



Razor's Edge

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Joe Mari Mercader . . . *Et Tu Saludo?*

NEW YORK, NY July 12 (PinoyGlobal) - If there is anything I hate to the core, it is ingratitude. I detest it even when the object of such sneer is done to someone with a checkered reputation. This negative trait is unlike the character of a Filipino who is reputed to be overly gracious, considerate, grateful and respectful to a point of being obsequious.

The novice congressman from Iloilo, Ricardo Saludo, redefined the true meaning of gratitude and loyalty with his implausible behavior of ignoring his former boss President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo who, in case he forgets, tossed him to prominence by appointing him Palace spokesperson until she stepped down last June 30.

The irony of it is that he recompensed her with ingratitude when they met after the elections in the floor of Congress. By snubbing her, he virtually demonstrated that he can spit on his erstwhile boss without qualms. The cheap-shot grandstand was to impress that he puts "loyalty" for his constituents above respecting his benefactor, as he expounded to the media soon after.

Little did he realize that it did not prove anything except to exhibit the other side of him: that he could also be a scoundrel with no sense of gratitude. This is a contradiction to his surname Saludo that means to bow, defer or respect.

All that stupid drama would be fine if the choice of ignoring a former boss and paying homage to his constituents was the issue or crucial point to be established. But it was not. His antagonistic attitude toward Madam Arroyo was grossly uncalled for, which, and aptly so, was frowned upon by the

public without horse-blinders.

Be that as it may, couldn't he have chosen a more fitting place to display his abrasive nature than the very hall of Congress where members are addressed "Honorable"?

Sure, former President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo now Pampanga congresswoman, has many faults as well as enemies. She may not even deserve respect from her peers in the legislative body. But for someone who out of nowhere was anointed by her as factotum in the Palace during Gloria's halcyon days of power and corruption, what he did of deliberately snubbing GMA was monumental ingratitude.

Quite clearly, he was riding on the crest of her low-life; for now is the time she desperately needs the comforting support of those she nurtured to prominence. Exacerbating her bitterness by joining detractors in honing the pangs of her frustration is doubly poignant. Must such cruel fate be always the consequence of falling from the pedestal of power (the presidency)? Indeed, the reverses of fortune can be stinging!

Most certainly, he is unaware that to be civilized one does not have to be educated. Common decency would suffice. And that comes from good breeding that starts at home with the family, not from a college diploma.

It would not have hurt him politically, since he is that eager beaver now after testing the first smell of victory in the polls, he could have gotten the cue from his colleagues, who although they did not lionize GMA, they nevertheless greeted her and many heartily shook hands with the former chief executive of the land without losing an iota of dignity or self-

respect.

Saludo's arrogance and ingratitude rose to a crescendo when he was ambushed by reporters who asked why he snubbed his former boss. His tart remark shocked even the most cynical Gloria hater: "I am a representative of my district, she is not my boss" or something to that effect.

Of course, it goes without saying that he is a representative of his district and no longer a house boy in Malacanang. But would it demean him to respect his former chief if only to be consistent with the marvelous trait of Filipinos of being profuse with gratitude for those who gave them favors in the past? What is the big deal to greet her with hello and goodbye?

On the other hand, by deliberately ignoring GMA he depicted his real self—the abominable ingrate that he is. In the process he debased the Filipino who is overly a grateful soul. Saludo should bear in mind that the greatest sermon is a good example.

He must never forget that the worst danger confronting the younger generation is the example set by the older generation. And ingratitude is hardly the example a decent leader sets for our youth to emulate. I am sure he does not want to be that man who commits a mistake and everybody comes rushing with an eraser.

Mr. Saludo, it would do you a great deal if you contemplate for a moment being in her shoes. How would you feel when those you helped establish them in a position of prominence will replicate your example by snubbing you?

Metaphorically speaking, I say that being out of the seat of power Madam Arroyo is a dead horse. As such there is no point beating her anymore by joining GMA's political enemies in rubbing acid on her fresh wound in the heart.

Truly, the simple value of being respectful and grateful, are evanescent qualities our politicians have long discarded for the obscene lust for power and money. Oh, love of country, how many crimes have been committed in your name!