

*A Tribute to the
Right Reverend Narciso V. Ticobay
Second Prime Bishop
Episcopal Church in the Philippines*

By Floyd P. Latwet

At its meeting last July 18, 2013, the ECP Executive Council received a report from the National Finance Officer on a P12 million windfall from the trading of long-term treasury bonds bought by the Church some years ago. Council resolved that this be constituted as part of the ECP's capital fund whose income will be used specifically for the purchase of real properties for strategic mission purposes.

Two days after Council made this decision, the Most Rev. Narciso V. Ticobay, 81 years old, passed away. He must have passed on to the Great Beyond very much contented that the Church he has served so hard is now on its way to sharing and giving more of itself, its resources and blessings to the pursuit of mission.

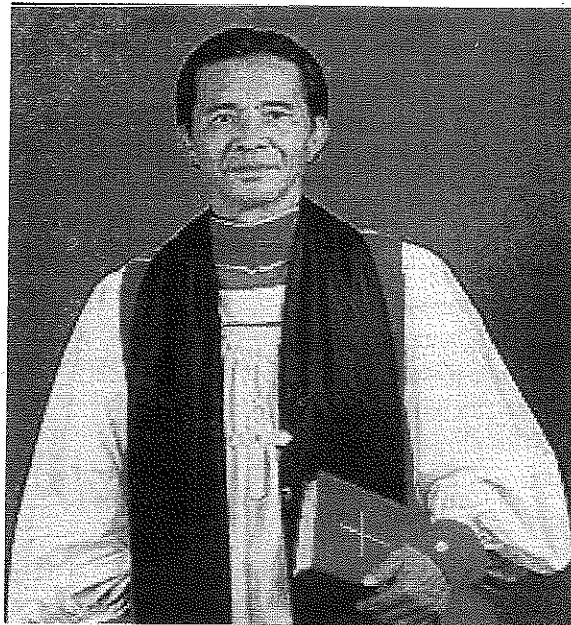
The late Bishop Ticobay was enthroned as the second Prime Bishop of the autonomous Episcopal Church in the Philippines and Metropolitan of the [now defunct] Metropolitan See during the Regular Synod on May 4, 1993. He served for 4 years in what could be the most difficult period in the financial life of the Church.

When the ECP became autonomous in 1990, 60% of its budget was paid for by the annual dollar subsidy from its erstwhile mother Church. Yet, even with this huge subsidy, it incurred deficits running into millions of pesos year after year. It was the time when clergy and lay employees in most dioceses were not receiving their salaries on time simply because there was no money. It was the time when the ECP had no choice but to retire its evangelists and catechists simply because it could not pay their salaries. Then Prime Bishop Ticobay agonized over these things as he led the Church in making hard decisions that almost caused a split in its membership. The decision to sell a 1.5 hectare portion of Cathedral Heights, Quezon City to build up a capital fund resulted in

and the entire leadership, attacks against his person were made in media, the most scathing of which was even no less than an editorial in the Philippine Daily Inquirer. But through all of these, there was never a time when Bishop Ticobay lost his cool and expressed anger of any kind. His recourse

through all these was prayerful reflections and healthy exchanges where he consistently spoke in that soft and understanding voice of a loving father of a family that was his trademark. Yes, some people disagreed with the positions he took but I believe that everybody agreed that he was a pastor in the truest sense of the word.

History books would write about Bishop Ticobay's valuable role and contributions in keeping the flock together amidst those turbulent times but for now, on the occasion of his passing away, we gift him with the fact that the institution which he worked so very hard to build is now on its most vibrant and dynamic course so far. We still have difficulties, struggles and challenges but we see our membership growing, we see communities of other faiths attracted to our way of doing mission and we see mission responsibilities being assumed by our people. We now have 52 full-fledge parishes and 30 aided parishes, and a number of organized missions being established in areas where, maybe 20 years ago, we



Bishop Narciso V. Ticobay

open animosities between and among Filipino Episcopalians - between those who supported the decision and those who voted against. The bitter discord went on for years and reaching its peak when the Church leadership was again accused of losing millions from the capital fund in investments with rural banks that eventually closed.

We were able to come out of those years very much intact and, in fact, much stronger and much more energized for mission and I believe that that was so largely because of how then Prime Bishop Ticobay shepherded the Church. Several court cases have been filed against him

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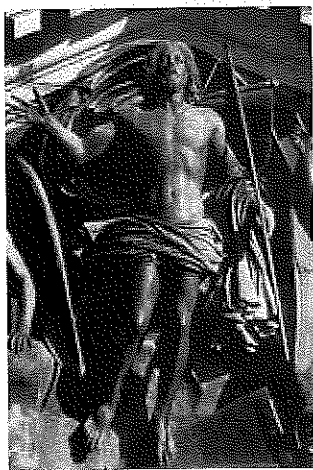
could never imagine to be. We have consistently posted budget surpluses in recent years and despite the financial failures we had experienced some years ago, I can say with much pride that we have the best passive investment course in these recent years – one that allowed us to earn up to 13% in long-term government peso bonds and up to 8% in government dollar bonds. Observers have commented that they have yet to see any passive investor performing along those lines. This is why for two successive years, Executive Council, upon motion of corporate executive Mr. Robert Kuan, has commended the National Finance Office for such exemplary financial management.

The previous accusation against the Church finance managers for losing millions of pesos in investments turned out to be grossly un-founded. The principal placements in the two rural banks that folded up summed up to P69.3 million. Over the years, however, the ECP earned a total investment income of P74.9 million and has received insurance proceeds of P28.5 million for a total cash inflow of P103.4 million. Less its principal placements, its net cash inflow or gain therefore amounted to P34.1 million. Rather than losing money, the ECP actually gained P34 million from these investments. But the accusations were also most welcome and turned out positive as these compelled the institution to improve its management systems and decision-making processes.

At the last Executive Council meeting, it was pointed out that the ECP was forced by financial need to sell a portion of its property to be able to fund its mission pursuits. That was more than 20 years ago. Now, it has moved way up the financial ladder and, among others, acquires properties in strategic mission centers so that it can share its faith, including the blessings of its experience as a growing Church. Truly, Bishop Ticobay can smile up there!



The ashes of Bishop Narciso V Ticobay are deposited in front of the main altar of the National Cathedral of St Mary and St John in Quezon City. ED



A painting of the triumphant risen Christ.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ, You came today, as is customarily said, to present your last respects to me. I would like to thank you for your kindness and your friendship.

Some time ago, I wrote this address and requested that it be read during my funeral service. Do not think that it was morbid on my part. I did it for two reasons: first, I am only too aware of the agony a priest goes through to prepare a funeral service and a sermon for the same occasion. I want to spare my friends and colleagues that heavy burden. Second, I firmly believe that my death is as much part of my existence as my birth. Both events are two points of the same line. Since this is, so to speak, my last public appearance, I feel that I am entitled to take an active part in it and have my presence definitely felt.

I have always felt uneasy with eulogies that tend to magnify one's life beyond proportions, making us humans look like saints, even going to the extent of extolling our

Sermon for my funeral

Rev Canon Gabriel Dimanche

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