



ATENEIO DE MANILA UNIVERSITY

University Statement on the 49th Anniversary of the Declaration of Martial Law

21 September 2021

Forty-nine years ago, one of the darkest, most shameful, and most painful chapters in our nation's history began.

Martial Law is a period in the story of the Filipino nation that is too critical, too important to be forgotten. But for the past few decades the memories of that period have been slowly receding in our rear-view mirror. Many of those who experienced the atrocities first-hand—Filipinos who suffered in the hands of fellow Filipinos—are now gone. The main actors are now back in the spotlight, working hard to blatantly revise history. A large segment of our population have been born post-1986 and are too young to truly understand the impact of that period. And we, as a nation, have apparently been experiencing historical amnesia, and have failed to truly take stock and reckon with its lessons.

We've always been told that we are bound to repeat the mistakes of the past if we don't remember it. That is why, as an educational institution, this is now one of our biggest challenges: to make sure that we, as a nation, will never



ATENEIO DE MANILA UNIVERSITY

forget. The Ateneo Martial Law Museum (<https://martiallawmuseum.ph>) is at the heart of Ateneo de Manila's efforts of educating our fellow Filipinos about this crucial part of our nation's story. Since 2017 it has been an important learning resource about democracy, human rights, and freedom, as we aim to preserve our collective memory, fight historical revisionism, and promote engaged citizenship especially among the youth. This is even more important in the coming months, as we all prepare to go to the polls and choose our next leaders amid the multiple crises we are facing.

It is a tall order, but Ateneo de Manila University—along with the historians, educators, and institutional partners who have been working on the digital museum—will always strive to keep our collective memory, however painful, alive. Together, we need to keep the memory of Martial Law so that we won't make those same mistakes again.

We owe it to those who sacrificed their lives, those who fought the darkness so that we may live freely.

We owe it to the succeeding generations of Filipinos, so that they may never ever experience it.

Let us never forget. Never again.

Online: <https://go.ateneo.edu/ML49>