

GMA, bishops to meet today on CARP extension

Catholic Church leaders will meet with President Arroyo at Malacañang today to convince her to urge Congress to pass the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program with Reforms (CARPer) bill before it adjourns on June 5.

In an interview, Fr. Anton Pascual, executive director of Caritas Manila, said the bishops were dismayed by Congress' "very slow" deliberation on the measure.

"They (legislators) promised that they will include CARP in their top agenda. But up to now, they have not fulfilled their promise. Basically, this is just lip service," Pascual said in Filipino.

Pascual said those who have confirmed their attendance in today's meeting at Malacañang are Manila Auxiliary Bishops Broderick Pabillo and Bernardino Cortez, Gumaca Bishop Buenaventura Famadico, Samar Bishop Emmanuel Trance, Masbate Bishop Joel Baylon, and Bayombong Bishop Ramon Villena.

Pascual said he will also attend the meeting with the President.

He said the bishops would ask the President to convince lawmakers to pass the CARPer bill and eliminate some "killer amendments," which he said favor only the rich landowners.

— Helen Flores