

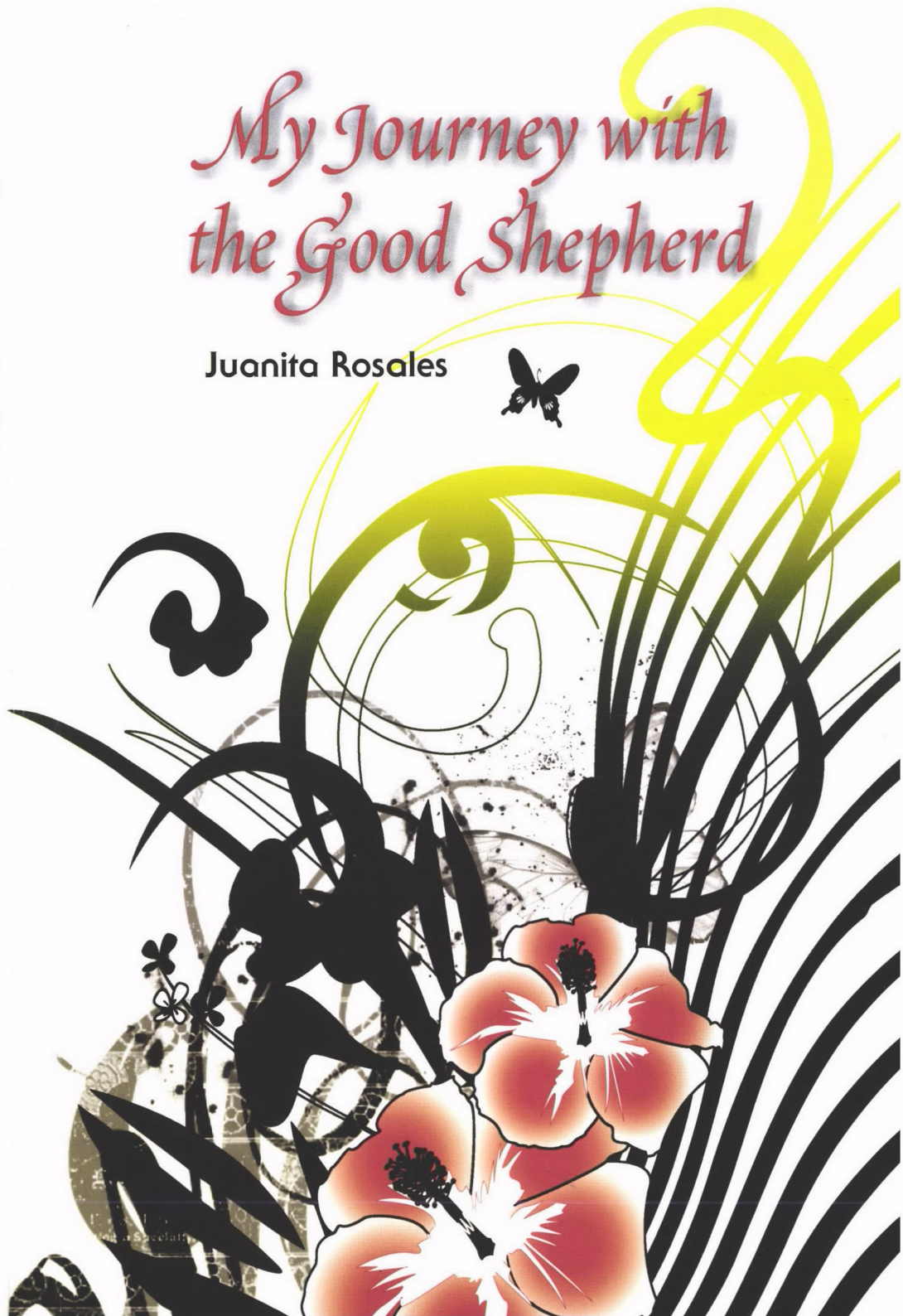
# *My Journey with the Good Shepherd*

Juanita Rosales



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# Foreword

In 1950, the census of Montana was 591,024. At that time specific information on Filipinos did not exist. All census information at the time reported 107 males and 93 females listed under "other races" which excluded Native Americans and African Americans, a remarkable statistic for the 4<sup>th</sup> largest state in North America. The few Filipinos living in Montana were bachelor Manongs who picked sugar beets in Western and Eastern Montana. My father, almost 20 years older than my mother, was one of the original Manongs to immigrate to America in the 1920's and my mother was the one to assuage his loneliness. As a little girl living in Montana in the early 60's, I remember my mother telling me about my relatives in the Philippines. It was very difficult for me to comprehend. We were always the only Filipinos.

When my mother turned 70 in 1996, she shared with me her desire to recount her life's story. I knew at that unspoken moment that I would be the one to help her with this task. Little did I know that it would be accomplished at my mother's age of 81 and would take her less than 3 months to complete a manuscript for editing. While reading each word of her work, I was constantly reminded that yes, I am the daughter of a righteous woman. It has taken me years to understand the depth of my mother's spiritual legacy which she leaves to my brothers and me and to the generation of us yet to be born. My mother is a living vessel of God's unconditional love, acceptance and goodness shared to her family and to all those she encounters daily. This remarkable woman has been instrumental in transforming lives and working miracles for the sick, lonely, and destitute and for the many we do not know by name and face in her local community of Great Falls, Montana and her homeland in the Philippines.

My mother's memoir vividly captures her humble roots and how God brought her from an unknown barrio to Great Falls, Montana. She speaks eloquently about her personal relationship with Jesus Christ and her ongoing ministries in her local community as well as in the Philippines. I thank God for giving me this opportunity to understand on a very personal level my mother's unselfish sacrifice throughout the years.

*Carmen Rosales*  
*Daughter*

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It was refreshing to read this life story of Imang Juaning. This is how we nephews and nieces fondly call Juanita Basa Lacanilao Rosales. I got a hold of the manuscript of this book long before it got into print because she requested me to contact a printer for her. And brushing through the whole story, it brought back memories to me from childhood days.

Imang Juaning is a lady of unsurpassed generosity and hospitality in the US where she took residence as a young single lady 55 years ago. As a frequent Balikbayan, Imang Juaning's goodness is extended to the indigents and needy in her Christian work in the Philippines. Her own Helping Hand's Ministry has been God's channel for Imang Juaning to serve and minister to her maximum ability and capacity. As you read through this you will be edified.

*Mike T. Lacanilao*

*A Nephew, President of Christian Growth Ministries, Former President of Far East Bible Institute & Seminary, Former President of Back to the Bible Philippines*

*The story of my life was written through encouragement of friends who have heard me share the goodness of my Lord and Savior who brought me from a humble beginning in an unknown barrio in the Philippines to America in 1953 to accomplish the plan He prepared for me to do. He knew the desires of my heart and He opened all the avenues for me. God has proven to me the completeness in taking care of my physical and spiritual needs during my earthly journey to prepare me for my final destiny of dwelling in the mansion for those who are faithful to His calling.*

*I am grateful to George Tyner in helping me with the computer. My computer literacy skills were developed last year at age 81 and gave me the ability to type, start, file and close the document. I thank my daughter, Carmen, who did the initial editing and my Grandson, Jason, who transmitted my manuscript back and forth from Great Falls to San Francisco in one paragraph, single spaced for Carmen to edit.*

*Finally, to God, I give all the glory for watching me through the years, inspiring me and gifting me with bonus years. And to all of you who love and honor Him, He will make something beautiful out of your Life.*

**Juanita Basa Lacanilao Rosales**

**July 2008**





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I am a Filipina immigrant to the United States and raised a family of three sons and a daughter in Great Falls, Montana. From three sons came five grandsons, a granddaughter, one adopted granddaughter and ten great grand children. For their sakes I wish to put in writing their heritage, less they forget their ethnic roots. As the years go by, their identity may not be traceable by their outward physical appearance but their personality will come out from the special creation "wonderfully and fearfully" made by the Great Creator. I want them to know their Grandma, "Lola" who prayed for each of them and for their descendants yet to be born. I want them to come to the saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, who alone can give them hope in this lifetime and beyond.

I am reminded of Ephesians 1:4 which states, "God knew us even before we were born and whose family we would belong. He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world and had already a divine plan for us." The prophet Jeremiah (29:11) continues, "I have plans for you declare the Lord, plans for your good and not for evil, plans for your future with hope."

When my first great granddaughter Adelia was four and I was babysitting her, she looked at me with loving eyes and said, "Lola, you are old, soon you will die." I assured her I would be around to take care of her and she said, "It is okay, you can watch me from heaven." If that is the concept of a little child of heaven, it must be a wonderful place. The Word of the Lord speaks of Heaven as a place of eternal happiness. There is no shedding of tears. God is preparing mansions for us in Heaven. When Jesus Christ is ready for us, He will come and take us to glory. God in His amazing grace gave His Son Jesus Christ to die on the cross for our sins and is now seated near the right hand of the Father interceding for us. We all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

When I spend eternity with my Lord, I will still be praying for you. We need a Savior in the Person of Jesus Christ to have eternal life. If we choose Him, He promises to bless and protect us; He will be our refuge and strength, a very present help in times of trouble. However, we are not spared from afflictions, but the Lord delivers us out of them all. "Heed, loved ones. Taste and see that the Lord is good. Blessed is the man that trusts in Him" (Psalm 33:19).

# **CHAPTER I**

## **My Beginning**

I was the youngest of ten children of Ambrocio Lacanilao and Carmen Basa. Three of my siblings died young, brother Honorio died at age 24, sister Magdalena at age 20 and my sister Hilaria died at infancy. I was born on February 8, 1926 and never knew my two deceased sisters. I remembered watching my deceased brother cleaning his multiple sores around his neck. Medical care was not available in the barrio. Two of my nephews and a niece bear the names of my deceased brother and sisters. Anacleto, my oldest brother, was already married when I was born. He would play an important role in my life. My mother was in her fifties when she gave birth to me and in the very young years of my life I was made to believe I was picked up from the rice field having the darkest skin in the family. I also had a birthmark over the right side of my eye which was reddish brown. I grew up with an inferiority complex being a homely child and was teased a lot.

When I was seven years old, a 10 year old neighbor was chopping bananas from each stack. I happened to see a ripe banana and reached for it and was accidentally struck on the back of my head at the base with the bolo and bled profusely. My mother, who was especially gifted in healing children, took guava leaves and mixed the leaves with salt and packed it in the gaping wound. In a few days, it was healed. I still bear the scar on the back of my head. As a child, I had kidney problems and would urinate blood. My mother boiled the bark of a tamarind tree and made me drink it as often as I could drink and soon my kidney problem was gone. When my tonsils were badly swollen and infected, mother fried rice as crispy as could be and made me swallow without chewing; I must have swallowed my tonsils, since I never had tonsillitis after that incident. I had other

childhood ailments and my mother continued to use herbs and plants growing in the neighborhood to do her healing. One of the external treatments she did was creating a heated suction using a glass cup with a lit piece of cotton immersed in the cup and applying it very quickly to the painful areas. For abdominal and chest pains the cup suction would cause redness in the area. The belief was the heat pulled out whatever was causing the problem. I was subjected to this technique many times. I do not remember any sick child brought to her that died. My mother had deep religious convictions and prayed to the Higher Power for guidance when she touched a sick child which included me.

The Pampanga River was just a stones throw away from our family home. As children we played near the shore while the women washed clothes and the men would fish. Seventy years ago one could see the bottom of the river because of its clarity. Today, the shores of the river are inhabited with many families of my Badjao ministry. When I was 10 years old, we went swimming in the river by our house; soon I was being swept away by a current. If not for a 15 year old around to pull me out, I would have drowned. I did not realize even then the Lord God was watching over me. My other brush with death and a consequent spanking was when I disobeyed my parents by crossing the river. I went with the boys to pick "camatchili" fruit where they only grow on the farm, accessed by crossing the river. The river is dangerous when it is high tide but we never thought of the danger. The boys paddled the boat and had it capsized all five of us would have drowned. The second spanking I received was arguing with my brother Bernardo whose turn it was to wash dishes. We were both punished. That was the only time in my childhood memory I misbehaved and was reprimanded. My brother Ben and I got along very well even in later years. Other than these close calls of drowning in my childhood, it was uncomplicated. I had loving parents who worked hard to provide for our daily needs.



Preschool preparation consisted of sending one's child to the village teacher who taught us the alphabet in our Kapampangan dialect, catechism and memorization of the rosary. Seven years old is the starting age to go to first grade and the medium of instruction was in English as we were a protectorate of the United States. The school was only up to fourth grade. Public instruction was free and was patterned after the US Board of Education. By the time we finished the fourth grade we mastered the three R's, (reading, writing and arithmetic) and could speak and understand the English language. The majority of the barrio kids did not go any further than the fourth grade because the Elementary School that had the 5th, 6th and 7<sup>th</sup> grades was in a town ten miles away. Only the well off who could hire a horse drawn rig that accommodated up to four students were able to pursue their studies beyond the fourth grade.

My father, Ambrocio, made a living for us as a chef to the wealthy in the village. Work was always sporadic. My mother Carmen, made ceramic pots. Continuing my schooling was not within the means of my parents. I wanted to continue my studies but I was given the final decision to learn the trade of making pots which was one of the few livelihoods available to most of the young girls living in the barrio. I tried to learn to make pots to please my parents but could not learn to mold the clay to make the pot sellable. My parents decided to send me to their friend who taught sewing. I also tried to sew but could not follow a pattern. A whole year was wasted. When old enough to marry, the parents would also choose a young man for their daughter to marry from their circle of friends. I begged my parents to talk to my oldest brother, Anacleto, who was 25 years older than me and to ask him if I could stay with his family in Manila so I could go to school. In exchange, I would help with house chores. My brother already had seven children living in a one bedroom house. He and my sister-in-law, Eduvigis, willingly took me in. All of us kids slept in the living room, on the mat under a mosquito net. We were a happy family.

My life in Manila was centered around brother Anacleto's family and church. Every Sunday, we were in church all day except to go home for lunch. Wednesdays were devoted to church prayer meetings and Thursdays, fellowship time in each others homes taking turns. My brother found a relationship with Jesus Christ that made his family so connected to spirituality. In spite of the rushed hours in the morning the family took time to read the Bible. The rule of the house was "No Bible, No breakfast." I settled in with my brother's family, but oh, I was so lonely. For a 12 year old to be separated from her parents for the first time was emotionally traumatic. I spent time alone crying. Many times I wanted to go back to Capalangan, and then I thought my life would be over if I gave up now. Something inside me reminded me that this too, would pass. I was brought up religious but did not really have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ to call upon Him to help me in my dilemma. A missionary from America came to hold nightly meetings. My brother took us all to hear him. During one of those nights, I understood the missionary's message of salvation, that Jesus is the only way, the Truth and the Life and that no man or woman can come to the Father, or go to heaven except through Jesus Christ.

I claimed to be a good person but was not sure of my eternal destiny. I never heard of me being a sinner and the preacher said all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. He said further, except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God. He closed his message by singing "Search me O God and know my heart today, Try me O Lord and know my thoughts, I pray. See if there be some wicked way in me. Cleanse me from every sin and set me free." I was 14 years old when the preacher gave the altar call that night and at that moment, I gave my life to Jesus Christ and accepted Him as my personal Savior and Lord. I knew without a doubt my name was written in the Book of Life. Jesus said, "Whoever confesses me before men; I will also confess him before my Father in Heaven."

Not too long ago I was attending a city Concert of Prayer in Great Falls and to my greatest delight found out that Dr. Orr was the speaker that night and was the same young missionary, Dr. Edwin Orr, who wrote and composed the music the night I was saved. Within weeks, Dr. Orr would meet his Savior. What an awesome revelation for the Lord to show me the face of the man whose message drew me to Him weeks before his death. Was God reminding me, I too, would be commissioned to bring the message of salvation?

My brother Anacleto's spiritual conversion happened in the early 1930's. During this time the American missionaries conducted evangelistic meetings in the streets of Manila. Anacleto happened to stop in his curiosity to listen to what the man was preaching. He became interested in the message of eternal life through Jesus Christ. As good Catholics, we were made to believe being good and following the doctrine and traditions of the church and to be prayed for after death was enough to enter heaven. We were aware of the two places to go after death and the other place to hold the soul or spirit until all the recommended rituals were met. My brother's hunger and thirst to learn more motivated him to attend every nightly meeting the missionaries had to offer. He went to their Bible studies. He learned that unless a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. "How can a man be born again," asked Nicodemus to Jesus? This was the same question my brother asked. Jesus said unless one is born from water (He is the Living Water that cleanses) and the Spirit, he cannot enter God's kingdom.

Human life comes from our parents, but spiritual life comes from the Spirit. In the 1930's, my brother was excited about his born again experience. He wanted to share it with the whole family and relatives in the province, in the barrio where we lived, Capalangan, Apalit, Pampanga. He brought American missionaries, gathered people and preached the good news of salvation to our family and barrio with him translating the message. He remained very faithful and brought missionaries to

difficult to reach places at the time. He trained to become a Christian worker under the First Baptist Church in Manila, ministry of the American Baptist for World Evangelism. He quit his job with American Motors and served as Tagalog Pastor of the Fellowship Center Church, a Baptist affiliated independent church. By this time he had eight children and myself including, and lived on faith. In the meantime, I was pursuing my elementary education under difficult conditions but we were a content family.

I graduated salutatorian of my class. My brother wrote my speech and I could not remember what it was about, except the conclusion, which was, "I beseech you brethren by the mercies of God that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God which is your reasonable service." I almost skipped the main message, except my brother was sitting in the front seat among the administrators of the National Teachers College Elementary Department. One of them was an African American educator. I noticed them nodding in approval, and thought they were Christians familiar with the scriptures. Because of this experience, whenever I am invited to speak, whether it is secular or a religious gathering it does not sound complete unless I close it with scriptures. I enrolled in high school on scholarship. Our family's financial concern over my education was solved.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **World War II and Post War**

On December 8, 1941 at 8:30 in the morning, just when classes are started, the paging system was announcing that classes are cancelled and that all of us needed to hurry up and go home. The Japanese were bombing US military installations and simultaneously, Pearl Harbor was being attacked, December 7, 1941 in the United States. We never experienced being at war. People were in panic, running home and jumping into any transportation available. While the Japanese planes were zooming above the skies of Manila, they were targeting US bases, Nicholls Field, Clark Field, Fort Stotsenberg and Cavite Navy Yard to name a few. When the whole family was united that day, we took the last train to the province. The city residents were all fleeing to their respective provinces to escape the bombing in Manila. The train was packed; people were hanging by the doors, by the windows, on top of the train, inside either standing or sitting on each other's laps.

