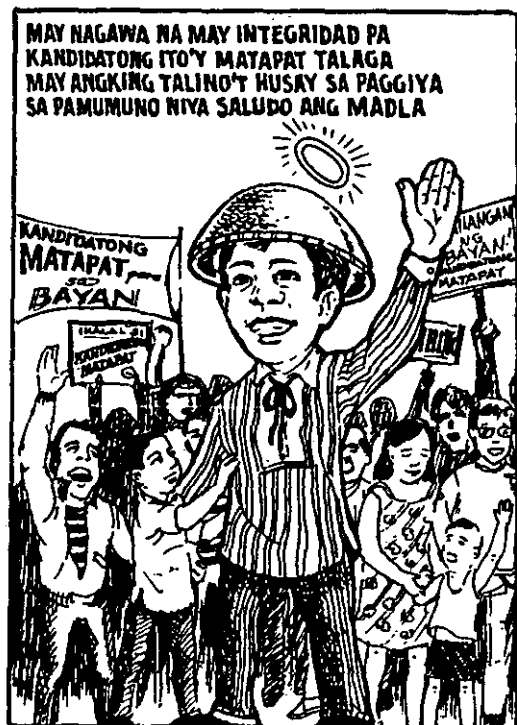
Soon we shall once more use our sacred right to vote;
Grant our voters the grace to choose wisely the people
who will be entrusted with public office.
Make us choose persons of high moral integrity,
honest, competent and unselfish, who love the poor
and promote the common good in a spirit of service,
persons who will lead us to unity and progress as a people.

Give us the courage and strength to resist and overcome
those who intend to use guns, goons and gold to win these elections.
Grant us to be honest and not to sell our votes.
Make us brave and not allow ourselves to be intimidated.
Unite us so that we may together overcome evil.
Thwart the plans of corrupt persons
who intend to use dishonorable means to win.
Make them fail and fall in shame.

May these coming elections be peaceful and orderly
and show that we are a mature people
who stand on the side of justice and truth.

United with Mary,
we ask you this through Christ our Lord
Amen.

**BOTO KO, DANGAL KO,
IPAGTATANGGOL KO!**





BOTO KO, DANGAL KO, IPAGLALABAN KO!