

Again, this is another paragraph that was suppressed for like reasons:

"Hence, it is no wonder if in Rizal's time, as in ours, there should have been priests who, like Judas, sold Christ for a handful of silver, or who, like Peter himself, the Prince of Apostles, in a moment of weakness denied his Lord."

In the light of this admission, that even in the company of twelve Apostles personally chosen by Jesus there was one Judas, why should the Hierarchy take exception to Rizal's assertion that among the hundreds of friars in the Philippines in those days there were ones like Padre Damaso, Padre Sibyla, Padre Salvi and Padre Camorra? But, let the Hierarchy remind itself, that Rizal found also a good Dominican friar, Padre Fernandez, the fairminded Professor of the University of Santo Tomas.

The entire paragraph 9 which was most important has also been suppressed. It said:

"It is true that most of the teachings against the Catholic Faith in the novels are put in the mouths of either "liberal" Catholics of the tupe of Don Rafael Ibarra, Don Custodio and possibly Elias, or of Catholics who have lost their faith, as Tasio the Philosopher. Such persons existed in the Philippines, and it is obvious that they thought and spoke as Rizal makes their fictional counterparts think and speak, viz., in terms of anti-Catholic ideas, with jeers at Catholic doctrine, with impieties, etc."

One of the most serious charges which the Hierarchy makes against these books of Rizal is that the characters therein speak "in terms of anti-Catholic ideas, with jeers at Catholic doctrine, with impieties." On the other hand there is the frank admission by the Hierarchy that the characters in the *Noli* and the *Fili* are but fictional counterparts of persons who actually existed in the Philippines and who "thought and spoke as Rizal makes their fictional counterparts think and speak." Such being the case granting that the words spoken by the characters in Rizal's novels are impious or heretical, the novels cannot, in all fairness, be called impious and heretical, because they are but a faithful picture of the naked truth, which Rizal promised to expose without fear or favor in his *Noli's* dedication. The Hierarchy was right, from the point of view of its own theory, when it eliminated the passage I have just quoted from the original text of the "Statement", because the effect of such passage is to destroy the effectiveness of its condemnation of Rizal's books as containing heresies and impieties. If Padres Damaso, Salvi, Camorra and Sibyla and Capitan Tiago, and Tasio the Philosopher and Don Filipino, and Doña Victoria and Doña Consolación, and the "Hermanas" of

the different "cofradías," and Chino Quiroga, side by side with Padre Florentino and Padre Fernández, were real persons in words, deeds and behaviour, then Rizal's books which reproduced them faithfully in bold relief cannot in justice be reproved. The Hierarchy knew this and understandably eliminated from the original text of its "Statement" the passage I have been commenting upon. But, the Hierarchy argued, "If the author would not in any way suggest that these were his own opinions which he proposed to his readers as true, it could be said that he was merely making use of the novelist's right to portray people as they are." This argument has also been suppressed because the Hierarchy must have found it untenable, the right of the novelist to be faithful in his narration of events being admitted, and no one can condemn novelist Rizal for making use of different characters to portray the real truth of our social, political and religious life in those days, and it cannot be said that by so doing he suggested that he made the opinions of his fictional characters his own.

In effect, in the letter Rizal wrote from London to Mariano Ponce on 18 August, 1888, he said the following, answering a similar charge:

Mi Querido Amigo:

Tantas gracias por su amabilidad enviándome la crítica analítica del bendito P. Font. Qué Padre y qué crítica! Si el autor de una novela tuviese que ser responsable de los dichos de sus personajes, Santo Dios, a qué conclusión iríamos á parar! Porque siguiendo este sistema las opiniones del P. Dámaso serian mías, la educación del alférez mía, la religiosidad de Cpn. Tiago, mía. El P. Font debía acordarse de un poco de Retórica en que se dice que novela es un género mixto en que hablan personajes introducidos y además el autor: claro está que el autor solo es responsable de las palabras que él dice como suyas, y los hechos y las circunstancias justificarán los dichos de los personajes, pues de lo contrario seria un tiquis-miquis si se atribuyen al autor opiniones diferentes como son las de sus personajes.