The cooler weather in December was a blessing. After an hour trip, we reached our destination. From the train station, we walked about a mile to our village. The children's ages ranged from infancy to 12 years. I knew it was by God's grace that we were able to survive the ordeal. We settled in my parents' home. Within ten days, we were informed that the Japanese soldiers were crossing the Calumpit Bridge. We did not expect them to be on land this soon. Apparently, the civilian Japanese who were in business over the last few years were spies and in military undercover. During this time they had built a big community of Japanese nationals on the island of Davao. So when they started bombing Pearl Harbor, they were also bombing the Philippines. My family prepared to evacuate when we heard the Japanese were coming. They used two bancas,

similar to canoes curved from a big tree to accommodate two families numbering twenty including children. Our only escape from the Japanese was the rice field across the river.

Most of the barrio folks were crossing the river and just when we were about halfway, the Japanese came and machine gunned us. Several were killed and some wounded. My family managed to get to the banks. We ran for cover in between tall cogon grass carrying small sacks of personal items and the little children being carried by the adults. We knew the angels of the Lord were covering us and leading us to a shelter where we could hide. Walking through tall cogon grass was in itself treacherous as there were poisonous snakes that were ready to attack. Finally, the adults in my family found a place where we could settle. The men put up a makeshift hut with bamboo posts and cogon grass for a roof and on the ground for us to sleep on. Day after day, all we saw circling the sky were Japanese planes. We wondered what happened to the mighty US Air Force. We heard of the heavy fighting in Bataan and Mariveles and the heavy shelling of Corregidor, the impenetrable rock of the US defense.

Within a few days of hiding and no imminent fear of being found out, we heard that fifteen Japanese soldiers came to the big evacuation camp where most of the barrio folks took refuge. They were accompanied by a Filipino collaborator. The Japanese soldiers raped all the women and young teenagers in the camp and the men were threatened to be killed if they made any move. That day was a day of grieving and humiliation for the whole community as almost every family was affected. However, we were in hiding and did not hear of this incident until the next day. When the Japanese soldiers left they passed our camp while we were watching the direction they were heading. They must not have seen our cogon hut because we were sheltered under His Wings. The next day at the break of dawn, our men did not want to take any chances of being discovered. They put up a banca on stilts on a creek by our campsite where it was hidden under tall cogon grass and could

not be seen from the outside. Six of us, women and teens, remained in there in a quiet vigil uninterrupted. As was expected, six Japanese soldiers came to our place looking for women. Only my mother, who was then elderly, and young children were in sight. The adult males were occupied pounding palay for our rice consumption. My oldest brother Anacleto was laying down sick with intestinal problems. He prayed and meditated continuously during his waking hours.

The soldiers left without harming anybody or taking anything as they normally did. Because of my brother's strong faith we were all covered under God's protection. We made the Lord God our safety, nothing bad would happen, no disaster would come to our dwelling. When it got dark, we continued our routine and joined the family until the next day. We did this until it was safe to come out at day time. We did not use any kind of light in the night. The moon was our light. We spent the Christmas season of 1941 in hiding. It did not stop us from singing Christmas carols and remembering the birth of Jesus. Because He lives, we were in His care and were not afraid. We had witnessed the marvel of His deliverance. It was only the beginning of the worst yet to come of the killings, dead bodies floating in the river, babies being tossed and soldiers catching them with their bayonets, raping, torturing and other unimaginable atrocities. While in evacuation, we ate what we could find, edible plants, root crops, boiled green bananas and small fish from the creek. We did not dare eat fish from the river with bodies and animal carcasses floating at all times and boiled our water from the creek for safe drinking.

While Manila was declared an open city towards the end of December, we in the province were reluctant to go back to our community. When the family decided to return to our home, it was occupied by Japanese soldiers. It was one of the bigger houses in the barrio where they occupied to set up covert military operations. We moved in with relatives and my brother, Anacleto, and his family returned to Manila. Miraculously, he recovered from his intestinal problem through prayer and



fasting. Meanwhile, my brother Amado, two cousins and a neighbor had joined the United States Armed Forces of the Far East (USAFPE) before the bombing and had retreated to Bataan and Mariveles, hoping to hold off the onslaught of the Japanese Army. Eighty percent of Luzon was occupied. The Japanese established a puppet government headed by Jose Laurel and made the Philippines a part of Greater Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere with Japan as the ruling country.

The Japanese took control of all businesses, running all phases of government and control of the different churches. They put all the Americans and British nationals in concentration camps sparing the missionaries temporarily but later they rounded them all without mercy. Fierce fighting continued in Bataan and Mariveles and the US soldiers finally fell and surrendered to the Japanese on April 9, 1942. Corregidor also was being bombarded. General Douglas MacArthur and his men and the President of the Philippine Commonwealth, Manuel L. Quezon and his family were evacuated to Australia by submarine. By May 6, General Jonathan Wainwright surrendered the whole Island Forces to the Japanese Imperial Army. It was doomsday for all the Filipinos. General MacArthur's voice could be heard on underground radio, a message of hope that he would return.

There were Americans who were able to go underground and organized guerilla activities. They coordinated their activities with the Peoples Army leaning to communist ideology. But when the Japanese came they recruited more men to fight the common enemy, the Japanese. They called themselves HUKBALAHAP, meaning Hukbu ng Bayan Laban sa Hapon, (Army of the Nation against Japan). We lived in fear all the time. When the guerillas struck a Japanese outpost the civilians suffered the consequence. They rounded up the Filipinos and shot at them mercilessly. When a Filipino collaborated with the Japanese they disappeared.

Following the surrender of Bataan and Corregidor, the Death March began. The Americans and Filipino soldiers were

made to walk a 50 mile trek day and night to Camp O'Donnell in Capas, Tarlac, without food and water. As some fell on the ground they were bayoneted to death. My brother Amado and his buddy were able to escape but two other relatives remained missing in action and must have died in battle. In the month of June of 1942, the Japanese soldiers brought about 20 American soldiers to our barrio to serve as their personal slaves. However, a few of them were sick and limited as to what they could do. These select few were confined to small nipa houses fenced in with barbed wire. The house of the relative we moved in with was close to their housing area. The military order was death to anybody caught handing out food to the prisoners.

Filipinos, including my family, continued taking risks in the night to give food and medicine to the Americans. One night one soldier was able to crawl under the barbed wire and came to us asking for food. We let him in. While he was eating, the dog was barking at a Japanese soldier who was bringing his left over food to us and calling my brother Ben's name. This soldier was staying at our house and my brother Ben was his errand boy and the same brother caught in the bombing of one of the military installations who escaped uninjured. We hurried to clear the table and hid Roy Mullins in the closet. The Japanese stayed for a few minutes and then left. We were so relieved when it was over knowing all of us would have been executed had Roy Mullins been discovered. One of the other soldier's who we also fed managed to get my sister Lucila's name. Lucila was an informant for the guerrillas. At the end of the war, this same soldier was liberated in Manchuria and made contact with us from his home in Louisiana. We never heard about what happened to Roy Mullins.

In the first year of Japanese occupation, the Japanese had military outposts in almost every town holding prisoners of war as slave workers. In one instance, a truck driven by the Japanese came to our barrio with twelve prisoners of war and their guards and drove to the school house. We were watching through a window without them noticing us. They had the

Americans dig their own graves, lined them up, and the soldiers fired at them in execution style. They pulled their bodies into the grave, covered them and left. We could not come close to the area until the Japanese moved out from our barrio. We learned later that one prisoner of war had escaped but then was discovered he had committed suicide and had drowned himself. The Japanese executed these twelve soldiers to pay the price. What a tragedy. One relative picked up the dead soldiers' dog tags that were left in the grave site and saved them. When the war ended four years later, the US military came to exhume the remains and the dog tags came in handy for identification. In 2001, my daughter Carmen and I were invited guests at the Macario Arnedo school house watching the dance festivities of the children just a few yards from where I had watched the execution of the American soldiers over sixty years ago as if it just had happened.

During the second year of Japanese occupation, I decided to move in with Brother Anacleto's family in Manila. Life was going on as usual under a Japanese puppet government. Filipinos who were not cooperating were locked up in Intramuros, the walled city of Manila. They were not given food or water, were tortured and many died. The family and all the church members came back to resume church activities under Japanese supervision eliminating everything connected to America. Philippine money went out of circulation and was replaced by the yen. I decided to take a course in typing and stenography and learned Nipongo. I worked briefly as a secretary for my brother's friend who was an asbestos product broker. The business did not last. Although I was not paid well, I gained experience.

The Baptist Church offered evangelism classes. My friend Hilda Fernandez de Leon and I decided to take the short course and we both were accepted. By this time, both in our late teens, we proved to be responsible help with the children's ministry. The Lord was leading our direction. That following year, my brother Antonio, next to Anacleto, also answered the

call to pastor a church in Baras, Rizal, 25 miles away from Manila. He moved his family to the small town. The few church members were meeting in a bigger house owned by a member while the children in the neighborhood needed to be ministered to. In the adjoining town of Teresa, Rizal, there was also a church that was being pastored by Pedro Angkahan and needed a worker for the children. It was then suggested Hilda and I would fill both needs in the two neighboring communities. She assisted Brother Tony in Baras, and I was assigned to Pastor Angkahan in Teresa. The Teresa church had a building built by the first convert, elder Brother Andoy. We were there for almost a year. The ministry was progressing very well especially with the children although the food supply was very limited.

The oldest son of my brother Tony, Henry, was ten years old and would walk five miles in the rice fields to the town of Teresa to pick up green bananas from Brother Andoy's farm for their meal of boiled green bananas dunked in brown sugar. There were plenty of green edible plants and a root crop called "name" which was supposedly poisonous, but when washed very well and boiled was added to our diet. Rice was rationed so we had to minimize our consumption. We had been hearing rumors from guerrilla sources that the promise of General MacArthur's, "I shall return", was imminent. My brother decided to go back to Manila. Hilda stayed with her sister Sorsing and brother Kurt in Manila and I went back to Pampanga with my parents. We were now entering the fourth year of Japanese occupation. Life was becoming increasingly unbearable with the Japanese treatment of Filipinos. If you passed the Japanese sentries and did not bow properly; you were slapped on the face or hit with their bayonets.

To help bring provision to the family's needs, I worked 12 hour shifts in a bakery making steamed rice cake from six in the morning until six in the afternoon. I had a short noon break for lunch, and mid morning and mid afternoon ten minute breaks for "merienda" or snack time. I sweated profusely facing the rice

steamer. Towards the closing of 1944, we heard the Liberation Forces were landing in Leyte, one of the Visayan Islands, and in Lingayen Gulf, farthest north of Luzon. The underground guerrillas kept us informed of the movement of the Liberation Forces, so we could prepare for evacuation. We lived 350 miles south of Lingayen. Our family again crossed the river to go to our hiding place, waiting for more news. There were no more Japanese in our barrio so we felt free to come and go. My sister Lucila and I, with two male cousins, Virgilio Scioco and his brother Pepe, decided to go back to the barrio to pick up what we needed. We made it home but when we got into the boat to cross the river; four Japanese soldiers appeared and commanded us to turn back. The boys paddled the boat back to the shore. We got out and trembled in fear as bayonets pressed our bodies and the soldiers spoke to us in Japanese. With my knowledge of Nipongo, I told them we are friends of the Japanese officers who stayed in our home. They talked to each other and said, "Go." We hurried to the boat praising God for our deliverance and safety.

The Japanese knew their time was numbered and were fierce as ever. We saw American planes dominating the skies while the Japanese were retreating to Manila. When we heard the Liberation Forces were passing through our barrio, we lined up on the side of the road welcoming our Liberators, shouting, "Victory Joe, we are free at last!" The beginning of January of 1945 began the end of the war for us and was recorded to be the bloodiest combat encountered by the Liberation Forces. Heavy fighting continued in Manila while American and British nationals were liberated in Santo Tomas, Bilibid Prison, Los Banos and other places where there were prisoners of war. During this war experience, the Lord was ever present. He prepared us by opening all the opportunities to know Him personally. My brother Anacleto was first to have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and he wanted to be sure that members of the family would make a decision to accept Jesus

Christ as their personal Saviour. We all did. We called on Him and trusted Him to be our Refuge and Shelter.

We claimed His promises in Psalm 91. "He, who dwells in the shelter of the Most High, will abide in the shadow of the Almighty. He will deliver me from the snare of the trapper and from the deadly pestilence." We were spared from snake bites while we were trekking through thick cogon grass, drank polluted water, lived in the most primitive ways to survive during evacuation, had limited food supply and subjected to bites of poisonous insects. Through all of this, we did not contract deadly diseases, except my brother Anacleto who recovered miraculously. "You will be delivered from terror," and God delivered us from terror. The Japanese could have found their way to our evacuation place when we were not prepared to hide but the angels of the Lord took them to different directions. "He will give His Angels charge over you, to guard you in all your ways." The Lord God, who is our Refuge and Shelter, was there to protect every one of us in the family. Almost a million Filipinos died in over four years of Japanese occupation. Almost every family experienced some kind of atrocity inflicted by the Japanese Imperial Forces. My family was spared.

Towards the end of March of 1945, when the mapping operations were almost completed in Manila, I asked my brother Anacleto if I could move back with his family in Manila so I could complete high school. I did not have a scholarship to pay my tuition but when school started in June, the student's tuition fee was funded by a special grant. Once again God's provision in motion. I did not mind the hardship I went through walking back and forth to school almost ten kilometers each way, no pocket money for emergencies, limited "baon" for my noon snack and worn out footwear. My sister-in-law, Eduvigis was so kind; she made sure I had an umbrella to use to protect me from the scorching heat or the downpour of rain, normal weather patterns in the Philippines. My brother then was raising nine children, there were ten, but Fausto died before the war, of spinal tuberculosis. My brother's faith was so great. He was living on a

minimum income as a Pastor with a big family, yet we were never lacking in God's provision for us. My brother had a wall motto hanging in a prominent place of the house that testifies of his witness from the Book of Joshua, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

My brother Anacleto served and loved the Lord with all his strength, with all of his heart and with all of his mind and God blessed him with children and children's children who are serving the Lord. His testimony lives in his sons, Miguel "Mike" and Paul, who are well known in the Christian community in the Philippines and Los Angeles and his grandsons and sons-in-laws who are in the ministry. After three generations of his family in the US and the Philippines, more are dedicating their lives to serving the Lord. Because I became a part of his household, the blessings of the Lord extended to me.

Graduating from high school was a big event. We were the first post war graduates. I needed a white graduation dress but did not have the money to buy it. My sister Lucila kept her extra money in one of the four supporting bamboo posts for our house; she chiseled the post and gave me all she had to buy the dress. I was very happy during graduation marching with that dress, even though it was the cheapest looking among my classmates, yet I wore it with pride, because it was my sister's sacrificial gift to me.

Right after the war, I had two marriage proposals, Pastor Pedro Angkahan and an American GI who had brought his commanding officer to meet my parents to ask for my hand in marriage. It would have been much easier for me to have taken that route. I was of age and my parents would have blessed either one of the marriage proposals which never materialized. I was also influenced by my friend Hilda, not to marry and to pursue a career in nursing. The Lord was behind me with every one of my decisions. He was pasturing me even though I was not aware of it. I decided to enroll in the School of Nursing. There were five hundred applicants from all over the country for admission to St. Luke's Hospital School of Nursing. It was the



best school in the country, run by the Anglican Mission. The tuition was P500 for the first and second year and our senior year was deferred because they assigned us as floor nurses in charge. We lived in the dorm with free meals and were given the best of training.

The selection process was scheduled and my name was selected for interview. I prayed, "Lord, if it is your will that I will become a nurse, put the words in my mouth that they want to hear." There were four interviewers, Miss Lillian Weiser, the Head of the Nursing School, Mrs. Vitaliana Beltran, superintendent, Dr. Flores, Medical Director and the chaplain of the hospital. I was so nervous and could not remember all the questions. However, the one question I remembered so well was when Mrs. Beltran asked me why I wanted to be a nurse. I readily answered and told her I wanted to be a missionary nurse. I was not aware of what a missionary nurse did but living with my brother Anacleto, I had contact with women missionaries who came to our church and taught us the Bible truths. I further told the panel I would like to be in the healing mission.

In a few days I was notified I was one of the thirty selected for the class of 1946-1949. I went home to my parents rejoicing in the great news. Now the question was, "where would we get the money for my tuition?" My father's only source of income was cooking for the rich families who were all Spanish descendants. Fortunately, there were always calls for his culinary expertise. We had enough earned money for the initial tuition. Every time a payment schedule came due, he would be called to cook. Before he would go home, he would stop at the school to make payment on my tuition.

The three year course was finally completed and by the grace of God, I was one of twenty eight nurses who graduated on April 1, 1949. On July 26 of that year, I passed the Board of Nurses Licensing. I was hired by the Philippine National Red Cross as Chapter Nurse in my own province. My duties included teaching Home Nursing, Mother and Baby Care and assisting in

disasters from typhoons, flooding, fire, earthquakes and other calamities that are frequent occurrences in the Philippines. I covered twenty one towns and held annual fund raising events. We maintained good public relations with town officials and school staff to support us in our mission. We also started the Blood Bank and the Junior Red Cross in schools. I worked four years with the Red Cross. During this time I also taught Red Cross courses to most of the high school students in the province as well as teachers, expectant mothers and female adults. My experience with the Red Cross was a preparation for the future work plans God would have in store for me.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **Going to America**

A recruiter came to the Red Cross offering positions for nurses in several places in America. After the war the United States had an Educational Exchange Program offered to foreign graduates in the medical field. Foreign graduates were given five year renewable visas and if they met satisfactory performance, the sponsoring facility could continue sponsorship for visa renewal. Those of us who fell in love could change status by marriage to a US citizen. After almost twenty years, this program was discontinued in 1965.

