



## **“Ang Diyos na Banal sa mga bagay na Banal” (The Lord who is Holy is in holy things)**

### **Objectives:**

To deepen one’s knowledge that God is Holy and He is in holy things.

To use holy things to sanctify our everyday life.

To express our love and respect for holy things. Whoever venerates an image venerates the persons portrayed in it.

### **Life Situation:**

#### **A. One very pervasive influence in the faith- life of many Catholic Filipinos is a certain “Folk Catholicism” or popular religiosity (NCDP 327):**

- Celebration of the Feast of the Saints.
- Flores de Mayo- Marian Devotion
- Majority of Filipinos have altars in their homes
- Two great feasts dear to many Filipino Catholics are celebrated in January: the feast of the Black Nazarene of Quiapo, and the feast of the Sto. Nino. The celebration of these feasts features the image of Christ carrying his cross, or the images of the Christ Child dressed regally and holding the globe in one hand, or else dressed in various garbs (of a fisherman, a farmer, a policeman, a fireman, etc.). This image-centeredness of the celebrations can either make a person smile with amusement, or make one’s forehead crease in worry, especially when, as happens in Quiapo, such a frenzy accompanies the procession that people get injured or die.

#### **B. Present Situation**

- Many born-again Christians attack the Catholic practice of the veneration of images, and have even accused the Church of practicing idolatry, in violation of God’s prohibition against graven images stated clearly in the Old Testament.
- The recent condemnation by the Bishops on the issue of CCP’s ‘**blasphemous**’ exhibit
- Malacanang opposes sanction vs controversial artist
- Some reactions of the Filipino people:

1. The works are insulting to our faith, kung ginawa sa mga hindi Katoliko, hindi ba't magagalit din kayo, subukan kaya niya sa sarili niyang pamilya o sa mga muslim, anung gagawin mo o gagawin nila. Kung ganyan ang inyong pananaw Okay lang palang makasagasa ng tao, basta ma-express ang art. Wala na...

2. Artists really look for opportunities para mapansin. good or bad publicity is always a good publicity. yan ang nasa ulo ni cruz. takaw pansit.. este pansin.
  3. hindi magandang gawi ang pagsira sa sagradong imahe para lang may ipangkain sa araw araw. walang pinag iba yun sa pagnanakaw.
- Some reactions from Church leaders :
    - Archbishop Oscar V. Cruz, has condemned the exhibit of artist Mideo Cruz describing it as a “consummate sacrilege!”
    - Pampanga Auxiliary Bishop Pablo Virgilio David compared the so-called Mideo Cruz’s case as “like that of a kleptomaniac who derives pleasure from stealing, or a sadomasochist who draws fulfillment from either hurting people or being hurt by them.”
    - Former CBCP President Archbishop Angel N. Lagdameo said the art exhibit at the Cultural Center of the Philippines desecrates the image of Jesus Christ. “It is blasphemous and an affront against Christianity,”
    - Gumaca Bishop Buenaventura Famadico said “those behind the exhibit should be sensitive to the religious beliefs of Christians.”
  - From CEAP statement on the exhibit Poleteismo

To our estimation, the work is far from art. The exhibit is offensively obscene and blasphemous- a sentiment shared even by well-meaning non-Christians. It hurts us for we cannot even imagine this done to our parents how much more to Jesus whom we consider us our Lord and savior.

**How about you, what is your reaction to this exhibit/to this issue?**

**Scriptural Texts:**

**Numbers 21:4-9**

*“And the Lord said to Moses: ‘Make a Fiery serpent, and set it on a pole; and every one who is bitten, when he sees it, shall live.’ So Moses made a bronze serpent, and set it on a pole; and if a serpent bit any man, he would look at the bronze serpent and live.*

**2 kings 18:1-6**

*He trusted in the Lord the God of Israel; so that there was none like him among all the kings of Judah after him, nor among those who were before him. For he held fast to the Lord; he did not depart from following him, but kept the commandments which the Lord commanded Moses.*

## Church Teachings

**Catechism of the Catholic Church 2132-** The Christian veneration of images is not contrary to the first commandment which proscribes idols. Indeed, "the honor rendered to an image passes to its prototype," and "whoever venerates an image venerates the person portrayed in it." The honor paid to sacred images is a "respectful veneration," not the adoration due to God alone:

Religious worship is not directed to images in themselves, considered as mere things, but under their distinctive aspect as images leading us on to God incarnate. The movement toward the image does not terminate in it as image, but tends toward that whose image it is.

**CCC 2141-** The veneration of sacred images is based on the mystery of the Incarnation of the Word of God. It is not contrary to the first commandment.

*[The Catholic practice of veneration of images has been upheld as legitimate by the Church repeatedly in ecumenical councils such as the Second Ecumenical Council of Nicaea (787), the Fourth Ecumenical Council of Constantinople (869-70), and the Ecumenical Council of Trent (in 1563).*

*The Second Ecumenical Council of Nicaea upheld the use of sacred images of Jesus Christ, the blessed Virgin Mother of God, of the holy angels, and of all the saints and just, giving this as a reason: "For, the more frequently one contemplates these pictorial representations, the more gladly will one be led to remember the original subject whom they represent, the more too will one be drawn to it (the original subject represented) and inclined to give it... a respectful veneration, which, however is not the true adoration which, according to our faith, is due to God alone."*

*So, in Catholic teaching, sacred images are not adored but are meant to be representations of Jesus Christ, the Blessed Virgin Mary, the angels or the saints and holy ones of God. The respect and veneration given to these images does not stop at them but is directed rather at the persons they represent. In other words, they are not worthy of veneration in themselves but only by virtue of the persons whom they represent. The images are not someone; they are only something. In venerating them, we venerate not the piece of wood or the material reproduction but the person portrayed.*