I now beg leave to discuss the authorship of the Hierarchy's statement, which is a very important question from the human point of view. It is admitted that the bishops did not make this Statement. They only authorized the preparation of it and, if at all, approved the same after it was prepared. The question is, who prepared the text of the Statement? Among the members of the Hierarchy there are at least eight foreigners, who are either bishops or apostolic administrators, and it may be safely contended that they have not read Rizal's novels.

The Hierarchy's Statement was released on April 21. The Rizal bill which is Senate Bill No. 438 had been filed by the Committee on Education

on April 5, 1956 and was reported by the papers two days thereafter. There are about forty members of the Hierarchy, scattered all over the country with eight foreigners among them, and they could not have learned of the filing of the bill and of its contents until, let us say, a week after, or about April 14. From the date last mentioned, April 14 to April 21, the date of the Hierarchy's Statement, there was only one week for each member of the Hierarchy within which to read and analyze the two novels and for them to meet in Manila or elsewhere to deliberate and vote on the proposition that these two novels of Rizal contain impieties and heresies. All this was impossible to accomplish in the brief period of one week. What is worse is that we know for a fact that they have not actually met in council either in Manila or elsewhere for any deliberation on the subject. How then could it be seriously contended that they authorized and approved the "Statement" in question?

Again I ask, who prepared this Statement? If my memory does not fail me, I remember having heard here the manifestation that there was a committee appointed for the preparation of the draft, and that among the members of that committee was Father Cavanna, also Father Piñon, both friars. That is the only thing we know. Perhaps, there were other friars in the committee and they formed the majority of the same, because they were supposed to be the best theologians and Canon Law experts. There was, however, one important factor which should have been taken into consideration, and that was the fact that the "disedifying priests" who were mercilessly satyri- zed by Rizal in these two books were friars belonging to different religious orders. That should have been sufficient reason for not naming friars to the Committee. In his press declaration which appeared in the local dailies yesterday, Archbishop Santos of Manila, although implying that the Hierarchy's Statement was not really a pastoral, maintains that it is binding just the same on the conscience of the Catholics under the provisions of the Canon Law, because it deals with matters of faith and morals. I have been going over the different provisions of the canon law, and I have not been able to find any which would support His Grace's contention that, whenever a bishop or a group of bishops should please make a public declaration, the contents thereof would bind the conscience of the faithful if they have to do with matters of faith and dogma. His Grace, or whoever represents him, or can speak for him, in this

chamber will certainly oblige us if he can point to the provisions of the Canon Law referred to by His Grace.

Senator LIM. Will the gentleman kindly yield to just a couple of questions on one point?

The PRESIDENT. The gentleman may yield if he so desires.

Senator RECTO. Gladly.

Senator LIM. I really would like to be informed. Has Your Honor found that in order that Catholics may be bound in conscience to a Statement of the Hierarchy it has to be in the form of at least a pastoral letter, or conversely, is not a Statement sufficient to bind the Catholics in conscience to the stand of the Catholic hierarchy on any subject?

Senator RECTO. Not even the word "pastoral", abbreviation of "pastoral letter," or its equivalent in Latin, which is "epistola", "epistle" in English, is mentioned in the Canon Law. The word "epistola" occurs only in one article of the Canon Law, and the particular article refers to the destruction, after a trial, of whatever letters have been presented during a trial which are obscene in character or unimportant. The Canon Law says that such documents should be destroyed, but nothing about pastorals.

Senator LIM. Would you rather say, Your Honor, that in order that Catholics may be bound in conscience, that whatever stand the Catholic hierarchy might have on any subject, that the Catholic hierarchy must state clearly in a pastoral letter such stand, or is it not sufficient that a mere statement, such as the statement in question, be made by the Catholic hierarchy in order to bind the Catholics?

Senator RECTO. Unless they can point the particular canon of the Canon Law to that effect, the stand will remain unchanged.

Senator LIM. Well, I am inclined to agree with you, and I would like to say also that I am convinced by the discrepancies and contradictions, and even by the fact that certain statements were suppressed as explained by Your Honor. Does not the fact that certain statements were withdrawn precisely prove and strengthen your allegation that this statement, this so-called pastoral letter, is not in the category at all of a pastoral letter?

