

BIBLE ALLOWS GIFTS FOR BISHOPS: Being hidden over and above the shrill demonization of Filipino Roman Catholic bishops who received dole-outs (some in the form of expensive sports utility vehicles or SUVs) from the Arroyo government through the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO) in exchange for their support is the Biblical basis for the donations.

The real question that all stakeholders in this issue must address is this: is there a basis in the Bible for the request---or demand, if you may---of the Catholic bishops for the dole-outs, or birthday gifts for some of them?

The answer is yes, there is. For whatever it is worth, here is that Biblical basis, found in 1 Corinthians 9:11-14: "If we have sown spiritual seed among you, is it too much if we reap a material harvest from you? If others have this right of support from you, shouldn't we have it all the more?"

"...Don't you know that those who serve in the temple get their food from the temple, and that those who serve at the altar share in what is offered on the altar? In the same way, the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the gospel...."

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JESUS SAYS: GOD'S WORKERS DESERVE THEIR WAGES: Jesus Christ, our God and Savior, advised the 72 preachers he appointed and whom He sent two by two to proclaim the Word of God to enjoy the gifts and the hospitality of those they will minister to with the Word. This is found in Luke 10:1-2, 5-7, which says:

"After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go. He told them... `Go! I am sending you out like lambs among wolves. Do not take a purse or bag or sandals; and do not greet anyone on the road.

"`When you enter a house, first say, 'Peace to this house.' If someone who promotes peace is there, your peace will rest on them; if not, it will return to you. Stay there, eating and drinking whatever they give you, for the worker deserves his wages. Do not move around from house to house..."

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GENEROSITY TO GOD'S WORKERS: In 1 Timothy 5:17-18, Paul intones: "The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching. For Scripture says, `Do not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain' and `The worker deserves his wages.'

And in 1 Timothy 6:17-20, he gives a command to the rich to be generous and willing to share not only with all the people but especially to those who are working for God: "Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment.

KAKAMPI MO ANG BATAS: Bible allows gifts for bishops

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“Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life...” --Atty. BATAS MAURICIO