I was attracted to two hospitals, the Montana Deaconess Hospital in Great Falls, Montana and Mid State Baptist Hospital in Nashville, Tennessee. I wanted to be sure I was accepted into a Christian institution. I sent in my applications to both hospitals, and prayed whichever acceptance I received first, that was where I would go. After a month of waiting, I received a response from the Deaconess Hospital in Great Falls that I was accepted. Within two months I had all the required documents completed and approved. At that time my father was also very ill with pulmonary disease. It could have been cancer but cancer was not known then, and he was a smoker. So, I delayed my departure and of course, he did not know about my plans to go to America. He would not have allowed me to leave. It would have broken his heart. I was the youngest in the family and not married. I was twenty seven years old.

On May 6, 1953, at the age of eighty, my father passed away. I started preparing for my big adventure without any source of where to borrow the money for my airfare. I consulted my brother Anacleto who knew Christian Chinese business people. Mr. Ted Lim was the answer. He needed dollars for his business and he was very happy to oblige. He paid my airfare of \$600 and gave me \$600 for the pocket money allowed to me.

Before I left I returned \$550 to him and kept \$50 for pocket money. I agreed to pay back Mr. Lim \$50 a month in writing. I thought that was a good deal. On June 28, 1953, my flight was booked on Northwest Airlines, my first airplane venture. Dressed in black still mourning the death of my father as was customary in the Philippines for one year after a beloved's death, my whole family was at the Manila Airport to see me off. We were all crying I would be the first in the family to take this big step and the first town nurse to go to America. How could she do it was everybody's question? Would she ever come back? I promised my Red Cross team I would pursue pediatric training and even try to become a pediatrician, if at all possible. That was the desire of my heart. By this time since my conversion earlier, I would always ask God to lead me and give me peace of mind as I was entering an entirely new experience and phase in my life. Many things were going through my mind and the Word of the Lord gently reminded me, "Do not be afraid, I have many people there."

I arrived in Seattle on the same date I had left the Philippines, and still needed to take my last flight to Great Falls. Arriving at midnight, nobody met me at the airport as I did not know the exact time of my arrival. I called the Deaconess Hospital and was advised to call a taxi which I did. I was met by the Night Supervisor, Mrs. Lucille Ille, and she called Rachel Tow, RN, a resident of the Nurses Home, where I would reside with other nurses. I would be the only Filipina living at 1205-6<sup>th</sup> Avenue North; just a stones throw from the Hospital and my present apartment. The next day early in the morning, with little sleep and great excitement, I went to the office of the Director of Nursing, Miss Gihring, and introduced myself. In turn Miss Gihring introduced me to Mrs. Mildred Rinker, the nurse who would give me my orientation. After orientation, I was assigned to the pediatric unit. I was very insecure as I was entirely in a new field of nursing. The still small voice of the Lord assured me, "Do not fear, I have people here."

I was welcomed by the Head Nurse, Margaret Jones, who was a Christian, and the rest of the staff. Learning new procedures was made easy and the doctors were very accommodating. I fondly remember Dr. Joseph Brinkley who took time explaining things to me, hardly expected from a doctor and who would later become pediatrician to my four children. During my year in pediatrics, the Lord put in my life a student nurse from Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada, Katherine Wiens, who was training to be a missionary nurse. We became bosom buddy friends, walking to church, spending time in Gibson Park which was a few blocks from the nurses' residence and sharing our spiritual convictions. We both encouraged each other. Our friendship helped relieve our homesickness. Three months after I arrived, two more Filipino nurses arrived, Lucy Madrigal and Editha Tagulinao. More nurses came the following years, whose names I do not remember. The Filipinas who stayed along with me married the first wave of Filipinos of original "Manongs." Many of us bonded and developed lifelong friendships raising our families in Great Falls and neighboring towns in Montana.

Within the first few months of my arrival to Great Falls, news circulated among the Filipino bachelors of the presence of Filipina nurses. I was featured in the afternoon newspaper, the Great Falls Leader, as the first Filipina Nurse sponsored by the Deaconess Hospital. The paper said I was eager to meet the cowboys and Indians that Montana was well known for in her homeland. There were Filipinos who were already married to Native Americans and to Caucasian women, although, during that time, the miscegenation laws prohibited mixed marriages. Couples would be forced to go to small towns to get married. One of the bachelors who came to visit and invited us to eat in his little studio apartment was Modesto Abarquez Rosales. He cooked pork adobo and grilled trout. The three of us Lucy, Editha and I enjoyed his meals and never refused Modesto's frequent invitations except Editha who felt too good for the working class Filipinos' lower status that she declined future invitations.

Lucy and a succession of new Filipina nurses started going to night clubs to meet airmen from Malmstrom Air Force Base (MAFB) and soon there were airmen courting them. As a result of these encounters six nurses became serious with their relationships and married the airmen after completing their one year stay and through marriage, their status changed. They continued working for the Deaconess while their husbands completed their duties at MAFB. Meanwhile, Modesto was very serious in courting me and I was impressed with him. He told me of his hard life getting started in America. Modesto was the second in the family. His oldest brother Paul came to California in the early 20's with intentions of pursuing an education. After he arrived in America, they never heard from him. His parents, Maximo and Teodora Rosales lived in Vigan, Ilocos Sur, Philippines and sold parcels of land to send Modesto to America where other relatives settled working in farms with hopes that he would be able to locate his brother. Modesto was seventeen years old at the time.

Modesto took the boat the "Empress of Japan" and ended up in the Salinas valley where most Filipinos were located. Along with these early "manongs," Modesto worked many long hours picking vegetables and fruits in season. Modesto's brother, Paul, already had seminary courses in Vigan, but apparently did not have a chance to pursue his dream. Instead, he got involved with gambling which was a past time of the Filipinos and was in a fight fatally wounding a fellow Filipino. Upon his arrival, Modesto later found out the grim truth about his brother and notified his parents. Paul was incarcerated in San Quentin prison. From there in the Philippines, their mother's brother, Mr. Abarquez, who was the appointed Governor of Ilocos Sur, requested the US Commissioner in the Philippines to allow Paul to serve his time in the Philippines, which was granted. By this time, Paul had contracted tuberculosis and was sent back to the Philippines, released to his parents, and died within two years.

It was heartbreaking for Modesto's parents to experience such disgrace to the family. They were expecting Modesto to be a different story. Modesto was equipped with elementary education and also had intentions of higher learning but that did not materialize as well. In 1928 nothing was available to the Filipinos except the lowliest jobs. They had to fight for survival. Filipinos coming to America could only work in farms in California or in canneries in Alaska. Even though the Philippines was a commonwealth of the United States, discrimination was evident, rental properties were off limits to Filipinos.

Modesto moved to Seattle when conditions were not favorable and fell in love with a Filipino lady and thought she was in love with him. Modesto soon found out there was another man involved. From Seattle, he went to Alaska to work in the canneries. It was a wise move for him before he had a chance to repeat a crime of passion, similar to what had happened to his older brother Paul. In 1935, he joined the Filipinos going to Montana to work in the sugar beets in Townsend. He heard of job openings in the Butte mines where there were already Filipinos working. He did not like underground mining and moved in the 40's to Great Falls where jobs were readily available working for the Great Northern Railroad and the Anaconda Smelter Company. Modesto tried the Railroad but working outside maintaining rails in the winter in sub-zero weather was not agreeable to him. He applied at the Smelter and worked as an operator in the zinc plant until he retired in 1971.

Modesto had a very interesting life, a self-made man, respectable and hard working. I also thought he was the best looking of all of the eligible Filipino bachelors. Modesto proposed to me November of 1953. We consulted my family, and at 27 years of age, they agreed I should be married. We also contacted Modesto's parents, whom he had stopped communicating with, much to their disappointment for over 30 years. After years of lost contact, Modesto's parents were made happy to know he had met me and that I would be his



future wife. I had already planned on taking special training in Pediatrics at Cincinnati Children's Hospital. We would wait to be married after my training which would be April of 1955. I completed my year at the Deaconess at the end of June of 1954 and took the train to Cincinnati, Ohio, a new experience for me.

I gained invaluable insights that I would take back to Montana with me and began to understand on a very personal level racist attitudes at that time. An African American nurse's aid who befriended me invited me to her home for dinner and then to a movie at the local theatre. When we arrived at the theatre, I noticed two lines going inside, one for "colored" and one for "whites". She explained to me the segregation law and I proceeded to get in the colored line with her since I was out of place and neither "white" or "colored." I also noticed the whole neighborhood was "colored." My year in Cincinnati with the African American community was one of the richest experiences visiting the Midwest. There was also a Christian nurse who took me to her all white church and here I was once again, out of place. I thought to myself, I am in God's country, wherever I would be, He would be there for me. I meditated on His Word for comfort and peace of mind and heard the voice of the Lord Jesus say, "I will not leave you comfortless, I will send the Spirit of truth to guide you in all your ways."

Through the entire training program, I never had any difficulties that I could not overcome. In the meantime, Modesto called me every day, sent me smoked fish, my favorite dish, and wishing the days were shortened. By the first week of April 1955, I tendered my resignation and took the Greyhound bus back to Montana. By this time I had tried the three means of transportation, plane, train and by bus. Was I fearful of these adventures? Not at all. I had felt the Good Shepherd leading me. After four days of traveling across the country, the long wait was over, Modesto and I would be married.

We went to Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada to get married and to meet Katherine Wien's parents who would be the sponsors to our wedding. Mom and Pop Wiens adopted us into

their family of German Russian immigrants who had left Russia when the Communist were taking over. While we were there, Katherine was already on assignment preparing for her mission in Africa. The Wiens family made all the arrangements for our simple church wedding which began our international family connection that has lasted until now based on Christian faith and love.

We drove to California for our honeymoon to visit Modesto's friends and relatives who were still farm hands in the wide fields of California. He was counting his blessings that he made his way to Montana, and met his twenty nine year old bride at his age of forty seven. When we came back from our honeymoon, we had to take care of changing my status from a visitor's visa to a permanent resident. For the first time, Modesto was also inspired by the thoughts of our marriage and wanted to make provisions that would help our family. While I was in Cincinnati, after over 20 years of living in the United States, Modesto studied to become a US citizen, took the test and passed the exam. What a blessing, I was also hired back at the Deaconess in the pediatric department with the same staff.

In the 1950's the Immigration Law required a resident alien to return to his/her country of origin before permanent resident status could be acquired. The petition of my husband was already approved and I needed to return to the Philippines just as a matter of re-entry as a permanent resident. I went home October of 1955, six months pregnant with our first son Timothy. I was able to meet Modesto's parents Maximo and Teodora Rosales, brothers Bonifacio and Manuel Rosales and sister Soccoro Rosales Fernandez. Brothers Igmidio and Paul were deceased. It was almost a whole day of travel from my hometown to Vigan by train and by bus. I was glad my brother Amado was able to accompany me. That was the first and the last time for me to be with Modesto's parents who were very happy to meet me. They were advanced in years and it was not possible for Modesto to go home. It broke their hearts never to

see their son again. I came back to Montana after a month and resumed working.

Our first born, Timothy Paul, was born on January 17, 1956. Tim, the first pure pinoy born in Great Falls was welcomed by the few Filipinos in the community. What a blessed event. Twelve of them volunteered to be godfathers and godmothers on his dedication day at the First Baptist Church followed by a party in our little house. A week later we celebrated with food, music and dancing in the old Carpenter's Hall hosted by Tim's godparents who had invited all their friends in the community. With the Filipino culture and tradition, each of the children had a major celebration on their dedication day. We had Filipino doctors and nurses coming and going who offered to be godparents but as time passed, we lost contact. Instead, most of the old timer Filipinos who came to the US about the same time as Modesto in the 1920's became the children's godparents and remained faithful remembering their birthdays and special holidays.

Over the next ten years more Filipino Nurses continued to arrive in Great Falls under the Exchange Program in both Great Falls hospitals, the Deaconess and Columbus. One of them was Bersabe Guban, who later married, Ignacio Jasmine. She became my best friend and was Timothy's godmother and helped me with babysitting Tim when I went back to work. Childcare was also provided by a young Filipino girl, Jesse Corsino, who did not make it through the probationary period. Jesse needed a place to stay so it was timely for us to take her in and she returned the favor and helped us with our baby. We did not have an extended family of relatives to help us out but God was there to meet our needs.

When I returned to work there was no opening in pediatrics. The orthopedic department needed an afternoon nurse which was the best shift for me. April of 1956, marked the beginning of my almost thirty two years of being an orthopedic nurse, from staff to Assistant Head Nurse. During these years of raising my family many interesting events happened in our lives

and the Lord was with me through it all. Exactly a year after our first child, we welcomed our daughter and named her after her two grandmothers, Carmen and Teodora. After two months of maternity leave, I was back to work. It seemed just when we needed help, somebody came to the rescue. When the young Filipino nurse Jesse Corsino had left, a relative from the Philippines a medical doctor, Diosdada Danganan Lacanilao, came for her residency in Internal Medicine. Doc Dading lived with us which helped us out tremendously. I could arrange my schedule so one of us, Doc Dading, Modesto or I was with the babies. My friend Bersabe was also available.

After two years, Mark Stephen, was born on September 8, 1959. We were really busy taking care of our babies and holding full time jobs. We never complained as the Lord blessed us with healthy children. After two years on October 25, 1961, our youngest was born, Modesto Abarquez, JR. His Dad wanted him to carry his name. Modesto and I also decided his birth would end the birthing process and was also a disappointment to my daughter, Carmen, who had looked forward to having a baby sister. When I called her from the hospital, she asked if she had a sister. I told her she had a baby brother. She accepted him when we brought him home.

In the 1950's we also had foreign doctors from India and China living in Great Falls. One day the Hindu and Filipino doctors decided to go out for lunch in one of the restaurants downtown. They were asked to leave and were told they served whites only. It was such a humiliating experience for them. I regretted not having the opportunity to have warned and/or shared with them what had happened to Modesto and me. I had asked Modesto to take me to a restaurant to eat. He took me to the cheapest looking establishment in the lower south side. We sat quietly waiting for somebody to take our order. Instead a man came and accused us of stealing the salt and pepper shakers. We left the place, knowing that was their way of chasing us out of the restaurant. In later years, my children always wondered why we as a family would seldom go out to

eat. Although we never spoke about it again, I do believe Modesto shared my same thoughts of never wanting our children subjected to this type of hostility.

I gathered then that the early Filipino residents were not welcomed in Montana. Fortunately, our presence in both Hospitals was appreciated because of exceptional performance and pride in our jobs, whether it was in the kitchen, exemplified by Benny Astor and Robert Coronel, long time employees of the Deaconess, and Paul Barrozo, long time chef of the Columbus. The men who worked for the Railroad and Smelter, including Modesto, were always remembered by their white co-workers as hard working and respectable. This included the foreign doctors, from the Philippines, India and China, and the many nurses who had come under the exchange program.

Because of the pressure of full time jobs and raising children, our church life was neglected. I managed to take the children to Sunday school but I did not participate. Pastor Leland Lawrence had met me at the hospital and was instrumental inviting me to his church, First Baptist. I was faithful in teaching our children bible stories and prayers at home. Modesto only had every sixth weekend off and would rather go fishing or play cards with his friends. I was also the only minority in the church and I felt out of place. One of the Sunday school teachers who made a big impact in my children's lives was Marie Ida Knutson. Carmen was in her class. When the children were not in Sunday school, she called the next day. She followed Carmen's progress in school. Carmen was one of Marie's favorite students and Miss Knutson was so pleased that before Carmen had entered grade school, Carmen had memorized the books of the Old and New Testament and could recite them verbatim. She gifted Carmen with a sizable amount when she went to college. During this time, Marie had bonded with me also. She bought concert tickets for both of us. I took her to social events and went grocery shopping for her. She trusted me like an old friend. Although retired for several years, Marie worked at the Charles M. Russell art studio part time.

It was a challenge for them growing up. Our first home was on the west side, 616 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue S.W. We bought it for \$5,500 with a \$50 monthly mortgage from an estate. It had only four rooms on half a lot. During the first year living in our little home, the Filipinos who were still in their prime in their forties and fifties were all handy in construction and helped Modesto build a big additional room. Within three years, we had three small bedrooms for our growing family. The children were happy in the neighborhood with little children around to play with. One day, five year old Carmen was playing with Robin and noticed she was different from her. She asked me, "Mommy, how come Robin has blue eyes and blond hair and I don't?" I then explained to her that God created us all different and loves us all, just like the flowers in the garden, all beautiful in different colors. I taught them the song, "Jesus Loves the Little Children, All the Children of the World," and this made more meaning to her.

From the time they could understand I emphasized to them about the environment we lived in and that kids would tease them because of the color of their skin. My reminder to them was 'be the best they can be' stay away from kids who initiated trouble, stay in school and that they would be as good as the next person or better. I explained to them when I realized that the children were being taunted with racial epithets to tell the other kids who were taunting them that they were Filipinos. We had a globe in our little house and I pointed to them, where we were living in Montana and showed them the vast ocean colored blue on the globe that separated us from where their father and I came from. I also told them this is where your relatives live. Since Modesto and I had no family in the United States, the children had no experience of what it was like to have aunts, uncles, cousins and grandparents nearby.

In 1965, we needed to move into a bigger place to accommodate the needs of our growing children. We contacted a realtor and he took us to the old section of town that did not impress us. One realtor, I will not forget, was very helpful and

showed us the new housing development, Riverview, located across the Missouri River which cuts through the City of Great Falls. I fell in love immediately with the second house he showed us, the only brick house on the block. This was it, Lord, I thought, thank you, for \$16,500, and a \$600 down payment, we could certainly afford that. We went to the Westside Bank and applied for a HUD loan. In a month, we were moving into our new home address, 305 Riverview 7 West. We were the first minority family in the Riverview area. Tim, Carmen and Mark transferred from Franklin Elementary to Riverview Elementary School. The Principal was very kind to welcome them and took them to each classroom to introduce them. They were very good students and did not have problems adjusting.

When the children entered Junior High bigger kids started picking a fight with Tim and kids in our own neighborhood started harassing all four of them. Tim would come home with a bloody nose or a black eye. He learned to fight back and Carmen had her share, too, fighting back when she was taunted with racial slurs. An African American Air Force family, the Stokes, moved in across from us with children about the same age as ours. With the two minorities, reinforcing each other, nobody dared to pick a fight with them again.

