

THE POWER OF THE PEOPLE

All week long we have been hearing the question: did EDSA change anything? We all have our own answers. Today we argue that there is at least one change. A silent change. A quiet revolution.

Especially in its first years, the Marcos dictatorship was widely perceived as a benefit to the country. The threat of communism was stanchd, crime rates plummeted, and people experienced a period of economic prosperity. Marcos had said that the suspension of certain essential freedoms was critical to the country's progress; and for a time, it seemed people believed it. Wary of the political left, many religious groups welcomed the intervention.

But as the illusion of a New Society began to deteriorate, Filipinos came to realize that those fundamental freedoms—those human and civil rights we had lost—were of such value that they were not to be surrendered for any price.

It is right to say that EDSA was different from your usual revolution. It was not mere resistance to a dictatorship, and it was not at all a class struggle. Filipinos went to EDSA to confront the repression and violence of the Marcos regime, animated by a peacemaking and prayerful spirit.

The greatest change that began in EDSA was the quiet revolution, the revolution of the heart. It takes a long time for this kind of revolution to take root. At EDSA, people began to realize what it meant to be a people, stakeholders in the future of the country. Immediately after the first few years, it was reported that there were about 60,000 NGOs registered at the Securities and Exchange Commission. People at the grassroots began to awaken, and to participate in generating change. Empowerment became a catchword. There has been an increasing sense that we ourselves are very much a requirement of the change we pray for.

But how will this play out? Again, EDSA provides the clue. We may disagree on the best ways to solve our many problems. We are divided by politics, by social commitments, by religious allegiances. Nonetheless, Filipinos came together at EDSA believing that there is *a* God who is a mighty fortress, a bulwark never failing. EDSA drew its character and strength from this hope, and an entrenched dictatorship crumbled after four days of unarmed siege.

Ultimately, People Power was not *just* that. God is sovereign over people's hearts; He is sovereign over our rulers. And he is infinitely trustworthy.

This editorial was based on a piece written by Ren Aguila. Mr. Aguila is a writer of ISACC.

