

## **ADVOCACY MINDANOW**

By Jesus “ Jess” Dureza

(Editor’s note: Beginning this week, private citizen Jess will run his regular “Advocacy MindaNOW” column sharing views and insights honed from his long years as a journalist and as a high government official.)

**BACK IN PRIVATE SECTOR** --- After 23 years of being in government service (starting 1987 in Congress with some short break during the Erap administration), being back in the private sector gives me quiet relief. I changed my phone numbers and suddenly it’s a new day.. Truly sorry to my regular callers and texters. Not having to rush and get the first newsbreaks on TV, radio or in print has also some liberating effect. It’s a good feeling!

I had a quiet dinner with fellow Mindanao worker Inday Santiago before she flew out to India days ago. I recall her saying: “Isn’t it just great that you can now do the things you want to do? Or meet only those you want to talk to? ” . Indeed!

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**“APOSTOLIC” WORK** --But the most enjoyable part is now doing what I call as “apostolic” work – which means doing a lot of religious readings and of course spending time with the “apos”. . . One early morning, journalist Carol Arguillas caught me with 3 of my “apos” in the GSIS subdivision on board a golf cart. “What are you doing?,” she hollered. I shouted back: “Doing apostolic work!” I confess I have a lot of catching up to do on these.

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**FARMING** – Quiz: Do you know what is the best fertilizer for any farm? Answer: Footsteps of the owner.

Our farm in Davao del Sur had long been on what I call as “survival farming”. Meaning just leaving those animals, trees and plants to take care of themselves just to survive with minimal attention. Not anymore. My footsteps now are all over the place.

The day’s hours in the farm seem longer than in the city. Time flies so fast in the hubbub of the city. Oftentimes, it’s late in the night that you realize the long tiresome day is over. But a day’s work in the farm is so refreshing and simple that we savor every minute of it until sundown. And the day starts before daybreak.

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**ADVOCACY** --- I’m back doing work with Advocacy MindaNOW Foundation, Inc. which I left 9 years ago when the Arroyo government beckoned. It’s the same Mindanao work except that this is in private sector. As I had been saying all along, there is a lot yet to do for our island region and work here never ends.

So, you’ll be hearing from me through this column from time to time. I’m back with my first love – writing. Thanks to the publisher and the editor of this paper for giving me a regular corner. You can email me at [jessdureza@gmail.com](mailto:jessdureza@gmail.com).

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