In 1971, Modesto retired from the Smelter after completing twenty years. He was enjoying his retirement. We always had plenty of fish in the freezer and his love of playing cards at the Senior Center was satisfied. In the spring of 1972, he had a heart attack. He recovered from it. We planned on going to the Philippines in the spring of 1975. The children were all in their teens. Our oldest son Timothy gave us a big surprise. He was just completing his junior year in high school when he asked us if he could marry his girlfriend Barbara Nett. The thought of being grandparents brought mixed emotions. We gave our full support. Tim and Barb had a beautiful wedding at Fairview Baptist Church and a reception at the Holiday Inn. My two nieces, Arsenia Roque and Lina Lacanilao, and my daughter Carmen, prepared and cooked a 6 course Oriental

feast for over 200 guests. Barb and Tim completed High School in June of 1974 with their son, Jason, in the audience.

Our first grandson Jason Paul was born December 30, 1973, and we could not have been more ecstatic. What a joy to be grandparents. Tim was still determined to finish college. He enrolled at the University of Montana in Missoula but the pressure of a young family made it difficult to be working and studying. He had to give up college and worked full time at Mountain Bell. Barb and Tim had another son, Joshua Michael. My two grandsons went through many struggles in their young lives and growing up was not easy. The good news is they are both doing well, worked hard to finish college and have given me five great grandchildren. From Jason and Dakota are Adelia, Isaiah and Thea. From Joshua and Sierra are Ambria and Mikaeo. Tim retired from Qwest after 32 years of service, young enough to take on another job as Sales Manager for Harley Davidson in Missoula and have fun, too, with his present wife, Katherine Olson.

The plan of going to the Philippines was carried out in February of 1975; the children were allowed to be out of school provided they documented their travel. Modesto, Carmen, Mark, Modesto JR and I went with Brother Tony, from California joining us. It was a very heartwarming reunion for all the families. It was Modesto's first trip back after forty years. The children's first trip to see my mother was in June of 1963 when they were aged two to seven years old. As I look back I wondered how I was able to manage to make the trip with four children. My mother was very happy to see her grandchildren, and sadly that was the last time for me to see her. She passed away in December of 1968 hoping to her last breath she would see me but it never happened. I could not leave the children. One wondered how we were able to finance the family trip in 1975. Fortunately, the Deaconess Hospital implemented a pension plan for the employees which could be drawn for emergency needs. By 1975, I had saved over \$10,000 which was good enough for our expense. We considered this an



emergency trip due to Modesto's medical condition. Every arrangement was working in our favor. As for the 1963 trip with the children, that too, was made possible by "fly now and pay later". We were also racing with time due to my aging mother's physical condition. I have built my faith in Jesus Christ. Whatever I have asked the Father in His name, He has answered me according to His will.

In the spring of 1975 Carmen graduated from CMR High School and received a scholarship to study at St. Olaf College in Minnesota. She enrolled that fall, completed the first semester and decided to return to Montana. She took time off and decided to enroll at the University of Montana in Missoula and eventually graduated with a degree in psychology. She continued to pursue a masters degree in Education at Western Montana College in Dillon, Montana. She wanted to spread her wings and California was the place in her mind after bicycling to California the previous summer with two of her friends. Carmen applied for a position as a Student Affairs Officer at the University of California, Berkeley, and was accepted out of many applicants. She held that job for four years, and then needed a change; she worked for the San Francisco Housing Authority for several years managing the waiting lists for public housing and Section 8.

For the past seven years Carmen has been earning a living working as an Executive Assistant first at Merrill Lynch until her boss moved to New York and now for Deutsche Bank. In spite of my daughter's many achievements, I did not realize the depth of her emotional struggles that had been controlling her life until now including a gambling addiction these last five years that cost her her home in Las Vegas. As a minority she felt insecure and that her achievements were never good enough. As a result she was not happy. I praise the Lord that life is now brighter for her through intercessory prayers and she continues to live one day at a time regaining her life again. I always remind her Jesus will give her the desires of her heart and what was destroyed by the locusts will increase tenfold if

she puts her trust back in Jesus and surrenders completely to His will in her life.

Tim, Carmen and Mark enjoyed their High School days at Charles Marion Russell (CMR). They belonged to the Drama Club, the Choir, the Band and Orchestra. They had friends to hang out with. Mark graduated from CMR in 1977. He did not have any desire to go to College. He met Lori in Missoula while visiting his brother Tim and it must have been love at first sight. In April of 1978, they decided to get married. They had a beautiful wedding at First Baptist Church with a reception at the church fellowship hall. They were young and responsible. Mark took auto mechanic courses, worked part time and lived in a rented house. He applied at the telephone company, took a test and was hired by US West in 1980. He took all the technical training offered and is very well qualified in his field. He works for Nemont Telephone based in Billings in a supervisory position. Mark and Lori are active in church and recently celebrated their 30th wedding anniversary. They have two children, Jonathan and Kristina. Jonathan is a father to Jacob, Sophia Juanita and newborn Tripp. Jonathan and Joni live in Eureka, California. Kristina completed computer programming courses and works for Federal Express in Billings, Montana.

My youngest, Modesto JR, graduated from CMR in June of 1980. He went to the University of Great Falls for one year then to the University of Montana in Missoula, graduating in 1985 with a degree in Computer Science. He worked as an instructor at the Fort Belknap Community College for two years setting up their Computer Program classes. He came back to Great Falls hoping to get a job but no job opened up for him. He opened Rosie's Restaurant in downtown Great Falls specializing in pinoy dishes and special JR Hamburgers. The business only lasted for six month. He decided to study Nursing at Northern Montana College in Havre and met Judy Settera also in his nursing class. In June of 1990, they got married and both started a career in Nursing. They are still employed at Benefis Healthcare. They have three children; Samantha

married to Joshua Karr, Modesto Abarquez III (Jay) and Anthony Raymond and grandchildren Madison and Abigail.

I praise the Lord. My children are blessed with good jobs and excellent health and my grandchildren and great grandchildren as well are healthy and beautiful. Was it always perfect raising the family, not by any means. They all went through what the world was offering, to participate in temporary pleasure. It could have been from wanting to be accepted and to make friends. I instilled in them that God is love and they are loved by one who gives many chances. We love them, although we were not perfect parents, we did the best within our power to give them what was not available to us. I always reminded them of the greatness of America and the opportunities for all who seek. Being born in America is a part of their blessing. Psalm 33:12 says, "Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord; and the people whom He has chosen for his own inheritance." My children will continue to prosper if they hold dear their spiritual heritage.

I will back track on the years of my working days and the miracles that God had shown me. Buying our home in Riverview was a miracle. For over 40 years, it became a hospitality house for everyone who needed to sleep over or a meal. We held weekly Interfaith Bible studies, prayer and worship services after I retired for almost ten years. We witnessed healing as we prayed for those who needed it. Taking care of my patients was a ministry to me. I asked the Lord for guidance in all the aspects of nursing care, a special discernment when something more than the usual needed attention. I had good relationships with the doctors, department heads and my co-workers that everything went well when I was in charge. It gave me great happiness coming to work knowing my patients looked forward to me taking care of them.

I mentioned earlier of Modesto having a heart attack. In the spring of 1977, he had a stroke. I took sometime off after his month of Rehab to take care of him at home, then worked part time. He was doing fairly well with paralysis on his left side for

about three years. When I went to work in the afternoon, I prayed that nothing was going to happen while I was not around. In July of 1980, I took my vacation. After our evening repast, he was ready to go to bed, and wished I did not have to go to work the following day. On that early morning of July 12, I fixed breakfast for him and helped him sit up. While he was eating, I noticed a change in his countenance and rubbing his right arm. I told him to ask God for mercy and he did. Carmen called the ambulance and Modesto was rushed to the Hospital. He never regained consciousness but his last words were, "Have mercy upon me God." He passed away that night.

I knew without a doubt his spirit was ushered into the presence of the Lord. The repentant thief asked Jesus to remember him when He is in Paradise and Jesus said to him, "Today you will be with me in Paradise." We have a merciful God, He had answered my prayers, and that if it were possible, Modesto would be around to celebrate our 25<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary on April 21, 1980 and we did. It was a celebration of thanksgiving and testimonies and music performed by the children and by the extended families from Lethbridge, Canada. Modesto's desire was to see his youngest son finish high school and he did that June of 1980. All these requests were granted before Modesto's earthly journey had ended. His death brought a celebration of his life attended by all the family and friends who loved him.

I am being reminded of God's presence in watching over me, even though I was not aware of it. I was coming home from work about midnight driving the 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue North one way street when I noticed a speeding car closing in on me. I thought for sure the driver of the car would hit me and I would crash into a tree. Instead, he swerved to avoid me and he crashed into a tree. Police cars and an ambulance came and took hours to extricate him from his car. The next day I was one of the nurses who took care of him. Several times in the worst winter driving conditions, my car would skid and would stop right before falling into a ditch and/or avoid a head on collision. Were the angels

watching over me? Definitely they were and my Good Shepherd right there beside me in all of these instances.

In 1968 Modesto was on strike at the Smelter. It was taking long to settle, so we decided to drive to Michigan to attend my niece Magdalena's wedding in April of 1968. From Michigan we went through the eastern states, New York, Washington D.C., Pennsylvania and took time to visit Brother William Dye in Columbus, Ohio. He was one of the Christian soldiers who came to our church in the Philippines during Liberation and we became good friends. Crossing the United States continent was a big adventure and a challenge for one driver, Modesto. Two months later, with Modesto still on strike, we proceeded to California. When we were one town away from our final destination, Stockton, a female driver entered an intersection. The car we were following crashed into hers and we crashed into the car we were following. I was sitting in the back seat with the two children and I sustained a broken left leg. The car was totaled. It was only by God's mercy that we were spared from fatal injuries since none of us were wearing seat belts. I was hospitalized in a small town near Auburn, California. My brother Tony from Stockton took us to his place and as soon as I could travel, we headed back to Great Falls in his car. Modesto and Timothy took the bus. I was off from work for six months rehabilitating from the injury. How did we manage with Modesto and I both not working? I had accident insurance to pay the house mortgage of \$150 a month, sick leave pay that helped pay our other expenses and food stamps. I went back to work after six months sooner than Modesto. The strike lasted for almost a year. Those were the lean years but God was faithful providing our needs. I can praise the Lord in many ways. I know events in our lives of pain, disappointment and loss personally and professionally can be very difficult to overcome. However, God never forsakes us of his presence, love and comfort even in our darkest moments.

In 1984, I was having an addition built on to the house and I came home from work about midnight. My dog Kitches

got excited meeting me at the door and I tripped falling very hard on the concrete floor. My right knee bent side ways and immediate swelling and pain was evident. I called an ambulance to take me to the hospital and an x-ray was taken. The next day I saw Dr. Robert Chambers who was very concerned by what he saw. He diagnosed it to be osteochondroma, a very rare tumor of the cartilage. A biopsy was sent to Mayo Clinic which confirmed the diagnosis. I always had knee pain but thought it was arthritis so I took aspirin for pain. There was a lot of bleeding from the injury. As soon as the knee was ready, the tumor was taken out. I was informed if it were not discovered within six months, it would have turned malignant. I went back to work when I was ready but my knee was never better. I continued to have pain.

My almost thirty years of service as an Orthopedic Nurse was the most rewarding experience in my life and I felt I had fulfilled my desire of being a missionary nurse right at the Deaconess Hospital where the Lord assigned me to be. I finally retired December 7, 1987 the date chosen to remember the bombing of Pearl Harbor and the beginning of World War II in the Philippines. As I mentioned before, I was the first in the family to venture beyond our borders. There was so much opportunity for those who wanted to improve their future which would never have been possible in the homeland. In 1960, my goddaughter Magdalena, daughter of Brother Tony, expressed her desire to come to America as a student to study Medical Technology. She was a pharmacy graduate. The Deaconess Hospital just started their program and Magdalena and her friend Teresita Danganan, a medical student, both applied and were accepted. Magdalena moved to Michigan after she completed her training and worked for Blodgett Memorial Hospital, Traverse City. She continued to work there, met her husband and raised a family.

In 1971, in the Philippines, my brother Bernardo passed away at 50 years old and left his widow Leonila, with four of the six children still needing to finish high school and college. Their

eldest daughter, Arsenia, a teacher was just married to Melham Roque. Ebenezer (Ben) had not quite finished college and was already married with a baby. My brother Ben's death left the family economically destitute. I decided to help the family by sponsoring Ben to immigrate to the United States under the 6<sup>th</sup> preference only to find out it would take at least ten years before he could get a visa. Canada was open to immigrants as long as they had sponsors. I asked the Wiens Family if they could help. Their son, Frank Wiens, was an administrator of a Coaldale Hospital and was willing to sponsor Ben. Within six months he came in October of 1971 and his wife, Lina dela Cruz with their two year old daughter, Katherine, arriving before the end of the year to join him. The rest is history. To date, there are about sixty people living in Lethbridge originating from the Lacanilaos, Roquez and dela Cruz. There are more Lacanilaos who immigrated to California from our branch of the Family and others are scattered in other areas of the continent. The blessing of the Lord continues to multiply. Everyone is working to the best of their capabilities, sharing their responsibilities to society as good citizens of the countries they adopted.

## EARLY DAYS



Capalangan 1939



Hilda and I at  
14 years old



Hilda and I with Filipino Soldier



Picture with US soldier  
after liberation with  
church people towards  
the end of 1944





High School Graduation, April  
1946, Arellano University High  
School Department



Juanita as a Red Cross Nurse



St. Luke's Graduating Class of 1949



1949 Graduation Day Family Portrait (Anacleto extreme left)



Lacanilao Reunion, Capalangan Elementary School, Apalit, Pampanga, 1 January 1953







Cincinnati, Ohio



Winter in Great Falls in front of  
Deaconess Hospital



Our Wedding Day, April 21, 1955 with the Wiens





Vigan Ilocos Sur with Modesto's  
Family, Maximo and Teodora  
Rosales, October 1955



Our First Home, 616 4th Avenue SW, Great Falls, Montana



The Children's Godparents - Ninangs  
and Ninongs, March 1957



Meeting Mike Lacanilao, Great  
Falls, MT, June 1962



Our first passport picture 1962

JANUARY 1975



My sisters Lucila and Patricia and  
brothers Amado and Antonio "Tony"



Modesto returns after 40 years with sister Soccoro and brothers  
Bonifacio and Manuel



**BEGINNING OF MINISTRY IN CAPALANGAN,  
APALIT, PAMPANGA**



1974 Community Church, First "Born Again" Congregation in Capalangan, Pastored by Efren Villanueva followed by Pastor René Bernardo



Community Christian Church  
built in 1988, In memory  
of Marie Ida Knutson, now  
Christ Centered Christian  
Church (CCCC)



Inauguration of Christ  
Centered Christian Church  
(CCCC), September of 1988





Christ Centered Community Church (CCCC) in worship service



CCCC Children's Ministry



Christ Chosen Church, Philippines, Dedicated November 2003, Rene Bernardo, Pastor, Malolos, Bulacan



Brethren in Christ Christian Ministry, Mother Church, aka Ana Hatler Memorial, 1993





Ribbon cutting ceremony, Brethren in Christ Christian Ministry, Pulitan Bulacan, Philippines, March 2008

## **MEDICAL MISSION AND RECIPIENTS OF HELPING HANDS**



Ben Lacanilao examining patient w/gastric problems



Dr. Terry removing a tumor



Odie - disabled





Noming and wife



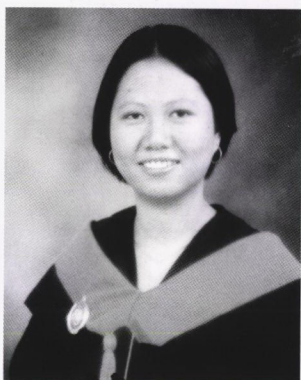
Sisa and blind sister



Reigel and Maricel, x-ray technician and nursing graduates



Rizza, graduate of nursing



Karen, computer science graduate



Vangie, graduate of nursing



Rizal Peralta, May 2007  
Ongoing corrective restorative  
surgeries by the Mabuhay Foundation,  
including speech therapy. Incidental  
expenses provided by the Lacanilao  
Family and partners of Helping Hands

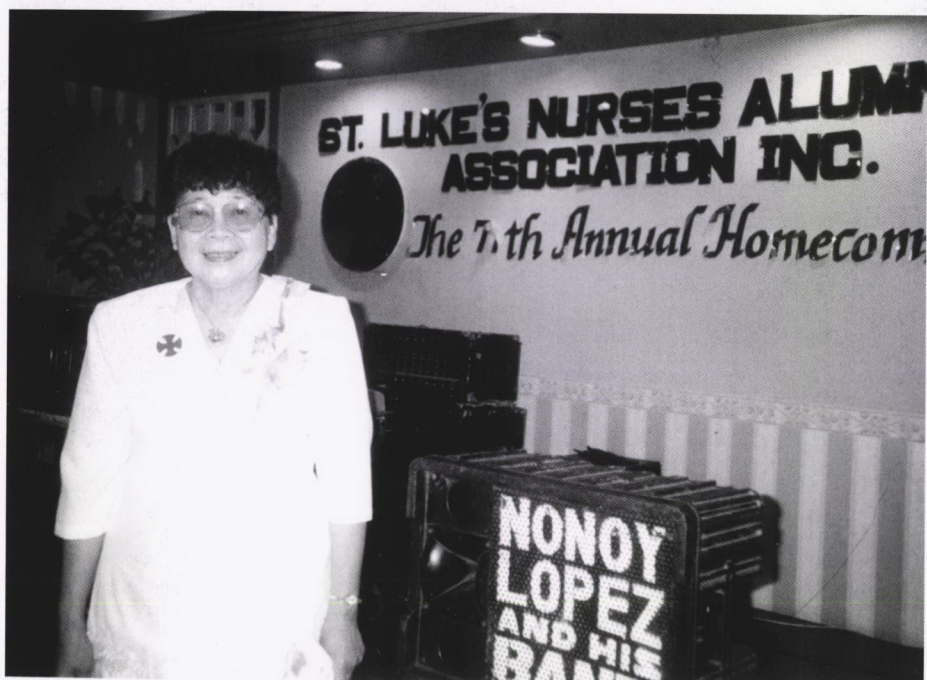


Rizal and I, March 2008





Trip to Corregidor with Nursing Class of 1949



50 Year Nursing Class Reunion, October 1999



The "49ers"



