



“A Reflection on our Approach to the 2009 National and Provincial Elections”

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“As our nation approaches its fourth National and Provincial Elections, 15 years into democracy, it is difficult not to remember somewhat wistfully the “miracle” that God worked for us on that historic occasion, in 1994. After weeks and months of fierce tension, conflict and violence, April 27 & 28 were like magic. The Lord had sent his Spirit of tolerance, mutual acceptance and ubuntu upon us in a measure no one expected.

Remembering the past is meant to do something for us, something constructive for the future, beginning in the present. Regarding the past, we should remember it with gratitude - gratitude for the gifts that God bestowed on us, even though we had done little to deserve them, apart from fervent and sustained prayer.

Learning from our past and expressing our gratitude, let us use the prayer suggested by the Catholic Bishops at their recent Plenary Session:

“Lord, we pray that our forthcoming elections may bring about a deepening of our democracy and that we will carry out our duties as citizens responsibly and with respect for the rights of others. May the choices we make bring hope to the poor, unity to all our people and a more secure and peaceful future for our children.”
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

In the above prayer we mention the present, namely the choices that we are to make. Let's engage in the present tasks and challenges with enthusiasm, with faith and confidence that God is with us, that he is willing us to do the right and just thing.

Four things we must avoid: blind loyalty (my party, right or wrong); intolerance and intimidation, corruption and apathy. To avoid these we will need to ask questions, make demands of those standing as candidates and the parties they represent and put the **common good** (bringing hope to the poor, unity to all our people and a secure and peaceful future for our children) before and above all else; set high standards for those we decide to vote for, and not sit back and expect others to clean up the mess we are in.

Finally, remember some will win and some will lose. Whatever you do, be open to the future with confidence. God is with us. He will help us if we are open and honest with Him.

Pray with us for a peaceful and harmonious election and future, where the Rainbow Nation – Ubuntu – will once again be our “trade mark.”

God bless you with his love and goodness.”

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