

RIZAL LEGACY: ILLUMINATING MINDS THROUGH TIMELESS TALES

by:

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José Protasio Rizal Mercado y Alonso Realonda, widely known as the "Father of Filipino Nationalism," played a crucial role in leading the country's fight for independence from Spanish rule (DeStephano, 2011). His life and writings have left a lasting impact on Philippine history, making him a symbol of strength and patriotism.

In the world of change-makers, literature has been a powerful tool, and Rizal used it to inspire Filipinos to seek freedom (Ballan, 2023). His important works, *Noli Me Tangere* and *El Filibusterismo*, not only played a big part in the revolution but also helped shape the modern Filipino identity.

In today's world, where our cultural heritage is at risk, it's essential to include Rizal's works in Filipino literature classes. These stories not only tell the tale of our country's struggle but also instill a sense of pride and identity among young Filipinos. Rizal used symbols, stories, and strong metaphors to show the tough times Filipinos faced under Spanish rule. His writing goes beyond just telling stories; it encourages readers to question things and take action. These qualities of his works are the reason we can't forget his pieces.

Thanks to Republic Act 1425, also called the "Rizal Law," Rizal's works are part of the curriculum in all schools, both public and private (Official Gazette, 1956). This law is an investment in the minds and hearts of young Filipinos. Beyond just reading stories, it helps students think critically and appreciate the challenges faced by earlier generations.

That pencil and paper can be a weapon to awaken our patriotism. Rizal's writings aren't just old stories; they're like lessons that are still important today.

Some people might say that Rizal's stories are from a long time ago and not relevant today. But the things he wrote about – like justice, freedom, and our national identity – still matter. Studying Rizal helps students understand where our problems come from and how they can make things better to act appropriately in the given situation. Rizal's stories aren't old; they're like guiding lights, showing us the way to a smarter and more aware society. So as to this day, his obra maestra is an eye opener to every Filipino. Let us treasure his writings and learn from his life journey. You don't need to die to be a hero, just be a Filipino who have the core values of Maka-Diyos, Makatao, Makakalikasan at Makabansa.

References:

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