My sister, Lucila and I





Francis Hatler and I shortly after our wedding in 1993

### **BADJAO MINISTRY**



Badjao Children



Badjao Ministry with Pastors Edwin and Perla, March 2008



Distributing food and clothing, March 2008





Life After the bridge





Worship and Multi-Purpose Center

## HOSPITAL TIME SERVING WITH GREAT REWARD



New building - from 1200 6th Avenue South to  
2500 10th Avenue South





Patient in traction



Patti Davidson, Orthopedics Head Nurse and I,  
Assistant Head Nurse



Patient recovery

My Benefactor,  
Marie Ida Knutson



30 Year Recognition Award with Hospital Administrator





Tim, Carmen, Mark and JR



First Two Grandchildren, Jason and Joshua

## 50TH YEAR CELEBRATION COMING TO AMERICA



Marion Russell, Katherine Wiens, Margaret Jones and Barbara Urqhart.  
First nurses I met in June of 1953 - we are still friends



50 year celebration

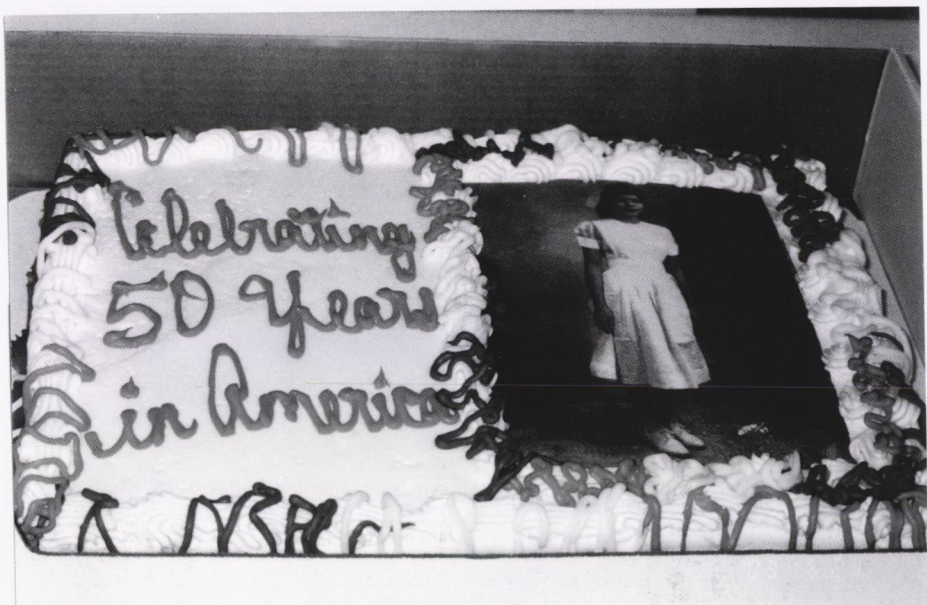




Recipient of 1999 YWCA Award for Volunteerism



Family Time



50 year celebration



305 Riverview 7 West, Great Falls, MT,  
Our Family Home 1965-2005



## **CHAPTER IV**

### **Retirement Activities**

After Modesto passed away in July of 1980, I was able to go back to work full time. In July of 1986, my spiritual mother, Marie Knutson, went to be with her Lord after being in the Nursing Home for a year. Before she became ill, she appointed me as her trustee and placed her trust in me totally, telling her older brothers from Oregon, I was her angel sent from heaven and that she loved me unconditionally. I would be with Marie during her last days of her earthly journey. I thank the Lord for that privilege of being Marie's care taker, a blessing from the Lord for Marie's faithfulness and devoted stewardship in Christian ministries. I believe it was God's divine intervention that placed both of us in each other's lives and this blessing would help us both fulfill the desires of our hearts to serve the Lord. Marie had made it in her trust to remember those she believed in that would carry on the Great Commission. Little did I know I would be God's instrument in fulfilling several of my dreams in my younger years as well, through Marie's legacy.

By divine intervention, church planting was started through the financial legacy of my friend, Marie Knutson. Many more miracles happened in this time period that I felt committed to in my earlier vision of being a missionary nurse, only being a nurse had already been realized. This time as I was planning to retire, it would be more of what the Lord was leading me to and here now, at the third phase of my life, beginning with my retirement at age 62, to the present. After my retirement in 1987, I had planned to get involved in visiting shut-ins and to participate more in church activities. I had already started helping orphan relatives to go to school and Bible students wanting to pursue their training to help with church evangelism.

Let me take you back to the vision I had in my heart during my earlier trip to the Philippines in 1963 with the children.

My brother Anacleto held services in the village in one of the houses with three families including ours, the Lacanilaos. These services were fruits of the American missionary efforts continued by my brother, Anacleto. My brother and the fellowship of believers were hoping to build a small church as more would come to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. They bought hollow blocks, but as time passed, the blocks just laid there crumbling. I thought to myself, someday I will help build a church in my village. I never gave it another thought for almost another twenty years.

My brother was pastoring a church in Manila and the work in the village eventually stopped. My brother went with the Lord in 1968 with his mission faithfully accomplished. In 1974, Pastor Efren Villanueva, one of Brother Anacleto's foster sons, and his wife Connie, just fresh from Bible School, took the missionary challenge by taking on the work in our village, Capalangan. They stayed in our old family home and held services there. The widow of brother Anacleto, Eduvigis, and Susan Bacani helped by holding home Bible studies. They incorporated the church with 14 members and named it "Sambahan Sa Nayon" or Community Church. Efren was born and raised in the barrio and the ministry did not grow. Also, persecutions of born again Christians continued. There seemed to be truth in "a prophet has no honor in his own country." Efren moved to another barrio and there were more positive responses there. Another young couple had just graduated from Bible School, Pastor Reynaldo and his wife May, started holding Bible studies in a different house under the banner of the Community Church. More families became interested and they had to relocate. The members rented a small lot and put up a corrugated tin roof supported by bamboo posts without siding. They held their services in this facility subject to the elements of rain and typhoon and occasional stone throwing from spiritual foes.

When I went home in 1982 and saw this situation, the burning desire of helping build a church was rekindled within

me. How could I help build a church when I had only limited means in helping the needy students? The born again Christians had been praying for a place of worship for many years because of the growing number of believers. There were young people who came in spite of parental restrictions. Funding a church was next to impossible with the poorest of the poor but they held on to their faith. With God nothing is impossible. The Lord had already planned on what was going to happen. Marie's friendship to me was a divine plan. She would be God's instrument through me to accomplish this great plan of reaching the lost in my country.

In September of 1988, the fulfillment of God's plan for these special people was realized. The first evangelical Christian church and a pastoral house was built and dedicated in memory of Marie I. Knutson, for the Glory of God. Marie supported missions in her lifetime. Simultaneously, the church that Pastor Efren was pastoring was also helped through Marie's funds. The church was named Capalangan Community Christian Church (CCCC), Bible based and Baptist in doctrine. The church ministry expanded to a children's ministry where they held backyard weekend Bible school to reach the children who could not make it to church. Before her death, Marie's estate was pre-designated to ministries she supported during her lifetime which included the Moody Bible Institute, Wycliffe Associates and the American Bible Society and whatever was left was designated to me for my old age security for which I was eternally grateful and humbled. However, the Lord had blessed me already and continues to see that I do not lack anything. For me, it was divine grace that her entire estate would be used for God's work and for His honor and glory to carry on the Great Commission which was important to Marie and to me.

We extended the needs to the community by building a facility for Christian groups from other religious persuasions which shared a basic doctrine and faith through Jesus Christ. We had youth groups from the Catholic Church who also joined

the Bible studies. The goal was to tear down denominational barriers and provide a sanctuary where all Christ believing Christians could worship in unity praising the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. The facility also offers a library open to students and those wanting to broaden their scope of learning in various fields. Books were donated by friends from America. The Caplangan Fellowship Hall is also a place for medical missions, distributing relief in disasters and holding educational and vocational workshops for the community. After almost twenty years, congenial relationships and tolerance to various groups is more evident.

Since my retirement, my trips to the Philippines have been a personal ministry speaking in churches, participating in personal evangelism and encouraging and exhorting the Pastors and Christian workers whose work is extending to outlying areas. During one of my trips in 1991, the workers had started a Bible study in a remote rural area with four families holding service in one of the homes. The believers felt if they had a chapel, more folks would be interested to attend and the fellowship would be the only evangelical one in the area. Without financial resources, they prayed about buying an available lot trusting their faith that God would provide the lot. They talked to the man who owned the lot and the man gave his word he would sell it to them. The dominant religious group found out it was being sold to the born again group and they offered the man double the asking price. The owner told them, he had a dream that he already sold the lot to the born again group which meant it was God's message to him, not to change his decision. The elders of the group approached me if I could help. It just so happened, my nephew Henry from Georgia, just sold his property in the Philippines. I called him if he could advance the amount needed and I would pay him when I returned to America. So, he did, and the lot was bought. It was God's perfect timing as the price of lots were going up and very few were available. This is again proof when we let God take charge of our undertakings, He will lead the way to fit His divine



plan. The next prayer request was for a church building which I could sense was not quite time yet.

Before I made this trip in 1991, I was already making arrangements to open my personal ministry to involve families and friends who have been blessed living in America and Canada to share to the less fortunate in the homeland. There is so much need in that part of the world. I know we cannot solve all the problems but God only requires that we make of the best with what we have. Helping Hands International was organized and approved by the Secretary of the State of Montana in March of 1992. The purpose of which is to receive funds, administer funds, to conduct, operate and engage in building churches, support ministers and Christian workers, support Bible students, provide basic education for orphans, provide scholarships for indigent college students and to supply nutritious meals to the local school to feed pupils who attend school without breakfast. In the last 15 years of operation with limited funds, we have accomplished many of our goals. Eight Bible students completed their training and are pastoring churches and are involved in Christian service. Nine students were helped from high school to college and are now gainfully employed supporting their families. The graduated students were instructed to help somebody else in need when they are able to. There are three students at present in college being helped. Our ministry embraced 30 of the most indigent in the village. Presently only two of the original are left, the others have died and we continue our outreach daily to new recipients.

At present, the mother church, Marie I. Knutson Memorial changed its name to Christ Centered Community Church (CCCC) and is undertaking the ministry to the Badjao, a displaced tribe from Mindanao. The Badjao ended up in Luzon and are animist, ancestor worshipers, who fled from their island after being terrorized by the Abu Sayaff who are involved in kidnappings and killings. About fifty families of Badjao are located in our town and many others in two neighboring provinces. When I was home in 2002, the Church was already



ministering to their spiritual and physical needs. They were living under the bridge, lying on cartons. Their livelihood is begging in the marketplace. When I came back to Great Falls and presented my trip to my ministry partners, they responded immediately. Through the efforts of my longtime Helping Hands partners, and friends George and Nita Tyner, we were able to send blankets, sheets and clothing and donated funds to build them nipa huts and a water pump. Helping Hands has been providing monthly stipends for their basic needs. The workers, Pastors Edwin and Perla, have been working with government agencies to register the Badjao as citizens of the country so their children can attend public schools. The ministry also conducts literacy classes for the young people, and the children are being prepared for school. Because of the ongoing ministry to their spiritual and physical needs, most of the adults have accepted Jesus Christ as their personal Savior and were baptized. The new Believers now meet in their bamboo chapel under the bridge. The Pastors are negotiating with the town government to grant them this small area of land for their permanent location.

The mother church has continued to expand and a change in the church leadership followed. Pastor Bernardo, after 15 years at the mother church, needed a change as well. He moved to a neighboring province in the town of Malolos. His father-in-law bought a house and let them live there. Two families followed him and they started meeting for church service in their home. They were in a new subdivision and would be starting over pioneering for a new church. By the time I went on my personal ministry in 1997, they were meeting in their garage and more people were getting interested. They had to rent a space in a club house owned by a new convert. Within two years more people were coming to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ, this included many young people. The rented place was running out of space for the people coming to hear the good news of salvation. They presented to me the need for a building. At this time there were no funds for a church

building. They had been praying for a building but only God could meet the impossible. In my newsletter to the ministry partners, hearts were moved, but it took two years to raise the funds to buy the lot they were interested in. The first opportunity was very high priced and instigated the members to research different locations. The chosen lot proved to be in a far better location and the price was right for the money at hand. In the spring of 2002, the lot was purchased.

The Pastor and the elders rejoiced that God's timing was imminent for the building. They set up a prayer hut in the middle of the lot and took turns around the clock on a prayer vigil. In the meantime, in Montana, I was awakened in my sleep several nights in a row on the matter of the need for a church building in Malolos. It was like the Spirit of the Lord stirring my spirit to take action. I said, Lord, I do not have a personal account in the bank, but what I have, is my house that is willed to my children, with the condition that ten per cent of its sale would be donated to any church building if it had not been built upon my demise. I had thought often about our Riverview home and even selling it at this time since I have been living on bonus time. Ten years ago, I was diagnosed to have a totally block right carotid artery where surgical intervention was not an option with high blood pressure and type II diabetes. My family medical history of three brothers, a sister, four young nephews in their twenties and thirties, all dying of strokes and sudden heart attacks had made me a very vulnerable and fragile candidate for any surgical intervention.

It is by God's mercy that He continues to keep me well preserved and sustained and that I was able to fulfill the plan He had for me. That morning, I called Pastor Bernardo and asked how much it would cost to build the church and he said twenty thousand dollars. I told him I could borrow ten thousand and for him to do what he could do with it to reach the goal for the church. He was glad to hear the proposal, but advised me, if I would borrow, it would not be a good idea. I asked if he had anybody else in mind and he said nobody and told me, "Mom,

but we are praying.” I decided then to borrow the money using my home as collateral, while I am alive, instead of waiting to die. I was very much at peace with my decision. The monthly payment would be covered by my son’s payment on a contract on deed to a property I had sold to him. This amount had supplemented my fixed income. In order to be able to use the house on an equity loan, I needed all of my children’s signatures. They were not all in a hundred per cent agreement with my plan especially my daughter, Carmen, as they were protecting my interest, but they all eventually did agree. The first bank I went to assured me there would be no problem, but when they checked further, I was denied. I have done business with them for over forty years, so I tried another bank where I also do business, and again, I was assured there would be no problem.

When it went through processing, I was denied again. I thought I knew the reason, I am old, and for the first time in their business, a seventy seven year old applying for a loan would be a great risk. They did not realize whether I live or die, it would be paid for. This time I was getting discouraged. I said, Lord, I will try another bank and if this is not your will for me to do this, you must have other plans. I went to a bank in which I had no previous dealings, except knowing the loan officer. I stated all the facts, why I was borrowing, and that I was previously denied by two banks. They processed my application and checked my excellent credit history. The next day, I was called to come to their office. The loan would be approved on signature only, without collateral at the lowest available interest rate. This was God’s intervention. What the devil tried to stop, God took charge and got him out of the way. Again, this was living proof of God’s Word. If we have faith like a mustard seed, we can move mountains and what is impossible, God will make it possible, where there seems to be no way, God will make a way.

What an awesome God we have. The architect, Rene Robles who drafted the building plan was blessed, too. Rene did not have a job and offered his services and did a good job in drafting the plans making sure the money was enough for such

a beautiful structure. God, Himself, was the Great Master Planner and because of His guidance, it was a perfect design. Rene now has more jobs now than he can handle and is a very active member of the church. The church was inaugurated in November of 2003. When our family home, 305 Riverview 7 West was sold in October of 2005, the loan was paid in full and it was the time, too, that my son finished paying his loan to me. The Lord's timing was just perfect.

Now, I want to relate the story of how the Balucuc Church, branched out from the Mother Church, Capalangan Community Christian Church (CCCC). The members were meeting in a home but were already able to buy a lot and waiting for God's timing to have a chapel. At the beginning of my retirement, I was invited to attend a luncheon sponsored by the Great Falls Christian Women's Club. I liked the approach of presenting the gospel of Jesus Christ in a non-threatening way. I got actively involved and invited friends, acquaintances and those I knew from the hospital that were retiring and found a reason to invite them to our club for lunch. One of the ladies I met was Anna Hatler, who was a committee chairman and very friendly. She was also active in Church Women United as was I, so we saw each other at meetings twice a month. That was all the extent of our social contact.

In the fall of 1991, Anna was diagnosed with a brain tumor. She had surgery and it was an open and closed case with the neurosurgeon determining the brain tumor inoperable. While she was in the hospital I visited her and prayed for her. I met her husband Francis very briefly for the first time. When Anna was ready to be discharged, he opted to take care of her at home. He called me if I would take time to visit her, read scriptures and pray for her. Of course I could do that as a part of my ministry visiting the shut ins. Anna had hospice help two hours a day when she became bedridden. The rest of the time, for the next nine months, I was helping Francis take care of Anna's physical and spiritual needs. While she was able to express her gratitude, she let me know she knew Francis would

not have been able to do the care she needed without help. Here again God's intervention to meet the needs of Anna through me. She was very dedicated and committed to God's ministry. I just had started the Helping Hands Ministry and she and Francis agreed to support the ministry. Whatever they started to donate we put it towards the Balucuc Church building fund. They both supported missions throughout their Christian lives.

In May of 1993, Anna went to be with her Lord. Francis decided to donate memorials to Anna and her term life insurance to build the church in Balucuc. A church was built named Brethren in Christ Christian Ministry, also known as the Anna C. Hatler Memorial Church, the only evangelical church in town. Their membership has multiplied. They have cell groups ministering to remote areas. One group could not fit in one of the houses and prayed for a chapel. When I was there in January of 2006, the elders presented to me the need for a chapel and I assured them to keep praying and God would answer in His time. In May of 2006, I was invited to present the Helping Hands Ministry to a Mission Board of the Westside Baptist Church. The members were moved on how God works in the small funded ministry and how much could be accomplished.

A week later, I received a sizable amount from the church and within six months more donations came. The funds were enough to build a small chapel in the very small lot the elder was donating. However, the selected lot did not materialize because God had other plans. Close to that area, a new subdivision was being developed and the elders of the church discovered that an available lot existed in a perfect location and much bigger for a larger building to accommodate more people coming to Christ. This is the Lord's doing and it is marvelous in His sight. In God's timing another place of worship will rise up. In the meantime Francis at age 89 continues supporting the two Pastors, Arnold and Roberto and their Mercy Ministry to needy students so they can continue with their

schooling. The members are mostly poor, but they are happy serving God.

