

Ampatuan massacre verdict 'answered prayer'—prelate

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OZAMIS Archbishop Martin Jumoad said the guilty verdict against some of the people behind the Maguindanao massacre on Thursday was an “answered prayer.” “Heavens have heard the cry of the poor. No one can escape the justice of God. So be it. The Court of the Land has spoken,” Jumoad said.

On Wednesday, Quezon City Regional Trial Court Jocelyn-Solis Reyes convicted Datu Andal “Unsay” Ampatuan Jr., Zaldy Ampatuan, and Datu Anwar Sr. and 25 others for the gruesome murder of 57 people in 2009.

Among those killed were 32 journalists, making the incident the single deadliest attack against the media in the country.

The three Ampatuans are now facing a maximum imprisonment of 40 years without benefit of parole.

However, Reyes acquitted Datu Sajid Islam Ampatuan, together with 54 others. “Hope those acquitted are really innocent,” Jumoad said.

The prelate commended Solis-Reyes for making the courageous decision on the historic case.

“We salute the verdict and it is a reminder to criminals that there are laws which will run after them. We always pray that our judges render decisions on proofs and evidences presented,” Jumoad said. Samuel P. Medenilla