



Razor's Edge

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Kudos To Nonoy's Ultimatum

NEW YORK, NY Oct. 02 (PinoyGlobal) - Not many people, for that matter, even publishers, writers and so-called concerned citizens would challenge the powers-that-be to do the right thing when all around is death, suffering and disaster plaguing the nation. Complacency is usually the last refuge of a scoundrel who is afraid to shake the foundation of his comfortable life by calling on powerful people to listen to the cry of the poor masses to rescue them from their wretched condition caused by the unbridled wrath of Mother Nature – tropical storm “Ondoy.”

It takes unflinching moral courage to call on the president who is known to flex her muscles with the help of sycophants in the cabinet to intimidate citizens that do not conform to the way the government is run. Together they imperviously mute the puny cry of redress and grievances of our beleaguered Juan de la Cruz whose plight is due to the excesses of the government.

This is why I am passionately fired by the splendid example of moral conviction of Pinoy Global Online publisher Nonoy Mendoza who willfully risked his hard earned respect from the government for having to deliberately provoked the conscience of Pres. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo - to confront the prevailing crisis in the country caused by the unbridled rage of typhoon Ondoy.

Anyone similarly situated would not dare tell the government, much less the president to do the right thing in the nation's hour of calamitous events, lest he or she is hit backed by the powers-that-be. Dante once said: “The hottest spot in hell is reserved for those who in great moments of moral crises maintain their neutrality.” Indeed it is easy to play possum when you are not personally affected

with fortuitous events.

Conversely, it is doubly a sacrifice to be concerned and do something or at least try to ameliorate the sufferings of victims when you can help as Nonoy did recently - calling on the president to be equal to the challenge facing the nation after Ondoy's devastating visit on our shores.

Thus I am overly anxious and eager to join with Nonoy and his brilliant proposal to Pres. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and her family and administration: that they roll up their sleeves and get personally involved with helping the victims of tropical storm “Ondoy”, and that her Cabinet members give up 20% of their considerable net assets to storm relief efforts.

Nonoy's plausible suggestion is so lucid and humane. Other writers followed suit and asked the president to look after the hungry victims of Ondoy, instead of using her usual gimmick of paying lip service to help. Remember madam that a stitch in time saves nine: do your level best for our people. Now is the time.

Hopefully, corrupt officials will go as far as sharing 20% of their ill-gotten wealth to the victims as suggested by Mr. Mendoza. Maybe, through this kindness, they could reinvent their image in the eyes of God and the suffering masses.

I know this is a big sacrifice for public officials who enjoy wallowing in their ill-gotten money such that to so much as deplete a bit of their assets is unthinkable. But this is perhaps their first and last chance to mend their ways to ingratiate themselves with the suffering victims whose plight

is partially if not solely the cause of their unmitigated corruption, their unrestrained abuse of power and greed for money.

Nonoy's idea is so ingenious that I reached out to congratulate him from the moment I read it. Politicians are forever making a show of aiding disaster victims, but Nonoy's insight saw through the PR-like nature of this ruse and called the President on the carpet: that she should get down in the dirt for a while and help the poor herself with her own two hands!

The international media has carried on about how wonderful it was for GMA to have her chef cook gourmet food for flood victims on Malacanang's grounds. This undertaking smacks of PR and political spin, and raises the question of why members of the poor public had to be nearly killed by a flood before they were so invited.

And of all things, why gourmet food? Given the critical situation plaguing Juan de la Cruz this was unrealistic if not absurd! The starving victims of Ondoy were in no mood to discriminate on what they ate. They would have been just as grateful with tuyo, galongong, plain gulay and hot rice. They could care less for fillet mignon, T-bon steak, paella, callus, embotido, etc., which gourmet food is only for the gods. Ridiculous!

What Gloria really needs is to actually spend an appreciable amount of time among the victims herself, and then people will be affected in a way that will not disappear in the next media-report cycle.

As Nonoy's amazing analysis pointed out, a truly meaningful and non-political humanitarian move on her part would have the additional and paradoxical benefit of also working politically! The people would truly hail Gloria as a hero from this day forward because of her saint-like devotion to working hands-on among our suffering ones, like the saint-kings Edmund or Louis IX of old.

In one fell swoop Gloria would then redeem herself of all the charges of corruption and human rights abuses that have been made against her and her administration. And simply because she had the humility to get personally down among the poor for a while!

Indeed, the sight of Gloria tending the wounds of little children who were nearly killed by the storm would inspire her own government, and lead Cabinet members to be willing to follow Part 2 of Nonoy Mendoza's plan. Let them do penance before God and the people for their sins in public office by serving the people in the way Nonoy called for, by sacrificing part of their net worth in a way that will not hurt their own comfort, but will definitely make a historical impression on the people.

May Gloria and company follow Nonoy's sage advice. But all the rest of us must do the same as well, and contribute whatever we can to the relief funds being collected for our suffering people. Long live the Filipinos and our beloved Philippines