Two women who had never met in this lifetime, Marie and Anna, who both loved the Lord, and who had hearts for mission work to carry on the Gospel according to Jesus Christ would leave a legacy that is being carried on 12,000 miles away. From the seeds of faith that have been sown in the Philippines, and the work of faithful untiring Pastors and Christian workers, many souls are being brought to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. Eleven churches have branched out from the mother church founded in 1974. Their church building was totally funded by Marie's funds built in 1988; three by Helping Hands through generous donors and the rest were helped in completing their buildings. One church was financed by Korean missionaries, and one is renting a spacious facility which is a special blessing from the Lord. There are still two churches on the island of Mindoro, in Wawa town, which still need to be completed.

The mother church, CCCC, now headed by Pastor Rudel Ochengco is going global in its ministry. They have a couple in Thailand, Mr. and Mrs. Lito Pingol, who served in China for a number of years until their visas could not be renewed. There is one ministry also in Malaysia. Lourdes Villanueva Manabat, who was the first Bible student I was privileged to help and her husband, are the Pastors of the two churches in Wawa. Amazingly, these are all young Pastors in their thirties and were part of those teenagers throwing rocks at the born again worshipping in a makeshift facility in the early 70's. My yearly mission trip since I retired continues to be a source of encouragement to the churches. Again, I want to give glory to the Almighty for giving us the opportunity to serve Him in my homeland and to the faithful partners who believe in the mission and vision of the ministry. Without their prayerful and financial support, this much would not have been accomplished.



## **CHAPTER V**

### **My Life with Francis**

I was widowed for thirteen years and very much involved in personal ministries. I was having thoughts of having a life partner to join me in my ministry. Did not the Lord say, "Delight yourself in the Lord and He will give you the desire of your heart?" After Anna passed away, Francis directed his attention to me. He was very sincere in expressing his feelings for me. He was forever grateful for helping him through the difficult times taking care of Anna and was faithful to the end fulfilling his commitment to her, "until death do us part." He was ready to move on with his life. Since he was in his seventies, he did not want to wait a long time, as the Lord had led him to the woman he wanted to spend the rest of his life with, me. I was falling in love with him, too, after seeing his devotion to his wife. Francis is also mission oriented, and had already started the funding for the new church. I was convinced that this is the man that God was preparing for me. Before I made a commitment, I suggested he should have a complete physical examination after going through a stressful year. He did, and was diagnosed to have stage two prostate cancer.

The doctor advised surgery or chemical treatment, without intervention, he would be dead in five years. He opted out of treatment because he was planning on getting married. He asked me, if I would still marry him with his medical problem. I said, "Yes, I will, and we will handle it together." We researched holistic approaches and heard of a medical doctor who practiced in Vancouver, Washington, with an alternative approach to cancer. We contacted him, and we were scheduled to see him September of 1993. That meant we would have to be married sooner than planned if I was to accompany him. It was a difficult decision to break the news to our families, especially on his side and I was seeking the Lord for guidance.

That summer, I attended a Baptist Women's conference in Templed Hills, Livingston, Montana. A lady noticed my countenance as being in deep thought, and she approached me if she could help. She was God sent and shared a similar situation. They were college friends, both of their spouses had died. She was widowed longer than him. When his wife died, they happened to meet shortly after, and they both agreed it was God's will for them to be married. His family members were not too happy but gave their blessings to them. They are both serving the Lord in their golden years. That was how I planned it, too. A big burden was lifted from me and the peace from the Lord took place in my being. The time came then to let his and my children know the plans we had. He wrote every one of his children. As expected, not every one was happy. My sons gave me their blessings, if I would be happy they would be happy. My daughter was resentful until she called Francis. She was convinced then, that Francis was sincere. We decided to get married in Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada, where most of the extended families reside.

My nephew, Pastor Paul Lacanilao, came from California to solemnize the wedding for us on August 14, 1993 at the Adventist Church where the Lacanilao family worships. Our wedding was followed by a reception at a Chinese Restaurant. All my family made it to the wedding. His two sons and their families from Great Falls and his daughter from Washington came. A beautiful wedding of commitment that was meant to be was the general comment. In September, we took the train to Vancouver, Washington to meet the holistic doctor who did alternative treatments for cancer. Francis began a macrobiotic diet, acupuncture, electromagnetics and was given the maximum dose of KM, a concentrated liquid dose of potassium, calcium and iron. We were there for two weeks and followed religiously the regimen of treatment. Francis took vitamins and herbal supplements like saw palmetto, ginkgo biloba, shark cartilage and others that were suggested to be good to treat prostate cancer. We did a lot of praying for healing and this has

been over 14 years ago. I know the God we serve and believe in heals all our diseases, forgives our sins, and healed Francis.

In November of 1993, Francis and I went to the Philippines on a medical mission through the Helping Hands Ministry. Three doctors and five nurses in the family treated several hundred people in our village of Capalangan. Minor surgeries, physical exams and the distribution of medications and vitamins to the community commenced for a week. We had a volunteer optometrist, Ramona Concenco, who did eye examinations. The medications and vitamins were donated from the United States and Canada. Francis saw first hand the need in the community. He saw the church that was being built in the rural area that was mentioned earlier from his donated funds from Anna's memorial. For the next two years of our married life, we concentrated on beating the cancer, although we knew healing had already taken place. In the fall of 1995, Francis woke up disoriented and fell going to the bathroom. I knew something was terribly wrong. I called my son, Modesto, JR, who is a nurse, and right away we took him to the Hospital. Francis was having seizures. He was diagnosed with mini strokes and because of his fall, he injured his back. Within two months, he was fully recovered.

During this time, Francis kept his house and went there every day doing his usual routine. He claimed he never felt comfortable moving into my house completely. He was stressed, apparently, when my family from out of town would come to visit me and my two teen age grandsons, Jason and Joshua, where indulging in unacceptable behavior. As a grandma, I was there for them and tried to help them through their crisis, and I am glad, I did. On February 8, 1996, my children celebrated my 70<sup>th</sup> birthday. The extended families from Canada and long time friends were all in attendance. It was a beautiful tribute and I could not forget giving God the glory for what He has done for me and our families, bringing us to America. Francis sang for me "I love you truly." He had a beautiful voice and nearly swept me off my feet.

After this event, I noticed some changes and never expected what was going to happen. Francis asked me the most difficult decision I had to make. It was either him, or my grandsons. I never neglected my duties to him as a wife and caretaker of his medical problems. I could not give up on my grandsons and never would. I did not hesitate to let him know, they are my flesh and blood, and will be forever. I suggested counseling and to give him time to think it over, but he must have made a decision already to dissolve our marriage. He moved back into his house. I could not believe what was happening. I was so heartbroken and could not think rationally. I thought, this was a partnership. I thought, I was going to spend the rest of my life with a man chosen of God for me. I said, "God, where are you?" I cannot take this. What would my friends say?" In the middle of my pain and anguish God reminded me, "All things work together for good to them who love God and to them who are called according to His purpose." (Romans 8:28). Francis was in a hurry to dissolve the marriage. As quick as we were married in August of 1993, it was over in August of 1996.

I was devastated and had never gone through this magnitude of brokenness in my entire life. I had good support from my family and friends. Above all, the Word of the Lord gave me comfort and strength. In Isaiah 54:4, "Fear not, for you will not be put in shame; neither feel humiliated, for you will not be disgraced," V-5, "For your husband is your Maker, your Redeemer is called the God of all the earth." In Psalm 34:18, "The Lord is near to the broken hearted and comforts those who are crushed in spirit." The Lord reminded me that I dedicated my life to serve Him after retirement but was distracted, serving a husband. Also in answer to my desire to have a life partner in the ministry, He allowed me to have an espousal partner, just like His plan for me was not enough.

During the healing process, the Lord opened more opportunities in my personal ministry in the community. I have always thought of reaching out to the women in Prison, but

there was no correctional facility in the County of Cascade. Then in 1995, a new Correctional Facility was built and there was now a place for women prisoners. The Prison Fellowship offered a course in Prison Ministry and I took the course. I have been involved in mentoring in Jail and at a Pre Release Center. It has been a very rewarding experience to see lives changed and redirected to productive lives. We do not know how many followed up their new found faith in Jesus Christ, but our Great Falls Prison Ministry Team mission is to bring the message of salvation through Jesus Christ who alone gives them hope and a future. We sow the seed of faith, and the Holy Spirit does the convicting.

Since I have been freed from wifely obligations, I expanded my volunteer work as an advocate for Filipinos and other minorities, mainly native Americans. I mentored a Native American single mom of three sons, aged six, seven and nine years old. For five years, I helped her through her crisis, involved the boys in church activities, and saw the boy's blossom. We had a working relationship in helping the boys grow up and her becoming a responsible mom and I was encouraged to see her progress. She may have moved, as I do not hear from her anymore. I do pray that the help and care she received will continue to influence her life and her three sons

The more I can do for people, the happier I am. In April of 1999, I was one of six honorees to be recognized at the 10<sup>th</sup> annual Salute to Women on volunteerism. I was humbled and praising the Lord for this opportunity. In the meantime, six months after Francis and my marriage dissolved, he wanted us to get back together and was apologetic for his quick decision. Please note that he continues to support the Helping Hands Ministry and is just as committed. With his persistence, I agreed for us to remain friends and have forgiven him. He was still able to drive and enjoy his independence. Several years ago he developed macular degeneration and became visually impaired and had to give up driving. I drove him to Havre to see his sister in the nursing home for over a year until she passed away. I

was with him during all his minor surgeries, dental appointments and his bout with pneumonia when he had to be in the hospital for six weeks. I spend almost every day taking care of his needs up until now. At this time in his life he needs somebody to take care of him.

God put Francis and I together initially for a special purpose as he is faithful in his support to the Helping Hands Ministry, so as long as I am able to help Francis with his medical and nursing needs I will always be available to him. We have differences in personal commitments but we can still be friends. It makes it easy for us to deal with the unpleasant happenings in our lives if we look up to Jesus, who is the author and finisher of our faith (Hebrew 12:2). God did not promise the journey will be easy, but He promised to walk with us. In Isaiah 46:4 we read, "I will be your Guide through all your lifetime: I made you and I will care for you. I will carry you along and be your Savior."



## **CHAPTER VI**

### **Reflections**

The first twenty seven years of my life were preparation for a higher calling. From the very beginning, I was molded in my mother's womb, all of me in the works of His Hands (Isaiah 64:8) and inscribed in the palm of His Hands (Isaiah 49:16). I came into the world in the most humble way with invisible angels watching my entry; only an elderly aunt, a "hilot" experienced in attending deliveries was present. If there were complications, a birthing mother would be completely on her own since medical personnel were not available. I was my mother's 10th pregnancy and with the hard life she went through, she should have miscarried me.

For work, my mother Carmen made big pots that held two liquid gallons. To make the clay, my mother struggled for hours in the tropical humidity and heat and into the wee hours of the early morning mixing soil, fine sand and water with her feet, step dancing on the mixture until it reached the right consistency for the potter to mold the clay on the potter's wheel. I remembered my mother staying up late at night to complete deadlines for these special big pots. The finished product would be completed in an open fire. That was some ninety years ago. When my older sisters Maria Patria and Lucila learned the trade of making pots, my mother gradually disengaged herself from making pots due to her advancing age. Making pots should have been my destiny but the Lord had other plans for me.

Earlier, I narrated my childhood and that my Shepherd was there all the time. Jesus opened the way for me to know Him personally. I was God fearing but was not a fruitful Christian. If I was called home then, I would have been empty handed. What could have I offered to the One who gave His life for me? I would not lose my salvation because He had already

paid the price of my redemption and I already accepted the greatest gift He had offered, His Son Jesus Christ, as my personal Savior. Would He welcome me and would He say, "Come, you who are blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Mathew 25: 24). Looking back at this time, I would be lacking in God's expectation of me. I was too busy taking care of my elderly parent's daily survival and of myself. I did not take time daily to feed on the Word; therefore, I suffered spiritual poverty.

While we were under Japanese occupation and our lives were threatened daily, we called on God and He was there for us, commanding His Angels to watch over us. Before coming to the United States, my work at the Philippine Red Cross entailed serving the physical needs of those brought to my attention. However, I was not bold enough to speak up and bear witness for my Lord for all the times He carried me through. Not that I did not thank Him or love Him; I followed the Ten Commandments, but being outwardly good is not good enough in God's standard. In Mathew 22:36-40—in answering the question of one of the learned men, which is the great Commandment in the Law, Jesus said to him. 'You shall love the Lord your God, with all your heart and with all your soul and with your mind.' This is the great and foremost commandment and the second is like it, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'

The spiritual foundation of the whole Law is based on these two Commandments alone. In spite of me supposedly being a good person and being born again, I did not qualify on what Jesus said in Luke 9: 23, "If anyone wishes to come after me, let him deny himself, and take up His cross daily and follow me." V-26 "For whoever is ashamed of me and my Words, of him will the Son of Man be ashamed when He comes in His glory and the glory of the Father and of the Holy Angels." I am praising the Lord for giving me a chance to make it up for the years I was not productive for His kingdom. God predetermines

the events in our lives and knows best where and when we are best fit.

The next 34 years of my life in the United States were most exciting, adjusting to a new life and culture and different job experiences that were very rewarding in my nursing career. During this period, I raised my family and it was not without challenges. I understand what mothers go through raising children and holding down full time jobs and racing with time. I would be at full throttle all day with my four children. By the time I was ready to go to work during one of those hectic afternoons, 4 year old Mark had stuck a bean in his nose. I was never in control when it came to emergencies involving my children. While I was getting him ready to take him to the hospital, seven year old Timothy took charge and made Mark blow his nose, and out came the bean. I cannot figure it out how it was possible except by divine intervention. Mark repeated the behavior a second time, putting a bean this time in his ear. I took him to the Great Falls clinic to have it removed. The same child, at 5 years of age climbed a big tree in front of our old house, 8 feet above ground. The bigger children called me, "Mommy, Mommy, Mark is up in the tree and cannot come down." I did not want to frighten him. In spite of my own fear of him falling, I talked to him to slide down slowly and assured him it was okay and he did.

While at work one time, I was called to go to the Emergency Room. I came down and saw my 6 year old son Modesto Jr, with his head and face covered in blood. He apparently was riding his new bike and crashed it into the back of a truck. His head wound was not bad; it could have been worse. The same child almost drowned in Duck's Lake when their Dad took them fishing. Thanks to the bigger children who saw him sinking and alerted their father who took hold of him, Modesto Jr. continues to carry his father's name. When we claim the Lord Jesus as our Shepherd, our entire families are under His mantel of protection. Praise God for guardian angels

who watch our children when we cannot be with them every moment.

As I reflect on the beautiful times I had with my children, they were also very responsible at their young age. Before I reported to work in the afternoons, I would take them for ice cream and the four of them would be content in the car sitting in front of the Old Deaconess Hospital waiting for their Dad to get off work in 15 minutes to pick them up and take them home with him. Tim was 7, Carmen was 6, and they took charge of Mark then 4 and Modesto then 2. They could see me from the Hospital window waving to them. Those were the good old days! The authorities probably would charge me with child endangerment if it were today. During those times, we hospital workers would watch out for each other and my co-workers all knew these four children inside the 1958 station wagon in front of the hospital were all mine. When the children were in grade school through high school, they were all given music lessons to keep them busy. As I mentioned earlier, they all went through teen crises but their solid background prevailed.

During these 34 years of maturing in my faith, God showed me in many different ways preparation for a higher calling. Taking care of the sick was my mission field. I became mother-in-law to my three sons' spouses and learned to adjust to cultural differences. I reached out to my daughter-in-laws when my counsel was needed. I experienced the joy of being a Grandma especially when you can answer questions. "Where is Jesus, Grandma, do we have to die to see Him?" asked 5 year old Jonathan. I answered, "Jesus is watching you and me, honey, and He is Spirit. If we love Him, Jesus is with us all the time." He was reassured and just said, "I see." Jesus commanded us to bring the little children to Him and to encourage them, for theirs is the kingdom of God. It was a blessing and a privilege to be able to bring my grandchildren and now my great grandchildren to our church's children's ministry for their early introduction to Jesus Christ.

Shortly after I retired, I had a total right knee replacement. It has been almost nineteen years and my knee has been holding up well except for occasional discomfort. I have had excellent orthopedic surgeons in the persons of Dr. Robert Chambers, Dr. Paul Melvin and Dr. J. W. Bloemendal who have been following my case for almost 20 years. Normally, for this length of time, problems can start coming up with the aging components. I praise the Lord that when we dedicate our bodies in serving Him, He takes good care of us including the artificial replacement of the worn out part. My emphasis at this stage of my life, as an octogenarian plus two at the time of this publishing, is God's ever presence in all of my daily activities and my personal ministry as evidenced in giving my aging body strength. I can testify it is the Holy Spirit who gives me stamina to start my day as I seek Him daily. Because He is my Shepherd, He restores my soul and body and guides me in the paths of righteousness (Psalm 23:3). God knows the ways of the righteous. He is near to those who call upon Him, to all who call upon Him in truth (Psalm 145:18).

I am reminded of how God had answered my call to Him when my childhood friend Hilda from California came to attend Grandson Jason and Dakota's wedding in August of 1998. She arrived in Great Falls already complaining of chest pain. However, she thought it was from gas pains as she was cleared to travel after staying a few days in a San Jose hospital. My son JR was going to take us for a boat ride but I suggested Hilda needed to see a doctor. I took her to the Great Falls Clinic and they advised us to go to the hospital emergency immediately. She was seen by a cardiologist and tests were done. Hilda was moments close to having a heart attack.

That evening, a heart catheterization was done and a stent was put in to her blocked coronary artery. The procedure went well and the Doctor assured us we could take her home in the morning. While she was in the Coronary Care Unit for post surgical watch, I noticed her spitting blood and notified the nurse right away. In just a matter of minutes, she was spitting up more

blood. They were trying to reach the pulmonologist. I called on my prayer partners and one came. We prayed and called on God to intervene and just when Hilda was choking with blood and gasping for breath, the Doctor came in time to clear her airway. From an uncomplicated procedure to a near death experience, God was there all the time. The Lord comforted us and took away our fears. Hilda stayed longer in the Hospital and was not able to attend my grandson's wedding. My friend Hilda and I are kindred spirits and experienced together walking through the valley of the shadow of death during WWII and this time death almost took her away from me.