*It must be admitted, though, that sometimes some Catholics consider the image itself as though it were the living person.*

*It is not wrong to care for sacred images, but they should never be treated as living persons. They are only representations. In fact, the better images of God and of Jesus Christ are living human beings who are all made in the image and likeness of God, and with each of whom Christ identifies himself so that whatever is done to one of the least*

*human person is done to Christ himself. It is more important to care for human beings than to care for wooden or stone images.*

*The Council of Trent also teaches that sacred images are to be honored and venerated “not because it is believed that there is in them anything divine or any power for which they are revered, nor in the sense that something is sought from them or that a blind trust is put in the images as once was done by the Gentiles who placed their hope in idols... but because the honor which is shown them is referred to the original subjects which they represent.”*

*It is to be regretted that many Catholics sometimes have made superstitious use of images, believing perhaps that these images are sources of good luck, or have a power to protect them from evil. Again, the power comes not from the images themselves but from the persons (Jesus Christ, the Blessed Virgin or the saints) they represent whom we invoke in faith.*

*Perhaps it will not be amiss in the Philippine setting to warn against the danger of making sacred images tools to project the egos of the owners of the images. The images are so embellished and decorated that their owners take pride in them. Sacred images are not meant for display only, and especially not for competition. Rather, their purpose is (as the prayer of the blessing of images says): “so that by looking upon their (the sacred persons’) likenesses with the eyes of our bodies, we may with the eyes of our minds remember and be led to imitate their holiness and deeds.”- from Bishop Bacani, Catholic veneration on sacred images]*

### **Integration:**

#### **God is Holy and He is in holy things.**

According to the Scriptures, and the experience of the saints of both the old and New Testaments, God is absolutely holy. This means literally that he is absolutely different and unlike anything or anyone else that exists. He is so unique and so perfect that his existence cannot be compared to any other existence. God is absolutely transcendent, "what he is, by essence and nature, is altogether beyond our comprehension and knowledge" (John of Damascus) .

Sacramentals or holy things they are objects, actions, practices, places and the like, that help us become aware of Christ’s grace-filled presence around us or liberate from the presence of the evil one.-CFC1532

#### **I Peter 1:16 – 25**

Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.

**I John 1:5**

This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

**Psalm 98:1**

O sing unto the Lord a new song; for he hath done marvelous things: his right hand, and his holy arm, hath gotten him the victory.

**Psalm 145:17**

The Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works.

**I Samuel 2:2**

There is none holy as the Lord: for there is none beside thee: neither is there any rock like our God.

**Isaiah 6:3**

And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.

**John 17:11**

And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are.

**Revelation 4:8**

And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.

**We use holy things to sanctify our everyday life.** We use these sacramentals or these holy things to sanctify our everyday life. They do not directly modify our grace-relationship with Christ, but rather arouse us to acts of virtue and piety which strengthens God's grace-filled presence within and among us.

**We express our love and respect for holy things. Whoever venerates an image venerates the persons portrayed in it.** We Catholics worship God alone, and saints are only honored and venerated as humans especially blessed by God. The Catholic encyclopedia explains the difference:

The worship of latria(latreia)or strict adoration, is given to God alone;the worship of dulia(douleia), or honour and humble reverence, is paid the saints;the worship of hyperdulia(hyperdouleia), a higher form of dulia belongs on account of her greater excellence, to the Blessed Virgin mary.

**Our Response in Faith:**

What have you understood in our discussion? Do you agree with the artist (Mideo Cruz) that their should be freedom of expression in everything without being judged?

How does your conscience speak after presenting and discussing the word of God and Church teachings on the issue of blasphemous CCP exhibit?

What is God telling us on this issue?

How is God calling me to respond to this situation?

Am I ready to defend my faith regarding the sanctity of holy things?

**Celebration:**

Let us ask the intercession of all the saints so that in this precarious time where our faith is tested, we may all the more strengthened and be steadfast in God's abiding love.

**Litany of the Saints**

Lord, have mercy on us. Lord, have mercy on us.

Christ, have mercy on us. Christ, have mercy on us.

Lord, have mercy on us. Lord, have mercy on us.

Holy Mary, Mother of God. Pray for us.

Saint Michael,

Holy angels of God,

Saint Joseph,

Saint John the Baptist,

Saint Peter and Saint Paul,

Saint Andrew,

Saint John,

Saint Mary Magdalene,

Saint Stephen,

Saint Ignatius,

Saint Lawrence,

Saint Perpetua and Saint Felicity,

Saint Agnes,

Saint Gregory,

Saint Augustine,

Saint Athanasius,

Saint Basil,

Saint Martin,

Pray for us.

Saint Benedict,

Saint Francis and Saint Dominic,

Saint Francis Xavier,

Saint John Vianney,

Saint Catherine,

Saint Theresa,

Saint Therese of the child Jesus

Saint John of the Cross

All you saints of God,

Lord,

be merciful,

Lord, save us.

From all harm,

Lord, save us.

From every sin,

Lord, save us.

From all temptations,

Lord, save us.

From everlasting death,

Lord, save us.

By Your coming among us,

Lord, save us.

By Your death and rising to new life,

Lord, save us.

By Your gift of the Holy Spirit,

Lord, save us.

Be merciful to us sinners,

Lord, hear our prayer.

Guide and protect Your Holy Church,

Lord, hear our prayer.

Keep our Pope and all the clergy in faithful service to Your Church.

Lord, hear our prayer.

Bring all people together in trust and peace.

Lord, hear our prayer.

Strengthen us in Your service.

Lord, hear our prayer.

Amen.

**Assignment: To bring the image of their favorite saints.**