



The Legal Profession*

By HON. JUSTICE RAMON SAN JOSE

The legal profession, next to priesthood, is the most exalted and dignified, it is an apostleship of justice. In its influence on man, it is the most extensive of all lay professions, but in its misuse, it is the most destructive. That is why Lord Belingbroke aptly remarked that "the profession of the law, in its nature the noblest and most beneficial to mankind, is in its abuse and abasement the most sordid and pernicious." Thus, the lawyer may rise to the infinite heights of glory and eminence as champion of freedom, as defender of human life and liberty, as guardian of individual rights, fortunes and reputations, but as transgressor of trust and confidence, as instigator of outrageous mischiefs, as advocate of irresponsible mobs, he may sink to the bottomless depths of wickedness and ignominy.

Serving this as a guide in carrying out the task that has been entrusted to us by this Court, we, your 1963 bar examiners, have framed our questions in such a manner as to be able to discern from the answers thereto that the examinees possess not only a sufficient knowledge of the law but also an analytic capacity to apply its provisions to a given set of facts as well as to understand the philosophy and reason behind the law. But after going over the examination notebooks, we found out to our amazement that the immense majority of the examinees were not responsive to our expectations; they were found wanting in preparation and understanding of the subject-matters prescribed for the examinations. That is why, after holding a deliberation over the results, we had no other alternative than to recommend that only 1,210 examinees be allowed to pass and be admitted to the practice of law. If Your Honors please, these are the candidates whom the Committee of 1963 Bar Examiners respectfully presents for admission to the Philippine Bar.

These 1,210 examinees have been carefully and conscientiously selected; they are the survivors in a severe ordeal. What will their future be in the legal profession? In our present days when in the midst of moral turmoil man has ignored the principles of right conduct and the norms of morality in his unbridled

* Speech delivered by Hon. Justice Ramon R. San Jose, in behalf of the 1963 Bar Examiners, at the Oath taking ceremony of successful bar examinees, on March 5, 1964 at the Supreme Court Quadrangle. Hon. Justice Ramon R. San Jose, is a Professor at the Faculty of Civil Law, University of Santo Tomas.

pursuit of wealth and wordly possessions for which his heart is craving, when under present circumstances man, according to Aristotle, if "perfected, is the best of animals, but when separated from law and justice, he is the worst of all; xxx, if he have not virtue, he is the most unholy and most savage of animals, and the most full of lust and gluttony," will these 1,210 candidates succeed in their severe struggle for survival in an overcrowded legal profession? They are equipped with the arms of intelligence and with moral qualities; they are inspired by the principles of justice and equity; they are ever watchful of their reputation and character which they will keep unblemished, beyond suspicion and above reproach; they are full of energy and ambition; they are all hope and enthusiasm, with dreams of glory and grandeur. They cannot fail; they will succeed.

Yes, indeed, these candidates will suffer no failure. They will attain success. Why? Because their steps will not be deviated from the narrow and thorny path of virtue and rectitude; because their goal will not be towards the wide avenue of material riches the glamour of which would not fascinate them; because they will hate vice and delights and will love honesty as the best policy; because they will be encouraged by the uprighteousness, dignity and sense of honor of such legal luminaries as Apolinario Mabini, Felipe Calderon, Cayetano Arellano, Manuel Araullo, Florentino Torres, Jose Abad Santos, Godofredo Reyes; and because, over and above all, they will be guided by the Biblical warning to the effect that "what does it profit a man if he gain the whole world but suffer the loss of his own soul?"

If the Court please, the 1963 Bar Examination Committee reiterates its petition that these 1,210 candidates be admitted to the Philippine Bar.

* Speech delivered by Hon. Justice Roman R. Sison, in behalf of the 1963 Bar Examinees of the Ombudsman's Office, on March 2, 1964 at the Supreme Court Building, Manila. Hon. Justice Roman R. Sison is a Professor of the Faculty of Law, University of Santo Tomas.