

RICARDO A. FORONDA, PETITIONER, VS. ATTY. ARNOLD V. GUERRERO, RESPONDENT.

A.C. NO. 5469. January 27, 2006

Ponente: CALLEJO, SR., J.

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CALLEJO, SR., J.:

In a Decision dated August 10, 2004, this Court found Atty. Arnold V. Guerrero of "trifling with judicial processes by resorting to forum shopping" for filing multifarious petitions, motions and actions concerning the sale of a particular property and suspended him from the practice of law for two (2) years.

On February 27, 2005, respondent filed a motion for reconsideration which the Court resolved to deny with finality in a Resolution dated February 15, 2004.

On May 3, 2005, respondent filed an "Ex-Parte Plea for Clemency" pleading for compassion and praying that the suspension meted against him be lifted immediately. According to respondent, he is fully aware that his suspension was a "corrective and a punitive measure for his professional indiscretion." He pleads that he be given a chance to prove that he is now reformed and that he is worthy of the compassion and clemency which the Court may give him.

We grant the petition.

It has been more than 17 months since we ordered respondent's suspension from the practice of law. To our mind, this is more than enough time for him to reflect and realize the gravity of his actuations. Respondent is contrite and remorseful. He has humbly acknowledged his transgression and offered his most sincere apology. This Court is not only a court of law and of justice, but one with compassion; [1] not a Court of vengeance but of justice. [2] We give prima facie credence to his vow "to be more circumspect and careful in the discharge of his professional functions and duties" and not to "repeat the same mistake again in the future".

Respondent is, however, sternly reminded that the practice of law is a privilege burdened with conditions. Adherence to the rigid standards of mental fitness, maintenance of the highest degree of morality and faithful compliance with the rules of legal profession are the conditions required for remaining a member of good standing of the bar and for enjoying the privilege to practice law. [3] More importantly, while lawyers owe their entire devotion to the interest of their clients and zeal in the defense of their client's right, they should not forget that they are, first and foremost, officers of the court, bound to exert every effort to assist in the speedy and efficient administration of justice. [4]

WHEREFORE, the petition is GRANTED. The order suspending Atty. Arnold V. Guerrero is LIFTED. This order is immediately executory. He is STERNLY WARNED that any act of a similar nature shall be dealt with even more severely.

SO ORDERED.

Panganiban, C.J., Puno, Quisumbing, Ynares-Santiago, Sandoval-Guitierrez, Carpio, Austria-Martinez, Corona, Carpio-Morales, Azcuna, Tinga, Chico-Nazario, and Garcia, JJ., concur.

[1] Minute Resolution in *Amane v. Atty. Susan Mendoza-Arce*, A.M. No. P-94-1080, November 27, 2001, citing *Torralba v. Court of Appeals*, G.R. No. 124526, October 2, 1996.

[2] *Zaldivar v. Sandiganbayan*, G.R. Nos. 79690-707, April 7, 1993, 221 SCRA 132.

[3] *Id.* at 135.

[4] *Eternal Gardens Memorial Park Corp. v. Court of Appeals*, G.R. No. 123698, August 5, 1998, 355 Phil. 369 (1998).

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