

Why is Rizal our National Hero?

- He is a man of Peace with a Vision.
 - He could have enjoyed the fruits of his family's abundance and spent the remaining days of his life rubbing elbows with the governing Spanish officials and the new enlightened Filipino *ilustrados* to which he belonged, but he dared to be different.
- He chose not to take up the gun against the oppressors (Spanish government and the Dominican friars).
 - Unlike the others, he worked through peaceful means of reforms to seek equality for his people under Spanish laws.
- Rizal also worked hard and suffered, as much as his countrymen, just to attain his goals for his beloved country and his loved ones.
 - He sojourned and travelled from country to country while preparing his two novels—the Noli and El Fili—which gave the world its first insight into conditions in the Philippines and become the first Asian to do such.
 - His sufferings were also compounded by the fact that his parents, brothers, and sisters had been persecuted by the Spanish government; some of them, including his mother, were jailed for a time.
- He is a proponent of education.
 - He wanted the people to educate themselves—not necessarily thru schools, even informally—so that they could stand as free men and face the world with heads held high. He wanted as well, that ever just for a moment, people remember him for the works that he had done for them.
 - Letter of Rizal to Dr. Ferdinand Blumentritt: "Whatever our country's condition might be here, let us love our country always and let us wish nothing but her welfare. Thus, we shall labor in conformity with the purpose of humanity dictated by God which is the harmony and universal peace of His creatures."
 - He even mentioned: "The glory of saving a country is not for him who has contributed to its ruin. Hate never produces anything but monsters and criminals."

It is evident that Rizal's pre-eminence among the national heroes in the Philippines made him revered by the Filipino nation and also for some primary reasons, which are as follows: (a) because of his virtues of character which exemplify honesty, (b) personal integrity, (c) patriotism and civic responsibility, (d) willingness to sacrifice for the cause of his native land, (e) high sense of justice and family solidarity, (f) and the loftiest standard of truth with which he pursued the nobility of his cause to found and foster Filipino nationhood.

Above all these aforementioned, his avowal and love of country and heroism was not mere word of mouth but manifested by pristine martyrdom in the tragic field of Bagumbayan, now the Luneta, on December 30, 1896.