GRADUATION WITH HIGHEST HONOR

A person in uniform and a picture of a person

Description automatically generatedJose Rizal graduated from Ateneo Municipal de Manila in March 1877 with the highest honors, earning a Bachelor of Arts degree. During his time at Ateneo from 1872 to 1877, Rizal consistently excelled in his studies, ranking first in his class and earning a *sobresaliente* (outstanding) rating in all subjects. His academic achievements, particularly in literature, history, and philosophy, along with his leadership skills, marked him as an exceptional student. Rizal's graduation with top honors highlighted his intellectual brilliance and set the stage for his future contributions to the Philippines.



EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES IN ATENEO

During his time at Ateneo, José Rizal was not only a top student but also actively involved in extracurricular activities. He was a member and later secretary of the Marian Congregation, and he participated in the exclusive Academy of Spanish Literature and the Academy of Natural Sciences. Rizal also cultivated his literary skills under Father Sanchez, studied painting and sculpture, and engaged in gymnastics and fencing to improve his physical strength.

SCULPTURAL WORKS IN ATENEO

During his time at Ateneo, José Rizal showcased his sculptural talent by carving an image of the Virgin Mary from Philippine hardwood, impressing his Jesuit professors. Father Lleonart, recognizing Rizal's skill, asked him to carve an image of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, which Rizal completed in a few days. This image, though intended to be taken to Spain, was left behind and placed on the dormitory door, where it remained as a lasting reminder of Rizal's legacy. This sculpture later played a significant role during Rizal's final hours at Fort Santiago.

ANECDOTES OF RIZAL, THE ATHENIAN

Two anecdotes from José Rizal's time at Ateneo highlight his character. In one incident, Rizal was accidentally hit in the face by a book during a quarrel between classmates. Despite being injured and requiring medical treatment, Rizal showed no anger or resentment toward those involved.

In another incident, Rizal displayed his bravery and compassion when he helped a younger student retrieve a kite stuck on the Manila Cathedral tower. While others laughed, Rizal courageously climbed the tower to recover the kite, showing his willingness to help others, even at personal risk.

POEMS WRITTEN IN ATENEO

José Rizal's poetic talent blossomed, initially encouraged by his mother, Doña Teodora, and later nurtured by Father Sanchez. His first poem, "Mi Primera Inspiración" (My First Inspiration), was written around 1874 and dedicated to his mother.

In 1875, inspired by Father Sanchez, Rizal wrote several poems, including:

* "Felicitación" (Felicitation)
* "El Embarque: Himno a la Flota de Magallanes" (The Departure: Hymn to Magellan's Fleet)
* "Y Es Español: Elcano, el Primero en dar la Vuelta al Mundo" (And He is Spanish: Elcano, the First to Circumnavigate the World)
* "El Combate: Urbiztondo, Terror de Jolo" (The Battle: Urbiztondo, Terror of Jolo)

In 1876, he wrote poems on education, childhood memories, and war, such as:

* "Un Recuerdo a Mi Pueblo" (In Memory of My Town)
* "Alianza Intima Entre la Religión y la Buena Educación" (Intimate Alliance Between Religion and Good Education)
* "Por la Educación Recibe Lustre la Patria" (Through Education the Country Receives Light)

In his final year at Ateneo in 1877, Rizal wrote additional poems, including:

* "El Heroismo de Colón" (The Heroism of Columbus)
* "Gran Consuelo en la Mayor Desdicha" (Great Solace in Great Misfortune)
* "Un Diálogo Alusivo a la Despedida de los Colegiales" (A Farewell Dialogue of the Students), his last poem at Ateneo, bidding farewell to his classmates.

MY FIRST INSPIRATION

"My First Inspiration" is a poem by José Rizal celebrating his mother's birthday. He uses imagery from nature—flowers, birds, and springs—to express his deep love and affection for her. The poem reflects Rizal's gratitude and the strong bond he shares with his mother, highlighting the importance of honoring loved ones. It also showcases Rizal's early poetic talent in connecting personal emotions with the beauty of nature.

RIZALS POEM ON EDUCATION

In **"Through Education Our Motherland Receives Light,"** José Rizal underscores the essential role of education in advancing and enlightening a nation. The poem advocates that education is crucial for national progress and freedom, portraying it as a guiding light that can uplift the country. Its purpose is to inspire Filipinos to recognize and pursue education as a means to achieve development and independence for their homeland.

In **"The Intimate Alliance Between Religion and Good Education,"** José Rizal highlights the crucial relationship between religion and education, arguing that both are essential for holistic personal and societal development. He asserts that religion provides moral guidance while education fosters intellectual growth, and their integration leads to a well-rounded and virtuous individual. The poem's purpose is to advocate for the combined influence of religious values and education in fostering a more enlightened and ethical society.

RIZAL’S RELIGIOUS POEMS

During his student days, José Rizal expressed his Catholic faith through poetry. One of his early religious poems, "**To the Child Jesus**," written in 1875, reflects his reverence for the humble birth of Jesus and contrasts it with the expected majesty of a celestial king. Another poem, "**To the Virgin Mary**," likely written later, seeks comfort and support from the Virgin Mary, portraying her as a source of relief and guidance in times of distress. These poems highlight Rizal's deep devotion and his use of poetry to seek spiritual solace and express his faith.

DRAMATIC WORK IN ATENEO

While still a student at Ateneo, José Rizal wrote a dramatic work titled "San Eustacio, Martir" (St. Eustace, the Martyr) at the request of his favorite teacher, Father Sanchez. Rizal completed the religious drama in poetic verses during the summer of 1876, finishing it on June 2. Upon returning to Ateneo for his final academic year, Rizal submitted the manuscript to Father Sanchez, who praised him for his excellent work.

FIRST ROAMNCE OF RIZAL

At sixteen, José Rizal fell in love with Segunda Katigbak, a girl from Lipa. He was captivated by her charm but their romance was doomed since Segunda was already engaged to Manuel Luz. Despite their mutual affection, Rizal's shyness prevented him from expressing his feelings. Their final encounter was an awkward goodbye during a visit to La Concordia College. Rizal saw Segunda briefly in a carriage later but could not speak to her. The romance ended in disappointment, leaving Rizal with fond but painful memories.