



**“REMEMBER THE WONDERS THE LORD HAS DONE”  
(Psalm 105:5)**

*Pastoral Letter to Celebrate the 40th Anniversary of EDSA People Power*

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Grace and peace from our Lord Jesus Christ!

*“Remember the Wonders the Lord has done,”* the Psalm enjoined the Israelites as they faced one tribulation after another in their journey to God’s promised land.

Forty years after we toppled a dictatorship that sought to prolong itself through electoral fraud, we hear the psalm today reminding us of the wonders that the Lord has done as we too face today’s challenges.

In 1986, after enduring years of suffering, we shouted in unison: *“Tama na! Sobra na! Palitan na!”* From February 22 to 25, 1986, we saw how Filipinos bravely yet peacefully took their disgust and frustrations to streets. The long stretch of EDSA became a vast open-air cathedral of faith and peaceful defiance. Millions of Filipinos, from across the country, gathered under the protective mantle of the Blessed Virgin Mary and her Son, Jesus. Clutching and praying the rosary, offering masses, singing hymns -We, as a people, stood shoulder-to-shoulder, faced tanks and soldiers with nothing but unyielding faith in our hearts.

The dictatorship fell, not through violence but through quiet perseverance and power of piety and collective faith that clamored for justice and true change.

This extraordinary event was not an accident, nor simply a human achievement. Rather, it is a testament of God’s favor on His people, who sought Him in their darkest hour. Faith and love for country brought us together. Our prayers were answered. The *‘Miracle of EDSA: People Power’* happened.

Today, with all peace-loving Filipinos, we mark the 40th anniversary of the *People Power*. We are grateful for the grace that made it possible. As we do this, we, the CBCP, request you to undertake three sacred duties: *to remember, to repent, to respond* – that we may welcome again the spirit of that miracle, and bring us to a better future.

**To Remember**

Our first duty is to remember. We remember the nameless heroes, the true heart of the *People Power*: the mother shielding a soldier with her body, the elderly in wheelchairs reciting the rosary amid rumbling engines and the youth forming human barricades with linked arms. They showed the true power of faith that can reshape society without bloodshed. Their witness pierced the armor of oppression. Prayers proved stronger than tanks. Faith triumphed over fear.

The fire of EDSA, set aflame forty years ago, is our task to sustain. Let courage once again dwell in our hearts and let faith reignite our passion to pursue the common good, not only for ourselves, but also for next generations. Let us retell the story of EDSA.

## To Repent

We realize that we have squandered the gift of EDSA –the dawn of a new freedom. We became inured to it. We forgot that freedom is both a task and a duty. We took for granted the opportunity to start anew.

Like the Israelites, after leaving Egypt, we forgot God's faithfulness and goodness. We returned to our old ways -habits that bring us comfort yet forget about our struggling brothers and sisters. We failed to take full responsibility of nation-building. Our country remained in ruins. Complacent and complicit to the scandalous corruption and the ugly face of impunity, we have betrayed not only ourselves, but also, our God.

This betrayal stares us in the face: persistent poverty, entrenched graft, eroded trust, underdevelopment. *"All have sinned and fall short,"* Scripture warns, reminding us that justification comes through humble faith, not self-righteousness.

Repentance demands that we confront our sins —our complicity in systems and structures that mock EDSA's promise. Let us confess with contrite hearts, turning from the golden calves of materialism to the God who liberated us once before.

## To Respond with Courage and Love

EDSA was an awakening that still calls us today. Like the Exodus, it showed that liberation requires courage. Like Pentecost, it revealed that unity can give birth to renewed mission. Today, we are called not only to remember and repent, but also to respond with courage and love through change.

*Change requires honesty.* May we not get tired of seeking and upholding truth and rejecting lies. Dishonesty covers our wounds and our poverty.

*Change comes from love. Love is action.* Without love, we continue to suffer. Empty slogans and promises become our pain relievers, yet we never get well.

*Change requires personal conversion.* Daily integrity is the sacrifice of doing good even when no one is looking. This is to turn our backs from lies and dishonest practices.

*Change requires communal conversion.* Our institutions and communities must leave behind old habits that perpetuate corruption. And when we work together, we can do a lot more.

The EDSA People Power was our peaceful way of effecting change. It demanded courage, sacrifice and love. And we acted together.

May we propose some concrete actions to celebrate EDSA at 40:

**Let us fight impunity together.** *Ang impunity ay kawalan ng pananagutan; hindi napaparusahan; palaging nakakalusot. Ang mali nagiging normal. Ang kasalanan ay nakakalusot, at ang katarungnan ay nanahimik. Ang makapangyarihan ay walang kinatatakutan.* So that we may hold power accountable, let us rally together for the passage of an authentic *Anti-Dynasty Bill*. Power must remain in the people, not in a few.

**Let us be vigilant.** Let us initiate local, diocesan or parish-based volunteer groups and movements for public accountability and monitoring of public funds, programs and projects.

**Let us engage.** Let us initiate and participate in conversations, dialogues and consultations where voices are heard, to promote responsibility, transparency and accountability. Town hall meetings, linkages with groups, institutions or organizations, or the recent trillion peso marches are examples of this.

**Let us support honest and competent leaders**, mindful of the common good. Let us continue the education for good citizenship and governance in view of 2028 Elections. Let us start voters' education early. And let us identify who genuinely serve and those who are already engaged in electioneering.

All these requires a revolution: a revolution of the heart. After 40 years of EDSA, millions among us wallow in poverty and suffering, because we have returned to our old bad habits. We need a revolution of hearts. For we must first see these changes in our own places and spaces: our homes, convents, parishes, boards, institutions, organizations, associations, movements, congregations, dioceses.


Lastly, we should not forget **change only happens with God's grace**. EDSA, for us, was a sign of God's love and mercy. Let us not lose hope, for God reveals through the Holy Spirit "*what eye has not seen, and ear has not heard, and what has not entered the human heart, what God has prepared for those who love him*". (1 Cor 2:9) Let us pray hard, as we work hard.

Brothers and Sisters, "*Remember the Wonders the Lord has done.*" Let us once again be filled with the same spirit that brought the 1986 People Power to fruition. Looking back, it was 'synodality in action' – hand-in-hand, shoulder-to-shoulder, we walked **together** in faith, hope and love. '*Sulong-Padayon*': this is our call that we may cross from slavery to freedom.

For forty years, the Israelites wandered in the desert. After forty years, and as we observe 40 days of Lent, we are called to a new revolution of the heart, a heart that turns to God for *it remembers the wonders God has done*. The 1986 People Power was '*kairos*' –a moment of grace. Let us *remember* with gratitude, *repent* with humility and *respond* with courage and love. Our Lord reminds us "*I have loved you.*" (Rev. 3:9)

Mary, Mother of our nation, pray for the Philippines. And may peace reign in our land.

For the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines

  
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*Note: Triduum of Masses can be offered in Parishes and Dioceses to mark the 40<sup>th</sup> of EDSA spiritually and peacefully. Prayer intentions for societal transformation and for the good of the country are to be offered.*