

## Julius Malicdem speaks: Morality for the Public Good in Tagbilaran, Philippines

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*Students prepare to march through the Tagbilaran City to promote purity before marriage.*

Tagbilaran, Philippines — Tourists usually come to Bohol, an island province in central Visayas, to relax on their spectacular white sand beaches and swim in crystal clear waters. But for three days in September, 23-25, as many as 2,100 students from 48 colleges and universities descended on this island paradise to start a revolution.



*2,100 students from 48 campuses in the Philippines make a public pledge of purity.*

Shunning the culture of free sex and the anything-goes mentality associated with drugs, alcohol and gangs, students made a public pledge to maintain their moral purity. However, the rationale was far more than just to remain free from deadly sexual diseases and avoid the emotional trauma of unwanted pregnancies.

Educators at the 4th annual International Youth Assembly emphasized multiple reasons why young people should remain moral purity: it builds good character, creates loving families, and helps develop peaceful societies, prosperous nations and a sustainable peaceful world. In essence, students were taught that one of the best ways for young people to express their patriotism was through sexual self-control. International students from eight nations, including nine from Japan, were happy to participate.

Students came to launch a new family-friendly culture in the Philippines and export it abroad—and they did not stand alone. Big name businesses proudly sponsored the student gathering, including: Coca-Cola, Dunkin Donuts, and Nature Spring (water). In addition, the Provincial Government of Bohol, the Tagbilaran City Government, Bohol Island State University and Rotary Club gave their unreserved backing.

Kristine Rabaño, 20, helped lead students in their public pledge of purity at the conclusion of the youth assembly. “I believe that educating youth about keeping their purity as well as giving them avenues to publicly affirm their belief..., is one huge step to make this world a better place to live in,” she said.

Dr. Julius Malicdem, the program organizer, said this event was the necessary next step in President Rodrigo Duterte’s crackdown on drugs. “Unless we can strengthen the family unit which is the basic building block of society where values, dignity and self-esteem are imbibed, the drug problem will come back sooner or later,” Malicdem explained. He has already drawn up plans to hold similar assemblies in all 15 provinces and 81 districts of the Philippines.