



Republic of the Philippines
Supreme Court
Manila

THIRD DIVISION

SPOUSES ROBERT C. G.R. No. 190998
PADERANGA AND JOVITA M.
PADERANGA,
Petitioners, Present:

- versus -

SPOUSES PENDATUN A.
BOGABONG AND NORMA P.
BOGABONG; STALINGEORGE
PADERANGA AND THE
REGISTER OF DEEDS OF
ILIGAN CITY; CIPRIANO
RATUNIL; ANTONIO MIÑOZA;
HEIRS OF TOMAS TAN SR.,
LOURDES TAN and LIBEN GO
MEDINA,

Respondents.

VELASCO, JR., J., Chairperson,
PERALTA,
VILLARAMA, JR., and
PEREZ,* and
JARDELEZA, JJ.

Promulgated:

July 20, 2015

X-----X

DECISION

PERALTA, J.:

This deals with the Petition for Review on *Certiorari* under Rule 45 of the Rules of Court praying that the Resolution¹ of the Court of Appeals (CA), promulgated on September 16, 2008, and the Resolution² dated December 7, 2009, denying petitioner's motion for reconsideration thereof, be reversed and set aside.

* Designated Acting Member in lieu of Associate Justice Bienvenido L. Reyes, per Special Order No. 2084 dated June 29, 2015.

¹ Penned by Associate Justice Rodrigo F. Lim, Jr., with Associate Justices Jane Aurora C. Lantion, Michael P. Elbinias and Edgardo T. Lloren, concurring; and Associate Justice Ruben C. Ayson, dissenting; *rollo* p. 92-95.

² Penned by Associate Justice Rodrigo F. Lim, Jr., with Associate Justices Romulo V. Borja, Edgardo A. Camello and Edgardo T. Lloren, concurring; and Associate Justice Ruben C. Ayson, dissenting; *id.* at 97-99.

Petitioners filed with the Regional Trial Court of Iligan City (RTC) a Complaint for *Injunction, Declaration of Nullity of forged Power of Attorney, etc., with Prayer for Preliminary Injunction or Restraining Order*, against respondents. The main issue raised in the complaint was the genuineness and authenticity of the signature of petitioner Robert Paderanga appearing on a Special Power of Attorney³ (SPA) supposedly authorizing respondent Stalingeorge Paderanga to sell the tract of land in contention. After trial, the RTC rendered judgment in favor of respondents, declaring the signature on the SPA as the true and genuine signature of Dr. Robert C. Paderanga, and dismissing the complaint. Petitioners' motion for reconsideration of the aforesaid Decision was denied per Resolution⁴ dated May 21, 2007.

Petitioners then appealed to the CA. After petitioners were notified to file their appellants' brief, their counsel prayed for several extensions of time within which to file the required pleading. The CA granted petitioners an extension of time totaling ninety (90) days, but petitioners still belatedly filed the appellants' brief.

Thus, the CA issued the Resolution dated September 16, 2008, wherein petitioners' appeal was deemed to have been abandoned and, accordingly, dismissed. In said Resolution, the CA stressed that in its Resolution dated April 25, 2008, petitioners were granted a second extension of thirty (30) days, but this time with a warning that no further motion for extension shall thereafter be entertained. The motion for reconsideration of the dismissal was denied in the CA's Resolution dated December 7, 2009.

Petitioners now come beseeching the Court to decide their case on the merits, presenting issues regarding (1) the authenticity of the signature of petitioner Robert Paderanga on the SPA; (2) the credibility of the handwriting expert presented as a defense witness; (3) the validity of the deed of sale executed by Stalingeorge Paderanga pursuant to the SPA in question; (4) whether respondents are innocent purchasers for value; (5) the propriety of the partition of the property; and (5) petitioners' right to damages. Lastly, petitioners assail the CA's dismissal of their appeal on the ground that the appellants' brief was belatedly filed, arguing that, in the interest of justice, their case should be decided on the merits.

Indeed, the courts should always aim for the expeditious and orderly administration of justice. However, this aspiration should not mar the higher interest of the just resolution of cases on its merits. Unless the non-compliance with procedural rules is wantonly and deliberately vexatious and

³ *Rollo*, p. 267.

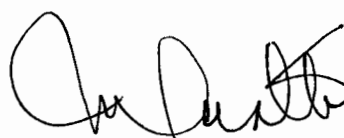
⁴ *Id.* at 231-232.

dilatory, proving to be very oppressive to one of the parties, it is better for all concerned to give premium to the substantial merits of the case over the non-compliance with mere rules and technicalities. In *Villanueva v. People*,⁵ the Court emphasized that “[i]n rendering justice, procedural infirmities take a backseat against substantive rights of litigants.”⁶ Verily, herein petitioners should be given the opportunity to fully argue the substantial issues and have their case reviewed by the appellate court.

Since Rule 45 of the Rules of Court clearly provides that only questions of law shall be entertained in a petition for review on *certiorari*, the issues raised in the present petition should first be threshed out below.

WHEREFORE, the instant petition is **GRANTED** and the case is **REMANDED** to the Court of Appeals for proper disposition.

SO ORDERED.



DIOSDADO M. PERALTA

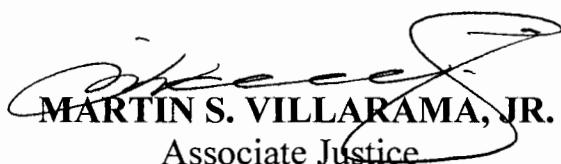
Associate Justice

WE CONCUR:



PRESBITERO J. VELASCO, JR.

Associate Justice
Chairperson



MARTIN S. VILLARAMA, JR.
Associate Justice



JOSE PORTUGAL PEREZ
Associate Justice



FRANCIS H. JARDELEZA
Associate Justice

⁵ 659 Phil. 418 (2011).

⁶ *Villanueva v. People, supra*, at 429.

ATTESTATION

I attest that the conclusions in the above Decision had been reached in consultation before the case was assigned to the writer of the opinion of the Court's Division.



PRESBITERO J. VELASCO, JR.

Associate Justice
Chairperson, Third Division

CERTIFICATION

Pursuant to Section 13, Article VIII of the Constitution and the Division Chairperson's Attestation, I certify that that the conclusions in the above Decision had been reached in consultation before the case was assigned to the writer of the opinion of the Court's Division.



ANTONIO T. CARPIO
Acting Chief Justice