

Retraction of Rizal

It has been more than a century when Dr. Jose P. Rizal died on 30th of December 1896 with his writings raising the flag of independence against the Spanish colonizers. Yet, there is an arousal of controversy in the life of the Philippine National Hero on his alleged retraction of the masonry and the reconversion to Catholicism.

The document bears the date of December 29, 1896 was said to have been signed by Rizal himself. The letter addressed: *"I declare myself a Catholic and in this religion in which I was born and educated I wish to live and die. I retract with all my heart whatever in my words, writings, publications and conduct has been contrary to my character as son of the Catholic Church"*. The retraction has raised notion and judgment among the academicians and historians, most especially to the two opposing groups - the Masonic Rizalists and the Catholic Rizalists.

The retraction was never been proven with an acceptable evidence. It was merely Fr. Vicente Balaguer, who hold the basis of the story withholding the exact copy of Rizal's retraction he received in the evening of Rizal's execution. This Jesuit priest befriended Rizal during his exile in Dapitan. Consequently, Rizal fell in love with Josephine Bracken in the same place on 1895, wanting a marriage. In order to have a benediction from the Catholic church, Rizal wrote a denouncement of his sinful beliefs to be approved by the Bishop of Cebu. This was claimed to be true by Prof. Austin Craig who was revealed unto him by Fr. Antonio Obach, he stated that *"the document, enclosed with the priest's letter, was ready for mail when Rizal came hurrying to reclaim it"*. Perhaps, at the moment, Rizal realized that what he had written was the reason why he was convinced by the friars to retract his works and writings in his resistance towards the Spaniards.

On the other hand, there are ambiguities in the retraction and presumed wedding of Rizal and Josephine Bracken. The family of Rizal and his co-scholars did not believe to Balaguer's account as they knew that Rizal would have addressed it to them during their communication minutes before he was executed. Additionally, it generates a contrasting story as he was unmindful that Rizal was writing the third stanza of the poem *"Mi Ultimo Adios"* with the time and date he claimed to have visited Rizal in Fort Santiago. Also, the presence of Rizal's sisters in the canonical marriage was not affirmed to be true at all. Moreover, if Rizal really did retract, he could have been given a Catholic burial.

With this, the points asserted by Fr. Balaguer is fraudulent and the signature of Rizal was likely to be forged. Hence, the retraction of Rizal remains an allegation with no authentic basis making his works and ideals in defiance to the Spaniards an act of heroism.

<http://ournativehero.weebly.com/the-retraction.html>

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2018/01/02/opinion/columnists/topanalysis/rizal-remains-living-burning-issue-among-us/371727/>

<http://www.joserizal.ph/rt03.html>