Senator RECTO. Of course, it is not. I am grateful for the very pertinent questions of Your Honor. And if Your Honor and the Senate will allow me, I will say that the origin of the pastoral letter is just "pastoral", in abbreviated form, can be traced to the epistles written by Saint Paul, particularly

to his disciples Timothy and Titus. Saint Paul wrote many epistles. He wrote to the Thessalonians, to the Ephesians, to the Romans, to the Hebrews, to the Galatians. And all those letters were written either by him exclusively or together with other bishops. For instance, there were epistles written by him and by Timothy. They are not called pastorals in the strict sense of the word. What are called pastorals are only the two letters of Saint Paul to Timothy—I Timothy and II Timothy—and the one addressed to Titus. Timothy was the bishop of Ephesus. Titus was the bishop of the Cretians. The distinctive formal requisites of pastorals are that they state the names of the writer and of the addressee; they contain a salutation or greeting, then the body of the epistle, and finally the parting salutation ending with the word "Amen". These requisites do not appear as having been complied with in the Hierarchy's Statement. For instance, in Timothy I, the first letter of Saint Paul to Timothy, this is the introduction:

"PAUL, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the commandment of God our Saviour, and Lord Jesus Christ, which is our hope;

"Unto Timothy, my own son in the faith; Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ."

Then comes the body of the epistle, and then it ends thus: "Grace be with thee. Amen."

The second epistle to Timothy, and the epistle to Titus, both of which are pastorals, carried similar greetings and parting salutations. The statement of the hierarchy, however, does not appear to be addressed to anybody and it contains no greetings. It starts by immediately treating the subject-matter, thus:

"Among the many illustrious Filipinos who have distinguished themselves in the service of their country, the highest place of honor belongs to Dr. Jose Rizal."

Without imparting the apostolic benediction, it ends by saying only:

"We, the Catholic Philippine Hierarchy maintain that these novels do contain teachings contrary to our faith and so, We are opposed to the proposed compulsory reading in their entirety of such books in any school in the Philippines where Catholic students may be affected."

It ends in fact with a quotation from the Gospel "For what does it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, but suffer the loss of his own soul? And then the closing clause: "Given in Manila this 21st day of April in the year of Our Lord,

1956." So, even from the point of view of formal requisites . . .

Senator LIM. Mr. President, will the gentleman yield?

The PRESIDENT. The gentleman may yield, if he so desires.

Senator RECTO. Willingly.

Senator LIM. Did I understand Your Honor correctly that in yesterday's statement Archbishop Santos said that he did not categorically admit or claim that this so-called pastoral letter is a pastoral letter?

Senator RECTO. He did not even suggest it. He said, "it is as it purports to be." What does it purport to be? We do not know. Except that it is a mere statement.

Senator LIM. When he said that such statement is "hereby authorized and approved by the Archbishop of Manila," does not Your Honor believe that that would raise the statement to the category of a pastoral letter?

Senator RECTO. The answer is no.

Senator LIM. I just want to know.

Senator RECTO. Because he cannot assume the representation of the entire Hierarchy. The jurisdiction of an archbishop extends only to his archdiocese.

Senator LIM. Now for one final question. Supposing that from this moment on the Archbishop, the bishops and all the members or majority of members of the Catholic hierarchy make a pastoral letter with all the requisites necessary, would Your Honor consider the Catholics and/or yourself as a Catholic bound by said pastoral letter in the event it is made?

Senator RECTO. If they adopt the text of the "Statement" as printed in the papers and as given to us, which contradict each other, and with passages in one deliberately suppressed in the other of course I would not, because the two inconsistent texts will not carry any binding force.

Senator LIM. But since they have never written a pastoral letter they may still put up a pastoral letter. Suppose they eliminate all these discrepancies and contradictions and present before Your Honor a pastoral letter, would Your Honor as a Catholic consider yourself bound by that pastoral letter?

