BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE PHILIPPINES   *MFN 9894*

PROCLAMATION NO. __24__

DECLARING THE FULL MOON DAY OF MAY OF EVERY YEAR AS "VESAK DAY"

WHEREAS, Article III, Section 5 of the Philippine Constitution declares that "The free exercise and enjoyment of religious profession and worship, without discrimination or preference, shall forever be allowed";

WHEREAS, Vesak Day is the day of birth, enlightenment and passing away of the wise teacher, Gautama Buddha, who lived more than 2,500 years ago;

WHEREAS, the message of peace, unity, compassion and non-violence espoused by Gautama Buddha has influenced and inspired millions of people in the world;

WHEREAS, in order to promote unity and healing in our nation and likewise to enhance better understanding and cooperation among our people, it is beneficial to focus attention on value-enriching messages and activities such as the recognition of the Vesak Day;

WHEREAS, this day is celebrated every year in the United Nations by virtue of the UN Resolution No. A/RES/54/115 titled "(Annual) International Recognition of the Day of Vesak at the United Nations" with the support of 80 nations including the Philippines, Spain, Indonesia, Russia, United States of America, among others;

WHEREAS, every year during Vesak Day, Buddhist associations and institutions will engage in humanitarian activities such as medical outreach programs, blood donations, cultural exchange programs with guests visiting from different countries inspired by Buddha's message of compassion, peace and love.
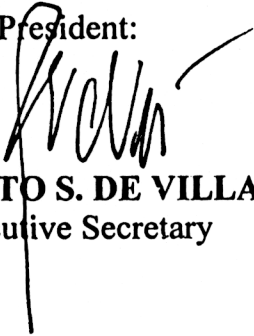
NOW, THEREFORE, I, GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO, President of the Philippines, by virtue of the powers vested in me by law, do hereby declare the full moon day of May of every year as "VESAK DAY".
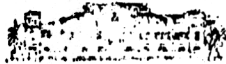
IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the Republic of the Philippines to be affixed.

DONE in the City of Manila, this 29th day of March , in the year of Our Lord, two thousand and one.

By the President:

RENATO S. DE VILLA
Executive Secretary