

Written by Libertito Pelayo
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Manny Pacquiao in a recent family photo. □ (Photo from the Facebook page of Pacquiao)

PH Catholic Church, social media practitioners rally behind Pacquiao

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After being pilloried by the LGBT community in Manila and after Nike dropped the iconic boxer as one of its product endorsers for comparing homosexuals in same-sex marriage to animals, Manny Pacquiao was vigorously defended by Filipinos, the Philippine Catholic Church and by a cross-section of netizens and social media practitioners.

Father Jerome Secillano, executive secretary of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) public affairs office, said, "This (Pacquiao's comment) is really in the Bible. There is this quote he uses from the Bible and we cannot change that."

The legendary boxing champion, a two-term congressman, is presently running as one of the 50 candidates for senator of the Philippines in the May 2016 elections.

Pacquiao has a scheduled fight, his last before retirement, against Timothy Bradley in Las Vegas on April 9.

A Facebook post from Manila placed side-by-side pictures of Pacquiao and Vice Ganda, a gay Filipino TV comedian who bitterly criticized the boxer for his anti-sex marriage statement, asking the netizens who was correct between the two.

Of the 112 comments as of last week when **FR** saw the post, all but four said Pacquiao was correct.

Another Facebook post from Manila was asking the Philippine Congress to declare the Filipino-American who started the online petition for Nike to drop Pacquiao as an endorser, persona non grata in the Philippines.

Another FB post enumerated what Pacquiao had done for the poor, sharing his winnings to them in the forms of food, money, houses, etc., and at the same time, mockingly asked what the boxer's critics had done for the poor?

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Bob Arum, Pacquiao's boxing promoter, defended him and said he was entitled to his belief.

Arum also said "he will fight to death Pacquiao's right to say it."