



Order of the Knights of Rizal

Diamond Chapter – Antwerp – Belgium

Belgian Area Assembly

Marriott Courtyard, Brussels, 24 May 2013.

Sir Reghis Romero II, KGCR, Supreme Commander,
Sir Diosdado Santos, KGOR, Supreme Exchequer
Sir Choy Arnaldo, KGOR, Deputy Supreme Exchequer
Sir Mark Boado, KR,
Lady Judy Savares, President of the Kababaihang Rizalista of Angeles City,
Brother Knights of Rizal,
Ladies,
Honored guests,
Dear friends,

Rizal in the Modern World

Complaining, criticizing is easy, it is, or becomes a natural habit in our modern world. It is also a way to release some of our frustration about things that are not going the way we want. But, in most of these cases it concerns merrily about personal discomfort and rarely about real essential matters of survival. Nowadays we are spoiled with material goods which are supposed to make our lives easier so that we have more time to spend on social and cultural activities. Unfortunately, in many cases, these material goods, or the lack of it, makes us more often unhappy and sometimes prevent us to pay attention to the less privileged amongst us.

Saying NO to changes is another natural human reaction, even when we do not agree with the present, because we fear to lose a familiar situation or because we do not want to stir up the actual order of the society.

Jose Rizal, as did most of his fellow countrymen, realized that the social order in *their* country was unfair and unjust, but **he** dared to come out of his comfort zone by writing his first novel; Noli Me Tangere. He took even a bigger deliberate risk by publishing his second book, El Filibusterismo and to do so, again, he had to undergo the sufferings of hunger, cold, deprivation and discouragement.

With the help of his mother, he learned to read and to write at a very young age, which gave him the opportunity, later, among other things, to study the writings

about the original local island people before the arrival of the Spanish colonists. Also had he the change to experience the liberal way of life in several European countries during this studies. The more he travelled and studied the different communities, the more he got convinced that it was a real necessity to give the people of LAS ISLAS FILIPINAS the lives they deserve based on historical rights. He did not demand an independent country, but simply that his people were considered as equal human beings with representation in the Cortes and that they would be no longer humiliated by the Spanish occupants.

Convincing people what NOT TO WANT is simple, but if you want to make changes you have to come with something which is better and not simply different. How can we improve ourselves? **Understanding** other peoples, through their history, their languages, their traditions, their religion, their relationship to other groups, as well as common sense helps to avoid making previously made mistakes, but you need to convince the correct persons with a concrete plan. This plan must be the result of a thorough preparation based on a long, in depth learning process. Despite the increasing spreading of **knowledge** in these modern times, the following saying is still valid: *History repeats itself*. Looking at the news broadcastings on television reminds us every day of this unfortunate fact. Therefore we definitely need to continue to propagate the ideals of Dr. Jose Rizal. The facilities to our disposal to do so, are exponentially growing, not at the least thanks to the latest developments of communication technologies during the past decades. This makes **education** easier and faster but at the same time also more complicated and more confusing. As Knights of Rizal, it is our duty to take care that the legacy of this exceptional hero is put in its right prospective and passed on to the next generation to ensure that this talented Filipino will keep his rightful place in the world history books.

Much has been improved during the last 150 years, not only in the Philippines but also several other nations started to realize that they do not have to submit themselves automatically to the rules of intruders with a different cultural background. But as I mentioned before, a harmonious community with respect to each other, in the spirit of Rizal, must be build up from mutual understanding, passing thru a long maturing process, always keeping in mind the ultimate end goal. There will be no future without a past. One does not build a house from the top down, but start with a strong foundation. The stronger the bases, the higher you can build. Rizal laid the first stone and has drawn the building. It is up to the following generations, including ours, to continue the work he started, not for himself, but for the better of his countrymen and others who are in the same situation.

Thanks you for listening.

Salamat Po.

Sir Paul Verloo, KCR
Chapter Commander 2011-2013
Deputy Area Commander for Belgium 2012-2014