

Office of the President
of the Philippines
Malacañang

130

Mar 24, 1970
Tuesday

8:50 AM

Third day of retreat

The meditations have been inspirational. "The Lord went into the darkness of the forest for his own test" was the theme of meditation this morning at 7:30 AM. I exercised and jogged inside the room for ten minutes (jogging); all in all about 15 minutes. It did not feel cold after that unlike yesterday morning when I did not exercise and felt chilly. Last night I was chilly and woke up at 4:30 AM.

It is my feeling that Father Jose Cruz the retreat master must think I might be breaking down under the pressures of the crisis and so the inspirational talks I must thank him for it. No one spoke of the Manila Times slanting the headline yesterday "Marcos warns of martial law" which of course I did not as borne out by the body of the story. Neither did Manila Chronicle help. It carried the headline "Marcos Threatens Martial Law" which was worse.

"Goodness may not be immediately appreciated but this is the test. History is a capricious mistress and does not guarantee that even if she allows you a historical role she will reserve even but a little space for you. But it is for one's satisfaction that one does what is right even if unpopular. And small mistakes and all the brilliant achievements in the past are forgotten." No example - Royal.

And I say we do what is right because of self-respect and integrity. Although a sense of history may propel us to do so, this is not the primary motivation, but pride in one's integrity and in one's self is a greater cause at times.

Office of the President
of the Philippines
Malacañang

131
Mar. 24, 1970 (Cont.)

Let me stand this suffering but let it be a suffering that will cure. Let it be the passion that will bring life.

For the cries of the and ones are heard over the land. And I must often bear the lash of their tongues in silence even if I know they are wrong.

For time will bear me out. Of this I am sure as I am sure that my conscience tells me so.

Today it is fashionable to be aligned against the establishment and I symbolize it. So all kinds of men pick up the cry of protest against what could be actual causes of grievance: lifelessness and pettiness in public service. We listen to them knowing that the accusers are not any less guilty nor are they so nobly motivated. For there are indeed valid grounds for grievance and there are indeed rapacious, vicious and dishonest men in the public service. And we must also rectify errors committed in the past.

But the past is a heavy legacy of all these ills — 400 years and more of apathy, dishonesty, viciousness, pettiness and indifference. Four hundred years the spirit had died — and now suddenly we must resurrect it. Phoenix-like it must spring alive from the ashes of our frustrations and our failures. This miracle is my task. At least its beginning and birth is.

So I pray that I may be given the grace of inspiration, of wisdom, discrimination, dedication and courage to accomplish this task.

And I am strengthened as I hear the Lord say: Fear not. I am with you. You shall not fail. For you bear my words in your mouth and my courage in your heart.

Office of the President
of the Philippines

132
Mar. 24, 1940 (Cont)

Now I know why I could not order the shooting
of the men who attacked Gate 4 of Malacanan on
Jan. 30th. They had attempted to burn the Medical Clinic,
they had actually burned the fire truck with which the gate
was rammed upon as well as several vehicles and they
had entered the compound where actually six were arrested.

But there flashed through my mind's eye all the
killings and the butchery that I had known and I had
participated in what was legitimate combat and I recoiled at
the memory of what may be useless waste of life.

The danger was there but it was not the danger that
I had known in many a battle and galed into insignificance
before the desperation of the last war and the underground.
And most of the attackers were irresponsible children -
who could have been our children.
I was never born to massacre babies.

However our military and some of the advisors
say if an armed conflict as you say is inevitable why
not provoke it now when we would have to kill less than
later when the communists will be stronger and we would
have to kill more of our own people.

Because it is still my hope that by legal action
of the courts and restrained action against those engaged
in actual violence we shall so weaken them and render
them leaderless and debilitated they will never be able
to mount an armed uprising.

And also because we must stabilize the currency
and propel the economy forward with such momentum
that no matter what the jolts, the quakes and the shocks
later on such momentum will carry our country forward
irreversibly.

Office of the President
of the Philippines
Malacañang

133

Mar. 24, 1970 (Cont)

Father Jose Cruz seems to have studied the problem of the militant youth although he claims that his memo are merely those of an ordinary citizen.

He starts with the warning that the problem may not be as insurmountable or as serious as most people may think. Only 350 armed Hukos, a base of legal cadres (he calls them part time fighters at night) of a thousand and a half and some mass base. But he says 85% of our people are quiet workers for our progress although they receive only 40% of the benefits derived from our development while the 15% that owns the greater portion of our wealth receive the 60% of such growth fruits. He feels that we must not allow the communists (he calls them the leftists) to win the 85% and they have not. For he feels that the wisdom and discrimination of the 85% of our people sees through the slogans of the leftists, "imperialism, fascism, feudalism."

"In lieu of slogans we must give them issues. And a dynamic ideology that is relevant to their lives. This dynamic Christian ideology that has to do with anything that is human. For it is through humanity that one approaches God."

And the greater number look askance at the violence and the disorder fomented by the radicals for it destroys all that they have been working for. But this 85% is under tension and gropes for answers, which we must furnish them. Thus the courageous dedicated leadership that will guide and reassure.