Senator RECTO. We shall examine the contents of the pastoral yet, and see if its declarations are in accordance with the Canon Law and if the charges of heresy and impiety against Rizal's books are true. The bishops are not infallible. It is only the

Pope that is infallible and that is only when he speaks *ex-cathedra*.

Senator LIM. When he speaks *ex-cathedra*, and only on matters of faith.

I wish to thank the gentleman from Batangas for giving me those answers.

Senator RECTO. (*Continuing*) An important question comes up in the wake of the pertinent questions of the gentleman from Zamboanga. Why did not the bishops issue a pastoral, after all? On previous occasions they wrote pastorals on the subject of optional religious instruction, one in January, 1953, and another in February of the same year. One of them, if I am not mistaken, was directed against the appointment of Mr. Pangilinan as Under-secretary of Public Instruction. In the present case, which, for the rumpus it has raised seems much more important, the Hierarchy abstained from writing a pastoral and satisfied itself with a mere statement. I ask again, why not a pastoral? The only answer that occurs to me is that Their Excellencies were divided in their opinions as to whether these books of Rizal should be condemned or not. Perhaps a majority was for condemning them, but for lack of unanimity a joint pastoral was not possible. I know of Filipino theologians trained and formed in the best tradition of the great Padre Vicente Garcia, who opine that there are no heresies or impieties in these Rizal's novels. So a "Statement", unsigned and anonymous, with no one accepting responsibility for it except the Archbishop of Manila, was the only way out. Father Vicente Garcia, the great theologian in the days of Rizal, not only found nothing heretical and impious in these books, but he openly defended Rizal against the charges that the books contained heresies and impieties. Why should there not be many Vicente Garcias, and Burgoses, Gomeses and Zamoras, among the Filipino members of the present Hierarchy? Why should all of them be under the sway of foreign influence still so powerful in the top circles of the Catholic Church in the Philippines?

Now, Mr. President, this morning the papers carried a dispatch from Bacolod City (Philippine News Service) of this tenor:

"Catholic Bishop Manuel Yap of this city asserted today that good children of the church should not read Dr. Rizal's novels."

The bishop was quite dogmatic and uncompromising in his declaration. He does not except

the good portions of the books. His is for absolute prohibition. Not only that, but he has given warning that all legislators who will vote for the approval of the Rizal bill shall be punished in the next elections. He spoke before a crowd of 10,000 people, members of the "Barrangay Sang Birgen" in Bacolod. It is not as bad as threatening one with the fires of hell, but it may bring sleepless nights to many a politician, particularly those of the Bacolod diocese. And the good bishop singled out our distinguished colleague the gentleman from Negros Occidental, a patriot, and a man of integrity, Senator Jose C. Loesin, for supporting the Rizal bill, saying that he should not be reelected. The bishop is of the bigoted type, a modern version of Torquemada, the "holy" Spanish inquisitor during the Middle Ages. Torquemada held his "holy" office for 18 years, and during that period burned at the stake 10,200 people as heretics. This Torquemada of the Hierarchy is a clear and present danger to our democracy. Our countrymen should be warned that if we allow this Republic of ours to be turned into another theocratic state run by the church, by intolerant men like Bishop Yap we shall have here days as tragic and desolate as those of Rizal. If Bishop Yap feels so sure that he will be supported by the Filipino people in his fight against Rizal without whose teachings and martyrdom he would not be a bishop today, if he is so sure of that, he should run against Dr. Loesin in the coming election for a seat in the Chamber and on the particular issue of Rizal and Rizal's books. He is not precluded from doing so by the Constitution. Those bishops who believe that they can interfere in the affairs of the state, should come to Congress and fight for their ideas and their principles openly, and be belabored themselves in turn.

Mr. President, I thank you and I thank the members of the Senate for their indulgence.

Senator RODRIGO. Mr. President.

The PRESIDENT. Gentleman from Bulacán.

Senator RODRIGO. I do not intend to interrupt the gentleman from Batangas considering the lateness of the hour and considering that we have many important bills that we have to pass upon, and considering further that we have only ten days left. Instead of the interpellation I would like to register my request that I be allowed to use the privilege hour tomorrow. Thank you.

The PRESIDENT. Let it be recorded.