THE FLAG AND THE FAITH

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It is a common scene that every Monday student will gather in an open field or the covered court and the acts of patriotism are exercised through the singing of the national anthem, reciting the oath of patriotism among all others. It can also be observed that in some establishments, they too exercise the same rites but a bit differently. Different in the sense that the sequence of the parts of the Monday morning routine varies. Some programs start with the prayer then followed by the national anthem. Others start with the national anthem then followed by the prayer. But come to think of it what should be the proper sequence of the flag raising ceremony?

Normally Filipinos being religious in culture would believe that God will have to be placed first and above all others. It is a known fact that faith in the All Mighty Creator governs all society in the country. Piety has paved the norm that all things are attributed to the blessings of God and that He should be given merit and attention first and foremost. Yes, that can be accepted as a valid reason why the prayer is done prior to the national anthem. But recently, there has been insights and explanation as to why a switch in the position of the singing of “Lupang Hinirang” and the prayer in every occasion.

According to Atty. Corazon David, in one of her discussions over the Flag and Heraldic Code of the Philippines, it is a must that during the flag raising ceremony, in the act of opening a program or an event, the national anthem should be sung first followed by the prayer. This has nothing to do with discriminating religion or placing God second, none of that at all. Atty. Corazon explained that even if that Filipinos have the right to exercise and express their religious beliefs, as long as these beliefs do not endanger the
lives of others such as in the likeness of cults and demonic rituals, it is the law of the land that allows these religions to remain, practiced or observed freely by the people. Hence, part of the provisions of the Philippine Heraldic Code singing of the national anthem should come first before reciting the prayer. To make it simpler, the people have the right to express their faith yet it is the law that allows them to express their chosen faith. That is why the embodiment of the law comes first. In this case the national anthem as the depiction of the land implementing the law.

Furthermore, it is clearly stipulated in the heraldic code that the flag are not to be used or positioned in such a way that dishonor is brought to the symbol of the country. These include using the flag as decorations for uniforms or costumes, allowing it to touch the ground, using it as a mop or trampling it, mutilate, burn or deface the flag, it can be used as cover of the casket of an honored individual but not as a table cloth and even in unveiling of monuments or statues. These among other prohibitions are stipulated in the law to ensure that respect is given to the symbol of the country and to the identity of a Filipino.

So the next time that you organize the opening ceremonies in your school, you are now properly guided on how to arrange the parts of the program that involves singing of the national anthem.

References:

Reference:
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RA 8491 – Flag and Heraldic Code of the Philippines