



## MESSAGE

We, your Pastors and Bishops, wish to add our voices to that of the entire nation in congratulating Ms. Maria Ressa, for being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for her efforts “to safeguard freedom of expression.”

Our recent Popes have on occasion highlighted the important role that the press play in gauging the health of a healthy democratic society. It is not a surprise, then, that the Church “find the right esteem for your work and the recognition of the freedom of the press.” (*17 January 1988: Teachings XI, 1 [1988], 135*).

Today, all over the world, this journalistic work has become more and more difficult because of the level of disinformation and fake news that continue to spread through the means of social communications. The vocation and mission, therefore, of the members of the Press (as envisioned by our Popes) is to contribute not only for the search for truth, but more importantly, to help build a culture of dialogue. (*cf. Pope Francis, Message to the Members of the Foreign Press Association in Italy, 18 May 2019*).

We are grateful that Ms. Ressa, together with many of the distinguished and dedicated members of the fourth estate, have discerned the signs of the times and have valiantly responded and continue to respond to this particular invitation.

This important recognition – the first for a Filipino – would hopefully strengthen our people’s conviction to build a nation where journalism “is free, at the service of truth, goodness and justice.” (*Pontifex Tweet, 03 May 2019*).

As Filipinos and Bishops, we commit our continued collaboration in order to uphold these values.

  
+**ROMULO G. VALLES, D.D.**

Archbishop of Davao

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