On the day she was being discharged, it was taking longer than usual. Apparently, it was the medication that was delaying us, so I decided to go down to the second floor to pick up Hilda's medications directly. While I was waiting at the hospital pharmacy for Hilda's medications, somebody from Emergency saw me and notified me of the stabbing of my second eldest grandchild, Joshua, and that they could not find a family member to notify. Joshua was rushed to the operating room and was clinging to life. He was stabbed with a 12 inch blade barely missing his heart and centimeters away from his aorta. His chest cavity was filled with almost two pints of blood. From the medical community and the Doctor's account attending to Joshua, it was a miracle he survived. Within minutes, more families were notified and prayers were directed to Heaven while the chest surgeon worked to repair the arteries that were lacerated. The Lord was there for Joshua and my family who trusted in God's promises. "When you call on Me, I will answer, when you seek me, you will find me."

We have a merciful God. Joshua was 22 years old and was just beginning to redirect his life, working and staying with me to get caught up with what he had lost from a 5 year drug addiction and homelessness. I prayed that God would give him a second chance and He did. He recovered beautifully. It was an unfortunate incident. Perhaps it was my grandson's impaired thinking that thought he was still homeless from

residual behaviors from his previous drug addiction; he decided to relieve himself against an apartment complex. This happened while Joshua was walking home from work the day after his brother Jason's wedding. However, the man living in the apartment building saw him and exchanged angry words at Joshua. The man was very quick in wielding a knife and stabbed Joshua. With his chest bleeding, Joshua was able to run to nearby Gibson Park and a woman worker at the Park who knew him put him in her pickup truck to rush him to the Hospital. A police officer going to the scene was flagged down by the woman with Joshua still in her pickup. The officer intervened and took Joshua to the hospital.

My friend Hilda was readmitted for extended care since I could not be available to attend to her until Joshua was stabilized. It is a wonder how the body heals. Miraculously within a week, they were both discharged from the Hospital. My friend Hilda stayed with me until she was well enough to travel back to California. Hilda has been a faithful support to the Helping Hands Ministry in church planting and other ministries of the Helping Hands. As teenagers during World War II, we dedicated our lives to give our best to the Master for as long as we are able. It was no surprise that God brought us to America to accomplish his plans for us although we came under different circumstances, Hilda as an Educator and I, as a nurse.

Joshua has come along way supporting himself while going through college; he earned a Business degree in May of 2006. He and Sierra are now the proud parents of three year old Ambria and newborn Mikaeo. Joshua was in my household with my friend Hilda so both of them were covered under the mantle of protection that I claim daily in Jesus' name.



## **CHAPTER VII**

### **Opportunities of Service**

The Lord has given me many opportunities of service. He especially gifted me in reaching out to the discouraged, the hopeless and to the emotionally challenged. I can offer them the Bread of Life, the Word, and Jesus Christ, who alone can give hope and life abundant. There was a case that I will forever remember that demanded my full attention and energy and involved domestic violence and child custody. In August of 2003, I was asked to see a young Filipina girl, a patient at Benefis Behavioral Services to help the staff communicate with her. I came to see her and saw this frightened looking girl who would not speak. I sensed she was afraid to trust anyone. I introduced myself and assured her I was there to help her. I spoke to her in our language and she started warming up. She was hungry for our native food, so I brought her food every day I visited her. Earlier in my visits I met the husband and let him know I would be helping her.

She confided to me her horrific experience of being abused since she came to the United States in February of 2003 to join her husband. She had a praying mother in the Philippines who had accepted Jesus Christ as her Savior. Wow, I thought to myself, this is God answering the prayer of a mother 12,000 miles away. After counseling, it was decided she should stay at the Mercy Home and continue with counseling through the Mental Health Center. In the meantime, the husband found my number and called me everyday wanting to make contact with her and wanting her back. After a month, after thinking about her situation, with no family and very insecure, she decided to give her husband a chance and went back to him. I made an arrangement for them to meet and both of them

agreed to get back together and get counseling. I advised her to find a church she could attend.

A few times he went with her to church. Then his personality disorder prevailed and with it the relentless physical, verbal and emotional abuse. She ended up in jail when she called 911 for help to give her protection. When the officer arrived, the husband claimed she attacked him showing the officer where she hit him when in fact she was the one defending herself from being pushed against the door when he forbade her to enter the house. Since she could not communicate in English to tell her side of the story, she was the one taken to jail. The husband called me to inform me of the alleged incident. I called the Pastor to check on her the following day and she was released to the care of the Pastor. A church family took her in until I could make arrangements for her to stay close to the Filipino community. A court hearing was scheduled and the case against her was dismissed.

A kind Filipino-American family took her in to help her recover from the emotional trauma. Just when she was getting settled, the husband started calling me incessantly wanting to make contact with her suspecting that she was pregnant and wanting her back. She was indeed pregnant and advised not to succumb to his promise of change. Her husband had been released from the military due to post traumatic stress disorder. Again she thought it over, with the baby coming, maybe he would change. A meeting was arranged and she went back to him again. The situation was not any better but she continued to stay with him.

We, as Christians, celebrate our Hope every December in the birth of Jesus and in December of 2004, she had a beautiful baby girl. How ironic that with the baby's birth, the conflict between husband and wife escalated as with the physical and emotional battery. Her whole being finally crashed. While she was in Church with the baby in January of 2005, she was noticed to be acting strangely. The church family was alarmed and took her to Benefis Behavioral Services. She

was admitted and began extensive psychotherapy. From her years of trauma, it drove her to a nervous breakdown.

The father was given the parental right to take care of the baby since he was on medical discharge and without current employment. With professional counseling and my visits with her everyday, she was discharged after a month with medications. We placed her at the Rescue Mission Women's shelter. She was doing very well and decided she could work and find a place of her own. For the first time since living in the US, she applied for jobs. I helped her fill out applications, translated for her during interviews and taught her to take the bus. She eventually got a job in housekeeping and did a good job with her boss speaking highly of her performance. The same family who took her in the first time welcomed her back. This time she paid the family a reasonable rent. When she was ready to learn to drive, I took time teaching her to drive after she had passed her written test. This was also the beginning of the legal conflict of parental rights, who would have custody of the child. The church family raised money for her legal expenses and she decided to proceed with the divorce. She was fighting to have full custody of the child because she could not trust him. The court initially decided to let her have limited child custody and granted more time to the father since he had been taking care of the baby full time.

By October of 2005, we got her into subsidized housing and I thought all was going well. She was not even in the house a month when the husband came to bring her the baby and they both decided to get back together. I can understand the pain of a mother not to be with her child at all times and of course, I was at the same time disappointed. I knew then after such intense involvement for almost three years, it was taking a toll on me as well. At this time, I just said "Lord you are in charge." We all have to learn painful lessons in life. It was okay for two months. I went home to the Philippines on a mission for six weeks. By the time I came back in February of 2006, her situation had worsened. Hopefully, this time a hard lesson had

been learned. Church families were reaching out to her. Montana Legal Services was now handling her case. It was a messy proceeding. Finally in November of 2006, a decision was made. The divorce was finalized and a financial settlement for her was reached. It is almost a year now and nothing dramatic has happened. I continue to be her personal advocate. They have shared parental rights. The goal is to see her improve her verbal communication and to build up her independence. We thank God for the blessings of the many people from the church who supported her. She remains gainfully employed and continues to keep up with her spiritual growth.

The Word of the Lord is the best counsel. Those who listen are inspired by God Himself and are profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work (II Timothy 3:16, 17). This is the method I have also based my mentoring to the incarcerated women I meet with weekly and to those who seek help to heal their pain. As the Good Shepherd leads me in the paths of righteousness, His goodness and unfailing love follows me to become gentle and kind to those entering His fold (Psalm 23:3, 6). The Lord constantly reminds me not to be weary of well doing for in due season we shall reap.

The Lord knew that my time staying in my Riverview home was getting close to an end due to my physical limitations. I enjoyed tending to my flowers and sharing the fruit of my apple trees. One of the trees was already bearing fruit when we moved in the home in 1965. It had been a very fruitful tree and had three kinds of good tasting fruit. After 40 years, the trunk slowly began drying up but continued to bear fruit but not as abundant or as sweet. Apparently, there was very little nourishment coming from the roots to sustain the tree. Eventually, it was chopped down. The tree reminded me of our spiritual connection with our Lord Jesus Christ. Without that connection, we experience spiritual malnutrition and can be rendered ineffective. The Scriptures point to us, in John 15: 12,

"I am the true vine and my Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in me that does not bear fruit, He prunes it, that it may bear more fruit." We can only be fruitful if we open our hearts to God's Word and meditate on it daily, that we may be rooted firmly, and follow Him more closely and that we will never wither, but prosper (Psalm 1:2 & 3). In every event in my life, I have learned to seek guidance from the Lord.

When the Riverview house was being prepared to sell, my sons and grandson did the necessary improvement to pass the inspection. Our family home was beautiful with lots of added features and a big yard full of flowers and trees. It was a special blessing from the Lord and a central gathering for every festive occasion and holiday sometimes with as many as 20 plus family members and relatives staying for the weekend. When I decided to finally sell the Riverview home, I was also looking for a place to move-in to. I checked an apartment close to downtown and my church of 50 years, First Baptist, and found a three bedroom apartment that was just right for me. I made the arrangement with the property management for them to hold it for me.

It took three months for the right family to come and buy our family home. Initially, when the house was placed on the market, I thought for sure it would sell right away. During this time the apartment was held for me and I moved before the cool weather set in October of 2005. It was God's perfect timing. My great grandchildren have missed the memorable times celebrating their birthdays at Grandma's place and the freedom they have had playing in the big yard. I, too, miss the beautiful flowers and spending time alone among the sweet fragrance of my many roses and the varieties of poppies, tulips, azaleas and iris. Throughout the years, the birds had a hand in creating many exotic combinations and colors by cross pollinating the seeds. I always felt a real connection with my Lord when I would spend time enjoying the beauty of His creation in my flower garden. But as time moves on, we move right along. The Lord continues to lead me in the direction He wants me to be

and has given me the opportunity to continue my short mission trips to the Philippines.

One of the most memorable times was my trip October of 1999, when the St. Luke's Homecoming Reunion honored our 1949 Nursing Class. It was our 50 year jubilee. Out of 28 graduates only 11 made it to the event. We were all in our seventies and in fairly good physical health. Of the 28 graduates, four had died and the others were not physically able to attend. Out of those 11 attendees, three have since died. We were asked to share our personal experience of what had transpired in the fifty years since our graduation. I spoke giving God the Glory for what He has done for me, allowing me to be an instrument in the Helping Hands ministry. I remembered in my student years when I gave a report or did nursing care demonstrations, I would feel hot all over and be covered in perspiration from being nervous. Our class was special. We were the first post war nursing graduates and we had a close relationship in the three years we were in training together. My classmates remembered those days. We had fun reminiscing and laughing. What they will remember of me this time is my witness of having a personal relationship with Jesus Christ that has made a difference making the aging process a joy, to share your rich experiences in life, your resources, and to do your best to make a difference in somebody's life. Our 50 year reunion may have been our last time for us to see each other.

My class reunion also gave me an opportunity to visit every church member with the Women's group and Church elders of the Balucuc Church, Brethren in Christ Ministry. This included those who had not been in Church for various reasons, those needing prayers for healing and the very poor families we help every month with their basic commodities. We brought bags of groceries to every family we visited. In this particular church location, there was a family whose seven year old son was dying slowly of tuberculosis and there was no nourishing food to feed him. They had three other children and the father did not have a regular job. He fed his children by scavenging



left over grains of palay (rice grain) from the rice field. We had the child checked by a doctor, bought medications, supplied him nourishing food and within six months his physical condition dramatically improved. He is now a teenager helping the family bring in food from what they can pick from the rice field. Incidentally, we (Helping Hands) gave the family money to buy piglets to help them raise a pig farm. They were doing well. In fact when I went home the following year in 2000, the father wanted to butcher one of the pigs to celebrate my visit, but I stopped him and advised him to sell it and use the money for their daily needs. Unfortunately, within two years of the pig farm the piglets started dying and did not recover. The family joined the church and remains active. As their sons grow up, they will move on and find their own livelihood but will now have Jesus as their foundation and hope for a future.

During this visit, there was also a young teenage girl who was raped and delivered a baby boy. She had not spoken since it happened and just had an empty look on her face. I talked to her, held her hands and prayed for her; assured her we would help her with her baby. There was no expression from her or sign she was absorbing any of our conversation. The Helping Hands ministry through the Church reached out to her, helped with the baby's needs and she gradually started responding. Because of her traumatic amnesia, nobody was identified as her attacker. She and her family are very poor and live with their mother in a one room shack. Their living conditions have improved since the church members extended help to them and the girl is doing much better.

My birthplace, Capalangan, Apalit, Pampanga, has always been my home base during my missions, where I stay with relatives. People in the community, who have needs come for counseling on domestic issues and seeking financial help for various needs. I count this as an opportunity to offer them the Bread of Life, Jesus Christ, as their only passport to Heaven. They are responsive to the gospel when their physical needs are met. My succeeding mission trips have been devoted to

speaking to churches and exhorting them to remain faithful in spite of difficult situations they go through. I remind them of I Peter 1:6, paraphrased from the Living Bible, "There is wonderful joy ahead, even though the going is rough for a while down here. These trials are only to test your faith, to see whether or not it is strong and pure. It is being tested as fire tests gold and purifies it and your faith is far more precious than gold. If your faith remains strong after being tried in the test tube of fiery trials, it will bring you much praise and glory and honor on the day of His return."

In the last two mission trips dated January to February 2006 and March to April 2007, Ben (Ebenezer) and Lina joined me in our personal ministries. Ben is the eldest son of my youngest brother and is a living testament of my friendship with Katherine Weins whose family sponsored him to come to Canada in 1972 when no other possibility existed for Ben to leave the Philippines. Ben and Lina promised the Lord they would serve Him if He would answer their prayers to heal their daughter Karlene who was critically injured from a car accident in the winter of 2003. Her car hit a patch of black ice and rolled over several times. Karlene sustained a broken neck that could have left her a quadriplegic. The Lord answered their prayers. After months of physical rehabilitation, she completely recovered. We serve a God who heals. Praise His Holy Name. As the Lord enables us, we plan on making yearly mission trips to the Philippines.

Ben retired from nursing two years ago but continues to work part time to finance our missions. On both trips, two doctors from Lethbridge donated medications for diabetes, high blood pressure, arthritis, heart and pain medications as well as vitamins. What was needed in treating patients like antibiotics, we bought locally. We held clinic three days a week from 9 am to 5 pm at the inadequate make-shift health center. Ben did physical exams, treated ear infections, respiratory diseases and all kinds of ailments. He referred the very sick ones to the

closest medical doctor and paid the costs of x-rays and medications we did not already have.

There was a two year old boy brought to the clinic with second and third degree burns on his chest and face. Ben treated him with antibiotics, debrided the areas as needed and by the time we left six weeks later he was completely healed. A seven year old boy was brought to the clinic bleeding profusely from the head. Apparently, his mother got angry at the boys making noise who had congregated in her backyard. She threw a big rock at them, and unknowingly hit her son. Ben washed the wound with antibacterial solution and applied steristrip, gave him a tetanus shot and sent him home. The mother was very distraught and ashamed of her actions. I am sure she will never do that again. If it were somebody else's child she would have been taken to court for assault with a deadly weapon. Ben was also called after hours to see bedridden patients to make medical decisions and to start intravenous medications. His ability comes from 30 years of experience in medical and surgical nursing in Lethbridge, Canada and the Lord as his partner in the healing ministry.

The last 10 days of our mission, my niece Maggie (Magdalena) and her husband Bill Briggs from Savannah, Georgia, joined us. They brought more vitamins, pain medications and clothing to distribute to the needy. This was their first trip to join us. Bill and Maggie were very moved by what they saw and since then have started helping the local pastors in their mission outreaches. Ben and Maggie were the first two in the family that I helped come to America and it gives me much joy to see them carrying on the legacy of helping. Prior to this trip, Maggie and Bill had been going to Honduras every year since their retirement to join a medical mission team from Savannah, Georgia. Incidentally, a week before we came, teams from the Cornerstone International Christian Church, from Los Angeles, California headed by Pastor Paul Lacanilao, were in other areas of Luzon doing evangelistic meetings and medical missions using local medical personnel and distributing

food items. Paul is the youngest son of my missionary eldest brother, Anacleto, whom I lived with in Manila during World War II.

The Lord continues to pour his many blessings to those He designates to be reached. Poverty and hunger for the truth is all over and we cannot cover it all, but God in His mercy plans the time and place where His people will sow and harvest. Psalm 37:23 states, "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord: and He delights in His way." Wherever we ministered, the people were thankful for all the help they were getting. We emphasized the need to trust God and that He alone would take care of their problems and what we do is temporary relief and that there can be permanent healing if they believe in Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord.

Ben and I were also invited guest speakers for several different graduation exercises. We used this as an opportunity to distribute Bibles to each graduate. We also donated Bibles to newly baptized members of one Church that was just organized four years ago with a handful of believers. Now, there are close to 100 active members and the building cannot hold them during worship service. The overflow of members sit outside during worship service on plastic chairs. The land space is very limited so there is no room for expansion. We are praying that another location will be made available and in God's timing a church will be built to accommodate people coming to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. This is a branch, out of the Mother Church, Christ Centered Christian Church (CCCC), pastored by Philip Bamba.

We also distributed New Testaments to the pupils at the Macario Arnedo Elementary school in Capalangan who are participants in our feeding program. A donor from Great Falls continues to support this worthy cause for as long as the Helping Hands has been in operation. By the end of the school year, the children are transformed from difficult to manageable individuals because of the Christian love and principles of their teacher, Virgie Arceo. Among her co-workers, Ms. Virgie has

been consistent giving the children encouragement when everyone else had given up on them. I take time to speak to this special class on my mission trips.

During my personal evangelism in the neighborhood, a young mother sat with her two children listening to Bible stories and singing, while I was conducting the class. After class, she stayed and wanted to hear more of the Bible. I read to her the Scriptures on salvation. Then she asked if she would be forgiven of her sins. I assured her that Jesus came to seek and to save all who are lost and we all have sinned and come short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23), and that Jesus died on the cross for all of us and would forgive all our sins if we confess and accept Him as our Savior. She wept and accepted Jesus Christ as her Savior. I asked the family to follow up and take her to church with them.

