

**PRIVILEGE SPEECH  
15<sup>TH</sup> REGULAR COUNCIL  
Sangguniang Panlungsod  
Davao City  
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**The Catholic Educational Association of the Philippines: Unifying and  
Consolidating Gains of Catholic Education  
By Councilor Pilar C. Braga, PhD**

Madam President, just a few days ago, to be exact September 11 to 13, a very important gathering of educators of one of the biggest educational associations in our country took place here in the city.

The gathering took place in the Matina Campus of Ateneo de Davao University. With the theme “**Growing Into Soul: Inner Space, Sacred Place in Catholic Education,**” the **2008 Catholic Educational Association of the Philippines (CEAP) NATIONAL CONVENTION** stood as a monumental witness of solidarity of member schools from Luzon and Visayas to Mindanao. Despite the reported fighting in the neighboring towns and provinces of Davao, the important gathering only shows that CEAP members are in harmony with one another.

The Catholic Educational Association of the Philippines (CEAP) is the biggest organized group of Catholic schools in the country, with about 1,252 members. Instituted in 1941, the association upholds quality Catholic education in the spirit of communion and service, guided by Gospel values and teachings of the Roman Catholic Church.

This year, more than two thousand (2,000) Catholic educators from all over the country converged to hear COCOPEA chair Fr. Roderick C. Salazar, Jr., SVD gave the international situationer on the topic “Reality Check: Where is Catholic Education?” while Sr. Teresita F. Bayona, SPC, director-at-large of CEAP introduced the national situationer.

Catholic education in the country has long preceded the public education system which came to the Philippines through the Americans only at the early part of the last century. While some of the notable public or state universities were founded only around less or so a century ago -- University of the Philippines in 1908, Polytechnic University of the Philippines in 1904, Technological University of the Philippines in 1901, and the Philippine Normal University in 1901 -- a considerable number of prime Catholic colleges and universities have already long established their qualitative supremacy in the country like, the University of San Carlos in 1595, University of Santo Tomas in 1611, Colegio de

San Juan de Letran in 1620, Colegio de Santa Isabel in 1632, Colegio de Santa Catalina in 1696, Ateneo de Manila University in 1804, to mention but a few.

Here in Davao City, catholic schools, whether archdiocesan or sectarian, have made their mark in the educational map of the city – Ateneo de Davao University, the University of the Immaculate Conception, San Pedro College, Holy Cross of Davao College, and various other secondary institutions run or managed by religious congregations – these institutions are all members of CEAP.

Catholic schools, through the quiet but persevering leadership of CEAP, have a long tradition of providing quality education in the country. Many Catholic schools produce graduates who are outstanding achievers and leaders in various fields of endeavours. In many licensures and Bar examinations, the top performing schools are mostly Catholic schools. In the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) list of autonomous and deregulated schools which are recognized for their excellence or quality, the majority are Catholic schools. In the Asiaweek listing of the top 100 universities in Asia, 3 out of 4 Philippine schools included in the list are Catholic schools (Ateneo de Manila University, De La Salle University, University of Santo Tomas). Even in the Department of Education (DepEd) examinations such as NCEE, NEAT and NSAT, Catholic schools generally perform better than other schools.

Catholic education has firmly claimed its enduring presence even amid crippling challenges. Through thick and thin, it has withered countless storms. Its enduring quality of education surpasses more than just the pursuance or attainment of knowledge. More than that, its over-arching agenda of education is firmly rooted on the program of evangelization conformably aligned with the apostolic exhortation of the late John Paul II, "Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever" -- and only for this reason, Catholic education will thus forever prevail.

The 2008 CEAP Convention is a historic turn about for its member-schools because the gathering provided for a needed deeper look into the state of Catholic education in the country amidst pressing political, economic and security issues.

With the leadership of CEAP, the vision and mission of Catholic education to form the whole person, to help people know about God's plan for the world and to be a part of that plan is as strong as ever.

The continuing task of CEAP and its member is not just to teach people about God but to help them to know God and his love. Teaching students about their faith must be a process of mentoring where the word of God is not expected

to be received as mere information but understood to have a deeper meaning for their lives.

The role and leadership of CEAP cannot be measured in terms of the growth of the associations under its umbrella, but in the continuing direction it has provided amidst changing political and economic conditions of the country – by its firm and sober policies, it has exemplified responsible Christian decision-making.

Madam President, it is high time that we commend and recognize the Catholic Educational Associations of the Philippines (CEAP) for its noble and enduring contribution in providing leadership direction to Catholic colleges and universities in the city and to make sure that Catholic education continue to firmly claim its enduring presence even amid crippling challenges.

Allow me therefore, Madam President, to pass the appropriate resolution regarding this matter at the opportune time.

Thank you.

**COUNCILOR PILAR C. BRAGA, PHD**  
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