NATIONAL CATHOLIC REPORTER
Published on *National Catholic Reporter* (http://ncronline.org)

Philippines archbishop encourages HIV/AIDS awareness workshops

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| Aug. 15, 2012
NCR Today

MANILA, Philippines -- Manila Archbishop Luis Antonio Tagle has called on the priests, religious, seminarians and laypeople of the Archdiocese of Manila to learn more about HIV/AIDS [1].

Education about HIV and AIDS is necessary for the local church to come up with an effective and appropriate pastoral response to the silent epidemic, Tagle wrote in a circular published on the Manila archdiocese's website.

Nine new cases of HIV are reported daily, of which 52 percent is in the National Capital Region, Tagle wrote in the circular. While the global trend is decreasing, the number of HIV cases is rising in the Philippines while the time it takes for cases to double continues to shorten, he wrote. "Of the 9,669 reported cases from 1984 to May 2012, 5,245 cases (or 54 per cent of total cases) were recorded between 2010 and 2012. What is alarming is that the 20-29 year old age group has had the most number of cases."

Infectious diseases doctor Fr. Dan Cancino of the Ministers of the Infirm told *NCR* [2] in May that common causes of infection are injection drug use and men having sex with men.

Manila archdiocese's website announced [3] two workshop this month that will be conducted by Msgr. Robert Vitillo [4], special advisor on HIV and AIDS for Caritas Internationalis [5] and head of the International Delegation to the UN in Geneva.

At the request of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines, Caritas Internationalis and the Catholic Medical Mission Board [6] organized the workshops: the first for priests and religious Aug. 22-23 at the San Carlos Seminary auditorium, San Carlos Formation Complex, EDSA, Makati City; the second for seminarians and laypeople Aug. 24 at Layforce chapel in the same compound.

Tagle in his circular urged all groups to attend the workshop to "help the Archdiocese mainstream HIV in all existing ministries and protect families, especially our young people, from the virus which until now has no cure."

He cited the bishops' conference's 2011 pastoral letter on AIDS, "Who Is My Neighbor?" [7]. The letter emphasized the need for church workers to develop basic knowledge and pastoral skills for ministry to people living with HIV and AIDS.

Source URL (retrieved on *10/23/2014 - 10:30*): http://ncronline.org/blogs/ncr-today/philippines-archbishop-encourages-hivaids-awareness-workshops

Links:
[1] http://aids.gov/hiv-aids-basics/

[2] http://ncronline.org/blogs/ncr-today/doctor-priest-taps-partners-tackle-hivaids
[3] http://www.rcam.org/news/785-manila-archbishop-asks-priests-lay-people-to-know-more-about-hiv-aids
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