

BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE PHILIPPINES

PROCLAMATION NO. 354

DECLARING SATURDAY, APRIL 19, 2003, AS A SPECIAL (NON-WORKING) DAY THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY AND ALLOWING THE PUBLIC SECTOR, UNDER CERTAIN CONDITIONS, NOT TO REPORT FOR WORK ON WEDNESDAY, APRIL 16, 2003

WHEREAS, Maundy Thursday, which falls on April 17, 2003 and Good Friday, which falls on April 18, 2003 are both regular holidays;

WHEREAS, Saturday, April 19, 2003 falls between Good Friday and Easter Sunday;

WHEREAS, the Saturday falling between Good Friday and Easter Sunday has been declared a special day throughout the country in the past;

WHEREAS, the observance of Holy Week is one of our people's most cherished traditions;

WHEREAS, our people must be given the full and uninterrupted opportunity to ponder on the significance of the Holy Week and to properly observe its traditions with religious fervor, without prejudice to public interest.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, ALBERTO G. ROMULO, Executive Secretary, by order of Her Excellency, **GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO**, do hereby declare:

SECTION 1. Saturday, April 19, 2003 shall be a special (non-working) day throughout the country.

SECTION 2. Furthermore, all employees of departments, offices, agencies and instrumentalities of the executive branch of the government, including government-owned or controlled corporations, shall not be required to report for work on Wednesday, April 16, 2003 except that:

- a. The head of a department, office, agency, instrumentality or government-owned or controlled corporation may, if required by the exigencies of public service, direct the employees of said department, office, agency, instrumentality or government-owned or

controlled corporation to observe regular working hours and provide regular services to the public on the said date;

- b. Employees of the Bureau of Internal Revenue, Bureau of Customs, Philippine Postal Corporation and other government departments, offices, agencies, instrumentalities or government-owned or controlled corporations that impose deadlines on the transacting public for payment of taxes, fees or fines and for compliance with reportorial and other requirements, shall be required by the head of the department, office, agency, instrumentality or government-owned or controlled corporation to observe regular working hours and provide regular services to the public on the said date; and
- c. Employees of government departments, offices, agencies, instrumentalities or government-owned or controlled corporations providing police, security, fire protection, custodial, rescue, emergency, medical and other similar services shall be required by the head of the department, office, agency, instrumentality or government-owned or controlled corporation to observe regular working hours and provide regular services to the public on the said date.

SECTION 3. Heads of departments, offices, agencies, and instrumentalities of the executive branch of the government, including government-owned or controlled corporations, are hereby directed to issue the appropriate rules and regulations to implement this Proclamation.

SECTION 4. The legislative and judicial branches of the government and the constitutional commissions are encouraged to allow their employees not to report for work on Wednesday, April 16, 2003.

SECTION 5. Employers in the private sector, except those providing banking, financial, health, security and other vital services to the public, are encouraged not to require their employees to report for work on Wednesday, April 16, 2003: *Provided*, That such employers who opt not to require their employees to report for work are urged to make the necessary arrangements, which may include increasing work hours or allowing work on other days, to ensure that daily paid workers are paid the equivalent of the wages or compensation that they would have earned on the said date and that production schedules are met to maintain a continuous supply of goods and services. All existing labor laws shall be observed.

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 2nd day of April, in the year of Our Lord, Two Thousand and Three.

By order of the President:


ALBERTO G. ROMULO
Executive Secretary

By the Executive Secretary:


JOAQUIN C. LAGONERA
Senior Deputy Executive Secretary


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