

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Filipino Freethinkers to hold forum on reason, science and secularism

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On April Fool's Day, freethinkers in the Philippines will celebrate reason, science and secularism.

Expected to be this year's biggest gathering of freethinkers in the country, the third Filipino Freethinkers forum -- dubbed "**R.S.S. (Reason, Science, and Secularism) Forum 2012**" -- will feature discussions on on the reproductive health bill, freedom of expression, LGBT (lesbian gay bisexual and transgender) rights, science and freedom of religion. "Public awareness of secularism is at an all-time high," according to **Pepe Bawagan**, FF Secularism Advocacy Director, "and with this event, we hope to keep moving forward towards our vision of a society that is vigilant against religious meddling in governance."

The forum will be held simultaneously from 1:30 to 6:30 p.m. (Manila Time, GMT +8) at the **UP-Ayalaland Technohub**, a streaming video webpage and various social networks on **April 1, 2012**. Attendees may participate by joining the discussions at the Technohub (pre-registration is required to reserve a seat, but walk-in guests are welcome and entrance is free for everyone), or watching the live video stream online and sending their comments and questions via chat. There will also be a live Tweeting of the Forum discussions, and anyone may participate by updating their Twitter using the **#3fff** hashtag.

Participants at the event venue will be able to join the discussions on these topics during the open forum at 3:50pm, immediately after a special performance by the comedy group Silly People's Improv Theater (SPIT) at 3:20pm.

A highlight of the Forum will be the presentation of this year's **Reason Award, Science Award, and Secularism Award**. The winners of each award will receive a trophy and PhP 10,000 donated to the charity or cause of their choice.

This year, a special honor will be given to a Filipino who best exemplifies irrational prejudice against a group of people, and who has used considerable power and influence to offend and oppress this group. The winner of this **Bigotry Award** will receive a

certificate, and PhP 10,000 in cash will be donated in their name to a deserving organization that works to uplift the conditions of the offended group or works to fight for a good cause the awardee has opposed.

FF Reproductive Health Advocacy Director Kenneth Keng says the Forum is part of the organization's continuous support for the push for congress to vote on the Reproductive Health Bill. "The last years have clearly shown that the Reproductive Health Bill and its provisions are in demand and have been approved by a majority of our population. The best scientific evidence has shown its measures' efficacy and safety. Its opponents have sought to undermine our democratic processes and perpetuate the suffering and death of our women through lies, misinformation and the blatant use of the influence of the Catholic church hierarchy on our elected officials."

The Third Filipino Freethinkers Forum is organized by the Filipino Freethinkers, and co-sponsored by the UP Center for Women's Studies. For more information or to register, please visit the FF website at <http://filipinofreethinkers.org/3fff>.

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IMAGES:

- fap2012.jpg** - Poster of the "RSS Forum 2012"
- 01.jpg** - Free Carlos Celdran rally in front of the CBCP (1 October 2010)
- 02.jpg** - Free Carlos Celdran rally in front of the CBCP (1 October 2010)
- 03.jpg** - "Pajero Bishops" rally (July 2011)

(If you would like higher resolution copies of these images, please contact us at tania@filipinofreethinkers.org.)