

FROM THE FRONT PAGE

Prayers offered for Cory as she leaves ICU

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her life's example, we entrust everything to God," the statement read.

A second healing Mass was held at the Greenbelt Chapel, with former President Joseph Estrada, his wife Loi and children Sen. Jinggoy Estrada and Jackie Lopez leading friends of Mrs. Aquino in prayer.

"I admire President Cory's courage, sincerity and for being hailed as the Philippines' least corrupt President," Estrada told newsmen after the Mass. "I am saddened by her condition and pray for her healing."

He said he felt no need to visit Mrs. Aquino in the hospital.

"I don't like to bother her right

now," Estrada said.

Mrs. Aquino was one of the leading figures behind the so-called EDSA 2 which ousted Estrada.

Mrs. Aquino's spokesperson Deedee Siytangco said the former president is in "stable" condition, and is very much aware of the outpouring of prayers and affection for her.

Juico, who was Mrs. Aquino's appointments secretary at Malacañang, added, "Tita Cory has been fighting many battles all her life, and this is just another battle. She will not give up without a fight."

**No bitterness**

She said Mrs. Aquino had once confided to her that she had no anxieties and bitterness about her illness and in fact wanted to be reunited with her husband, the late Sen. Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino Jr.

"But she had promised her children to do everything she could to fight her cancer," Juico said.

She said Mrs. Aquino has been visited by the priests closest to her, like Fr. Catalino Arevalo, S.J., and Monsignor Socrates Villegas, and Masses attended only by her immediate family have been held at a room next to the one occupied by the former president at the Makati Medical Center.

Mrs. Aquino was diagnosed with colon cancer in March last year and has undergone chemotherapy, laparoscopy and radiation to battle her cancer. She reportedly has not been eating well for close to a month now.

Fr. Jun Sescon, who celebrated yesterday's healing Mass, said Mrs. Aquino wasn't only an "icon of democracy" but also an icon of the power of prayer, because even through the most difficult times in her life, she believed prayer would see her through.

Healing Masses for Mrs. Aquino will be held at the Greenbelt chapel at noon everyday until July 9.

Sen. Panfilo Lacson also said in a statement that the nation still needs Mrs. Aquino.

"Few have contributed so much for the democratic space Filipinos now possess. Let us all pray for the turnaround of Cory's condition and her recovery," Lacson said.

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