



Restoring Faith and Dignity in the Senate

In our country's history, we have rarely witnessed the Senate, an institution entrusted with national legislation and ensuring the accountability of our officials, face such grave questions about its own integrity and dignity. More than a conflict among political personalities, recent events compel us to confront a painful question: What becomes of our democratic institutions when they are not serving truth and justice, but in the protection of power?

The controversies now hounding the Senate have become so serious that they force us to ask whether it is fulfilling its mandate. From invoking questionable institutional protection for a member of the chamber facing accountability for alleged crimes against humanity, to the violence that unfolded within its halls, to the shameless public posturing that has followed, our Senators have done so little to restore the confidence of the Filipino people. Instead, they have only deepened the perception that the institution is more concerned with shielding the powerful rather than upholding the rule of law.

As Lasallians, we are called to view recent events with the eyes of faith and to respond with zeal for truth, justice, and accountability. We cannot remain detached from the suffering of the poor and vulnerable, who continue to bear the heaviest costs of corruption, abuse of power, and institutional decay. Our faith challenges us to be prophetic witnesses at a time when indifference is tempting, and silence is convenient. We must not accept the normalization of institutions meant to serve the Filipino people being used instead to protect a powerful few from accountability.

To the Lasallians in government: our shared identity and the values imparted to us through our education cannot be set aside when one enters public service. On the contrary, public service demands an even deeper fidelity to the values our institution upholds. In the words of the statesman, fellow Lasallian, Jose "Ka Pepe" Diokno, "we must view public office as a way to serve the people, not to profit at their expense." To have been formed in the Lasallian tradition is to recognize the dignity of those made vulnerable, to reject the misuse of authority, and to choose the difficult demands of principled public service over the comforts of political expediency, personal allegiance, and self-preservation. The true measure of being Lasallian is the courage to do what is right when the insulation of power makes it costly.



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Our people deserve leaders committed to holding the powerful to account and undertaking the difficult work of reform that addresses the urgent needs of our basic sectors: laborers, farmers, fisherfolk, urban poor communities, and all Filipinos who continue to be denied quality health care and education.

Restoring faith in the Senate and upholding its dignity require moving beyond political spectacle, abandoning attempts to manipulate the rules of the institution to suit political interests, and confronting the violence committed within its halls with the seriousness and transparency it demands. It can only come through a clear and unwavering commitment to truth, justice, and ethical public service – qualities once embodied by distinguished senators who dignified the office they occupied.

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Pagpapanumbalik ng Tiwala at Dignidad sa Senado

Sa kasaysayan ng ating bansa, bihira nating masaksihan ang Senado, isang institusyong pinagkakatiwalaan ng taumbayan sa paglikha ng mga batas gayondin ang pagpapanagot sa ating mga opisyal, na kasalukuyan ngayong may bahid ang katapatan at dangal. Higit pa sa tunggaliang politikal, ang mga nagdaang pangyayari ay nagtutulak sa atin na harapin ang isang karima-rimarim na tanong: Ano ang nangyayari sa ating mga demokratikong institusyon kung hindi na sila nagsisilbi para sa katotohanan at katarungan, kundi sa pagprotekta sa kapangyarihan?

Nakapanlulumo na ng mga kontrobersiyang bumabalot sa Senado. Dahil dito, tayo ngayon ay nagtatanong kung ginagampanan pa ba nito ang mandato nito? Mula sa paggamit ng kuwestiyonableng pagprotekta ng isa nilang kasamahang nahaharap sa mga umano'y krimen laban sa sangkatauhan, hanggang sa karahasang naganap mismo sa loob ng Senado, at sa walang pakundangang sirkus na ipinapakita sa publiko. Sa kayunayan, halos walang ginawa ang marami sa ating mga senador upang maibalik sa kanila ang tiwala ng sambayanang Pilipino. Sa halip, lalo lamang nilang pinatibay ang pananaw na higit nilang inuuna ang pagprotekta sa mga makapangyarihan kaysa sa mapanaig ang batas.

Bilang mga Lasalyano, inaanyayahan tayong lahat na tingnan ang mga pangyayari nitong mga nakalipas na araw sa lente ng pananampalataya at tumugon nang may sigasig para sa katotohanan, katarungan, at pananagutan. Hindi tayo maaaring manatiling walang pakialam sa pagdurusa ng mga mahihirap at mahihina - ang mga taong patuloy na nagpapasan ng mabibigat na epekto ng korupsiyon, pang-aabuso sa kapangyarihan, at pagkasira ng mga institusyon.

Hinahamon tayo ng ating pananampalataya na maging mga saksi sa panahong madaling piliin ang pagiging manhid at manahimik. Hindi rin nararapat na maging normal ang pagprotekta ng institusyong ito ng pamahalaan para lamang sa iilang tao, bagkus para sa sambayanang Pilipino.

Sa mga Lasalyanong nasa pamahalaan: ang ating pagkakakilanlan at kaloobang hinubog ng ating edukasyon ay hindi maaaring isantabi sa usapin ng serbisyo publiko. Sa halip, ang paglilingkod-bayan ay nangangailangan ng higit pang katapatan sa mga pinaninindigang turo ng ating institusyon. Sambit ng ating kapwa Lasalyano na si Jose “Ka Pepe” Diokno, “Kailangan nating tingnan ang tungkuling sa pamahalaan bilang paglilingkod sa taong bayan, hindi upang pagkakitaan ang bayan.”

Sa tradisyong Lasalyano, tayo ay hinubog upang kilalanin ang dignidad ng mga api at nasa laylayan, pagtanggihan sa maling paggamit ng kapangyarihan, at pagpili sa marangal na paglilingkod-bayan kaysa sa pansarili at pampolitikang kapakanan.



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