



## **MANIFESTO OF SUPPORT FOR THE MARYAM MOVEMENT**

We, the youth gathered on February 17, 2015 in Pagbilao, Quezon Province, Philippines, reflecting on our respective faiths, core values, and traditions, uphold A Common Word's call for people of faith to live together in unity, peace and harmony.

We believe that the lack of understanding of differences in religious and cultural beliefs often lead to tensions and conflicts. We are therefore committed to foster mutual understanding and respect among diverse cultures and religions in the country by strengthening intercultural and interfaith dialogues, highlighting commonalities rather than differences.

Amidst rising tensions and conflicts, we believe that the Virgin Mary has become relevant as a unifying icon for both Christians and Muslims. By focusing on the shared belief in the Virgin Mary, the Maryam Movement was conceived to bridge the gap created by misconception, distrust and suspicion over differences in faiths, traditions and cultures. The movement's name, coined from Mary and Maryam, reflects this shared belief in an icon who symbolizes peace, love, compassion and unwaivering faith.

To love one's neighbor, one must first be able to understand and empathize with them. Thus, as part of our continuing commitment to the goals of the World Interfaith Harmony Week, we focus on the role of Mary/Maryam in the different religions and belief systems to enhance better understanding and harmony between and among the diverse communities in the Philippines.

We further hope that the Maryam Movement could be the foundation of peace building efforts, especially in areas affected by armed conflict, as the movement reaches across people of different faiths, cultures and traditions with the goal of promoting harmonious co-existence and strengthening the shared commitment towards the attainment of peace and development in the community.

Signed, this 17<sup>th</sup> day of February 2015 at the Talipan National High School, Barangay Talipan, Pagbilao, Quezon Province, Philippines.