

# Beloved Filipino Youth,



## **YOU ARE THE "NOW" OF GOD**

Our country stands at a crossroads because of the upcoming May 9 elections. We, the Sovereign Filipino People, are called to exercise our sacred right and duty to vote.

These days leading to the elections, however, are marked by the proliferation of disinformation. Filipinos are said to be enthusiastic users of social media, but this same quality - our fondness for Facebook, Twitter, TikTok and Instagram - is being exploited and used to peddle lies.

Our country calls you, the Filipino youth, to an informed and courageous participation in the field of politics. You comprise 37 million (56%)<sup>1</sup> of the 67.5 million registered voters. It is safe to say that you, the youth, will decide now who will lead our country in the next six years. Remember Pope Francis' message **"You are the 'now' of God! You are not the future of the world; you are its present."**<sup>2</sup>

## **WE SALESIANS OF DON BOSCO WILL WALK WITH YOU**

You are not alone on this journey because we, Salesians of Don Bosco, will walk with you. Together, we can do the following:

**Counteract misinformation and historical revisionism.** Know the relevant issues based on credible sources. Be courageous in calling out false news, but do so respectfully and charitably.

**Engage in dialogue and collective discernment.** Listen to each other and be open. Do not fear differences in opinions and preferences. If we are sincere, respectful, and charitable, differences can be creative because they lead to tensions, and in the resolution of tensions lies our progress.<sup>3</sup>

**In choosing whom to vote, we ask ourselves if he/she is** faithful to our pledge in the *Panunumpa sa Watawat ng Pilipinas*:

**MakaDiyos?** Is the candidate a person of faith and upright values? Does he/she respect and uphold the dignity of human life? Does he/she stand for truth and honesty?

**MakaTao?** How does he/she promote the common good? What did he/she do during the COVID-19 pandemic? Does the candidate respect freedom and human rights? What is his/her plan to address poverty and hunger?

**MakaKalikasan?** What is his/her track record in the aspect of environmental protection? What is his/her stand on mining, pollution, natural disasters, and climate change?

**MakaBansa?** Is he/she committed to defending our sovereignty and territory? What is his/her stand on the issue of the West Philippine Sea? Is he/she committed to pursuing an independent foreign policy? What is his/her stand on political dynasties?



**Consider supporting your chosen candidate publicly.** Give this matter a lot of thought. Shun the noise and make a sober choice as if your life depended on it. And once you have made a thoughtful choice of whom to elect, you may make your decision public. Support your candidates. Make a prophetic stand and *'let your light shine before others'* (Mt. 5:16). Your light will also dispel the darkness present in others. You may join organizations that will guard the ballot to ensure that the will of the people is respected.

**Continue political participation even after the May 9 elections.** Our political participation should not end with the elections. Continue raising consciousness through political education. Be vigilant and hold the elected officials accountable for their promises.

### **CHRIST LIVES!**

Be not afraid or lose hope because Christ lives! "He is in you, he is with you, and he never abandons you." <sup>4</sup> St. John Bosco wanted to form young people into upright citizens and good Christians. We believe that your responsible participation in the democratic process of electing our political leaders is an opportunity to achieve this goal.

***Through Mary's intercession, may God protect you always,  
and empower you to fulfill your mission!***

Walking with you,

### **Salesians of Don Bosco**

Philippines North Province (FIN)

13 March 2022

Second Sunday of Lent

<sup>1</sup> 18-41 years old registered voters according to Comelec, *CNN Philippines*, <https://www.cnnphilippines.com/news/2022/2/8/youth-vote-56-percent-2022.html>

<sup>2</sup> Pope Francis, *Christus Vivit*, no. 64

<sup>3</sup> Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, no.203

<sup>4</sup> *Christus Vivit*, nos. 1 & 2.