I was able to visit the local Women's Prison near my village of Capalangan. I was horrified with the abysmal accommodations and living conditions of the incarcerated compared to the penal system in Great Falls. Two hundred inmates were cramped in a facility that should hold only fifty. I witnessed to a group while my niece Magdalena witnessed to another group. We distributed Bibles and tracts. They were all very interested in the gospel message and when the invitation to accept Jesus Christ was extended, eight of them accepted Jesus as their personal Savior and promised to read their Bibles. There are other Christian groups ministering in jail. I pray that inmates will continue to have opportunities to receive hope through the Word of God. I rejoice knowing that I can continue to provide transportation for folks who cannot not drive to meetings and to doctors' appointments until this day and will also continue translating for Filipinos with legal issues and for clients at the YWCA Mercy Home.

Today is October 9, 2007: I am in the third phase of my earthly journey and being an octogenarian, my every day is in God's Hands. I am recovering from a hard fall that happened Saturday, October 6, in Church, while I was preparing

Communion for Sunday service. I was being careful and still missed a step in the sanctuary and fell very hard on the carpeted concrete floor. Except for a smashed upper lip and sprained left wrist, I was spared from serious injuries. My eyeglasses were intact, my upper dental plates stayed in place unbroken and my injured muscles are all back to normal. Why something like this happened to me while I was doing what I was called to do is just a reminder that He was there for me and it was going to happen because of my physical instability. As the Lord is my Shepherd, He helped me get up with His staff with ease. Normally, in the best of health getting up from a horizontal position flat on my back on the floor is rather difficult at eighty plus without help. God continues to lead me in my journey, reminding me to evaluate daily what I can do within my physical ability.

My soul rejoices when I think of the goodness and tender mercies that follow me every day of my life (Psalm 23:6). Am I slowing down as have been suggested many times by well meaning friends and family members? This spring, I was inspired by a single Mom with two young school aged children. She was so moved when she heard me speak of the Helping Hands Ministry while a guest at her Church and wanted to help.

She decided to hold a "Rummage Sale" of things she no longer needed in her house and made \$121.45 and gave it all to the Helping Hands ministry. She could have used the money or part of it as she had only \$ 7.50 to gas up her car. That day, unexpectedly, she received \$60 in the mail to meet her needs and more. What an awesome God we have. Even before we call upon His Name, He already answers. This precious young lady wanted to give back to God for watching and protecting her when she was away from her Lord. She has praying parents who never gave up on her. The young Mom is now pursuing a college education and taking good care of her daughters.

I have faithful partners who help me carry on the ministry in the Philippines. Our ongoing work includes: church planting, feeding the poor, praying for the sick, clothing for the needy,



educating the deserving poor to finish college so they can help their families in turn who can help others in need, and helping the displaced tribes of Basilan Island, called "Badjaos," to be recognized as citizens of the country. The Mother Church has been undertaking the big job of relocating the Badjao and providing literacy classes for the adults and young people so they can read and write and be able to vote. The children are taught the basic pre school requirements so they can be enrolled in the public school. The workers Pastor Edwin and Perla are devoted full time ministering to them. They hold their services in a shack of bamboo walls and a corrugated tin roof which collapsed from the weight of the downfall of rain. It had been protected by the old bridge and when it rained, it poured on the shaky chapel.

Here again the Lord answered our need for a chapel even before we asked. One faithful steward who has supported the Helping Hands ministry in church planting through the years pledged her \$400 rebate from the State to help in church planting. When Perla called, I assured her the Lord already provided for the chapel. God is mindful even to the lowliest of creation. He gives them opportunity through us to know their Creator personally. Most of the adult members of the Badjao community have accepted Jesus Christ as their Savior and have been baptized. The government has recognized the ministry of the Church to this indigenous group as, "God's Love for the Indigents Ministry." Our long time Helping Hands partners designate their monthly help to the needs of the Badjaos. Thank you faithful partners and those who are in the homeland, the Philippines; I cannot recognize all of you personally in the printed page but God has your name written in His everlasting scroll where He will welcome us into the Kingdom prepared for those who love Him and are faithful to the end. And to those who brought the good news to the multitudes He would say, "How lovely on the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who announces peace and brings

good news of happiness, who announces salvation and says to Zion, Our God reigns" (Isaiah 52:7).

I am very humbled to be God's instrument in this special ministry. I can feel the Hand of God directing me in ways I cannot even fathom possible. When the plans for the mission trips are being made, funds come in and we are never lacking in distributing the needs to the poor. My family members and close friends are very generous, blessing me with the personal expense. To top it all, we always get the best deal on our airfare, and the presence of the Lord is evident from the time we leave until we arrive to our destination. Why are we so confident? Because we have a God who said so and we claim it in Exodus 23:20, "Behold, I am going to send the Angel before you, to guard you along the way, and to bring you into the place which I prepared."

As a part of my preparation in this phase of my journey, the Lord granted me the desire of my heart to visit the Holy Land. In January of 1984, my spiritual mother, Marie Knutson, gifted me with an all paid expense trip to Israel. It was an overwhelming spiritual experience with the Bible as you know it coming alive. Two weeks was not enough time to see all of the Holy Land so the following year the Travel Agency offered a bonus. If we recruited prospective tourists, we could get a reduction in our fare. My traveling friend, Benedicta Schulteis, was able to recruit enough to have her fare free. Bless her; she shared it with me so I journeyed a second time to see and experience completely the cradle of my spiritual beliefs. What a blessing! After this trip I can sing with the songwriter,

**"I Walked Where Jesus Walked."**

**I walked today where Jesus walked, in days of long ago. I wandered down each path He knew, with reverent steps and slow. Those little lanes, they have not changed, a sweet peace fills the air. I walked today where Jesus walked, and felt His presence there. My pathway led through Bethlehem, ah, memories ever sweet. The little hills of Galilee that knew those childish feet. The Mt. Olives hollowed scenes that Jesus knew before. I saw the mighty Jordan roll, as in the**

days of yore. I knelt today where Jesus knelt, where alone He prayed, The Garden of Gethsemane, my feet felt unafraid. I picked my heavy burdens up, and with Him by my side. I climbed the Hill of Calvary, where on the cross He died. I walked today where Jesus walked and felt him close to me.

What impressed me most was the traditional site of the Garden Tomb where Jesus was buried and resurrected on the third day. I was reminded of the women, early in the morning toward the first day of the week who looked into the grave and an angel of the Lord rolled the stone and told the women, "Do not be afraid; for I know you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. He is not here, for He has risen, just as He said, "Come see the place where He was lying" (Matthew 28: 1-6). I counted it my blessing to be able to see where He laid and now He is seated near the right Hand of the Father interceding for you and me. The holy grounds where Jesus manifested Himself to the world is still there. If you have a heart's desire to see where He spent His earthly journey and where He will come again to set up His Kingdom as Lord of Lords and King of Kings, He may just grant that desire as special favor. He said in Psalm 84: 11, "The Lord gives grace and glory; No good thing does He withhold from those who walk uprightly."

Another favor from the Lord that I never expected would happen was a European tour. My long time friend, Hilda, from California was also a travel agent on the side as well as an educator and would get special rates and shared her perks with me. It was very reasonable and although it was not a priority to me I decided to take this opportunity to travel with my childhood friend. It was an educational and invaluable experience to see seven countries I knew very little about and it was good to be with a group. We encountered one unpleasant experience in Amsterdam I cannot forget. We went into a shop with my friend because it was raining outside and came in to look around. The shopkeeper asked us if we were buying and if not we would not be welcomed in the store. His comments insulted us and we

just left. That was in May of 1991 and reminded me of the few hostile experiences I had forgotten from the 1950's when Modesto and I began our life together in America. It also reinforced my appreciation of living in America and God's divine purpose bringing me here and that new opportunities continue to be revealed to me and that it is my hope to accomplish, if not by me but by others who are inspired by my memoir.

On our last mission trip to the Philippines, we met a seven year old boy named Rizal Peralta. His face is so severely deformed from birth defects. The poor child does not go out to play and does not go to school because he is ridiculed and teased. He almost received help when he was three years old from one of the International Foundations located in Manila doing cranio facial surgeries. However, the family was so poor they could not commute to the city to get help for him. A niece, Carmencita Lacanilao Lapuz, a retired nurse, made contacts with the Mabuhay Foundation, and Rizal is now being taken care of. Families from Lethbridge and Helping Hands partners are undertaking his medical, transport and other incidental expenses. His multiple surgical procedures are covered by the Foundation. My nephew Honorio takes care of transporting the family to Manila and niece Remedios takes care of the finances we send for his family's daily needs.

For Rizal, this is God's timing for him to get help and to transform his serious facial disfigurement into a successful facial makeover. Rizal had to undergo a complete physical and treatment for respiratory and heart problems before the facial surgeon began working on him. The Lord is to be praised for the commitment of the people involved in giving Rizal a new lease on life. He is already telling his parents to say thank you to all "Maraming Salamat Po" in Pilipino. An American cranio facial surgeon specialist saw Rizal and assured him, "Don't worry son, I will take care of you."

## **CHAPTER VIII**

### **My Testimony**

The Lord has inspired me to put in writing my journey in this lifetime to leave a message of hope to everyone who may have a chance to read the book. I am computer illiterate but I can type and taught myself to start and to close each entry. Several times in the process I would get into a computer glitch and George Tyner, my bosom friend Nita's husband, would always come to my rescue. Two years ago, they sold their home and had to move into an apartment in a hurry. It was small for what they needed. After a year's lease ended, they checked out an apartment that was being vacated in the same building I am in, on the same level, just three apartment doors down from mine. It was perfect for what they wanted and they were happy to relocate. Is this coincidental of what God planned for me to help me complete my story? It is definitely God's intervention, placing George and Nita close to me, anticipating my needs and reaching out to me unselfishly. God takes care of our needs through special people He designates. By the time the book is ready, I will be four score and two and still waiting for God's leading on what plans He has for me. In Psalm 92: "But the godly shall flourish like a palm tree....they are transplanted into the Lord's own garden, and are under His personal care. Even in old age they will still produce fruit and be vital and green. This honors the Lord, and exhibits His faithful care. He is my Shelter. There is nothing but goodness in Him!"

I am confident my Good Shepherd will continue to watch over me. I never lack anything; even in the leanest years my needs were met. When I was lonely and needed to be alone, God gave me a beautiful garden of flowers for many years for me to enjoy which would clear my mind from the cares of the day. I had planted many flowers in my big yard so there were

flowers for the shut-ins, for friends on their special days, and bouquets of flowers in church on Sundays from spring to fall. The more the flowers were picked for distribution, the more they blossomed. My flower garden was known for having the most flowers on the whole block. How beautiful and majestic your creation O Lord, it gives peace to my soul! I have experienced physical afflictions and medical conditions that death could snuff me away from the living any moment, but I never fear because You are with me in life and death. I will be with You at the table You have prepared for those who love You. Your Words of comfort are ever before me. Your tender mercies will be with me as we journey together. When my earthly assignment is finished, you will welcome me to the mansions prepared for those who remain faithful and I will enjoy the fellowship of the Triune God as pictured in the Gospel of John Chapter 17, for eternity!

The Word of the Lord is truth and has been proven in my life as I claim it in Psalm 23. This maybe the only manuscript I will write and I want to share it with those with limited knowledge of the Lord. I want you to know that God is a loving God. He is not willing that any will perish. He is patient toward you. 2 Peter 3:9 states that He gave the greatest gift of all, giving His only Son, Jesus Christ, to die on the cross for our sins and is now seated near the right Hand of the Father, interceding for us. We are sinners, according to the Scriptures: "For all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus, our Lord" (Romans 6:23).

What will you do to change the course of your troubled life? Believe; accept Jesus Christ as your personal Savior. "Though your sins be scarlet, they shall be white as snow, though they be red like crimson they will be like wool" (Isaiah 1:18). You are privileged when you become a child of God. You can claim heavenly heritage and all the promises in the Bible. We are living in a chaotic world and God is our only hope. Are we spared from trials and temptation? I am afraid not, but God



is there to carry us through. Psalm 46, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore, we will not fear, though the earth should change, and though the mountains slip into the heart of the sea..... the Lord of hosts is with us; He is our stronghold." He will supply our needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:19).

God gives us special favors when we honor Him. Psalm 84:11 states, "For the Lord God is a sun and shield; The Lord gives grace and glory; No good thing does He withhold from those who walk uprightly." How then can we honor God? In Micah 6:8, He has told you, "O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you, but to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God." In Romans 12:9-10, "Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good. Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another." I John 3:17 - 18, "But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him? Let us not love in word but in deed and in truth." The Scriptures are full of instructions to follow on our daily walk with Him. Continue seeking, continue meditating, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts. We should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present age, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ (Titus 2:12-13). For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ (Philippians 3:20).

Finally, my heart's desire is to impress to the young what the Preacher King Solomon reminds the youth, "Remember also your Creator in the days of your youth, before the evil days come and the years draw near when you will say, " I have no delight in them. I have been young and now I am old." And in all my years I have never seen the Lord forsake a man who loves Him; nor have I seen the children of the godly go hungry. Instead, the godly are able to be generous with their gifts and loans to others, and their children are a blessing" (Psalm 37:25

– 26). Teach us to number our days and recognize how few they are; help us to spend them as we should (Psalm 90:12).

This is the testimony of my life and to God I give the glory for helping me restore them in my memory and the many scriptures that have helped me through my earthly journey with the Good Shepherd. I am not done yet; whatever blessings will result from my memoir will go to the Helping Hands International Ministry.

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May 2008: On April 29<sup>th</sup>, Francis's earthly journey ended. The family celebrated his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday on November 24<sup>th</sup>, 2007. He managed to live independently with the help of his son Roger and my daily visits to him.

Before I made my mission trip to the Philippines in February, he was admitted to the hospital with breathing problems. He gave me his blessings to go, and said, "I will wait for you." I called him regularly to update him of my mission activities. I came back towards the end of March and he was oxygen dependant from apparent pulmonary fibrosis. He was very hopeful to be able to go home or be in an assisted living facility. He was scheduled to be moved May 1<sup>st</sup>, but suddenly his lungs could not take anymore oxygen to sustain him. The day of his departure, we had spent the majority of time praying together, repeating Scripture verses and humming his favorite hymns, preparing him to meet his Maker. He was cognizant two hours before he was ushered into the presence of the Lord. The man God gave to me for a partner in the Helping Hands Ministry was faithful to the end. His and Anna's legacy to the Philippine Mission will continue as long as we are given time by the Lord of the Harvest, in sowing and reaping in the field.

May the Lord find us faithful in our earthly journey and he can say: "Come ye blessed of My father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. Well done, good and faithful servant, you have been faithful over a few

things, I will make you a ruler over many things; enter into the joy of the Lord” (Mathew 25:23-24).

## **APPENDIX**

### **Recognitions**

Church Women United recognizes Juanita Rosales as a valiant woman  
Myrtle Ludeman, Unit President  
Ann B. Galcin National President  
May 1984  
\*\*\*\*\*

Marantha Agape Congregation  
Caldera, Sulipan, Apalit, Pampanga, Philippines  
*Presents with great pride this plaque of appreciation to Juanita Rosales.  
In recognition of and in grateful appreciation for her love and dedication to  
the Lord, for her profound concern and whole hearted support for the Lord's  
work and for her unselfish contribution in the construction of our church  
building.  
Given this 10<sup>th</sup> day of November 1991 at the Maranatha Agape  
Congregation.*  
Reverend Efren D. Villanueva, JR. Founder, Resident Minister  
Pastor Dante Talavera, Chairman, Board of Trustees  
Nora Pangan, Church Secretary  
Marcelina Mundo, Church Treasurer  
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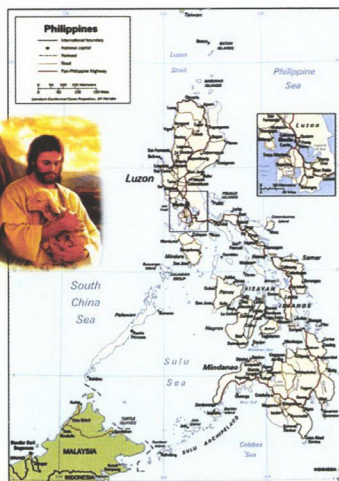
Christ Chosen Church, Philippines, Inc.  
Malolos City, Bulacan  
*Plaque of appreciation to Juanita L. Rosales  
In grateful acknowledgment of her untiring support and dedication in the  
ministry. As partner in the ministry she serves as an inspiration and  
encouragement to many churches for the Glory of God. Given this 29<sup>th</sup> day  
of November 2003 during the inauguration and dedication of its building at  
Malinis St., Maundad, Subnajon, Malolos City, Bulacan, Philippines  
Love & Prayers, Reverend Reynaldo G. Bernardo, Founder, Resident Pastor.*



**J**uanita Basa Lacanilao Rosales was born in Capalangan, Apalit, Pampanga, Philippines in 1926. She was the first graduate nurse of the town of Apalit in April 1949, first chapter nurse of the Pampanga Red Cross serving four years in that capacity and was the first Filipino nurse sponsored by the Montana Deaconess Hospital of Great Falls under the U.S. Educational Exchange Program in June of 1953. She retired after 34

years of service. She married Modesto Abarquez Rosales from Vigan, Ilocos Sur, one of the early waves of Filipinos to come to America who settled in Montana. Together, they had three sons and a daughter, seven grandchildren and ten great-grandchildren.

She completed the story of her life before she turned 82 and remains very active in her volunteer work of mentoring to incarcerated women, providing transportation to the elderly and Christian women's ministries. In March of 1992, she founded the Helping Hands Ministry supported by family, friends and herself to be the instrument of spreading the Word of God and transforming lives in the Philippines. In April of 1999, Juanita received the YWCA Volunteer Award. She derives her inspiration and strength from her personal relationship with her Lord, Jesus Christ. In Isaiah 40:31; those who wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary and they shall walk and not faint. Her recipe for life is Proverbs 3:5-6, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not unto your own understanding, in all your ways, acknowledge Him and He will direct your path."



Cover design by Gary Huffman