

Olive Asis Dugay
Born: October 31
Nueva Vizcaya

Becoming a Deaconess



My father, Rev. Benjamin I. Asis, Sr., was a United Methodist pastor from Nueva Vizcaya. We relocated to San Mateo, Isabela, when he became a District Superintendent of Isabela and Ifugao Districts in 1964. Later he continued his ministerial work as a local pastor. Our family stayed in Isabela for 14 long years.

Being a pastor's kid, I was involved in various church activities such as choir, Sunday School, Christmas Institutes, etc. Our deaconess sent me, together with a few teachers, to conduct extension classes in barrios. I loved and enjoyed my experiences in church, but I was not sure whether I had a calling to become a deaconess. My family and I prayed so hard to seek God's will. Both my eldest sister, Miriam Asis Blanco, a Harris graduate of 1966 and my father inspired me to become a deaconess. I entered Harris Memorial College (HMC) in 1977.

Harris, Field Work, and Summer Appointments

Like other students at HMC, I did Sunday fieldwork in churches around Manila. At summer assignments, I was always asked to return to same churches. The churches provided honorarium and gifts in kind. I saved up the money for my next semester's expenses. The churches I served in my fieldwork were the following: Superville UMC in Paranaque; Highway Hills UMC in Mandaluyong; Muntinglupa UMC; and Malabon North UMC.

Full time deaconess work after graduation

During my junior year at Harris my parents migrated to the United States. As one of their dependents I was to join them and continue my studies in US. Our then HMC President, Dr. Prudencia Fabro, talked to my parents and requested to reconsider their plan so I can complete my studies at Harris, then join them after graduation. Taking Dr. Fabro's recommendation, I stayed. I graduated from Harris in 1981, but not commissioned as a full-fledged deaconess.

1981-1982, Kindergarten Teacher - Deparo UMC, Novaliches Quezon City. Bishop Paul Locke Granadosin appointed me to this church. I served with Rev. Hemesias Ares.

The school was well established. We enrolled about 15 pupils at the opening of the school, later the attendance became 25! I did not have an official assistant, but I had more than enough help from the youth group of the church who volunteered their free time to help in room preparation, decoration, etc.

I enjoyed visitations! One of the practices I maintained in all my teaching assignments was visiting my students who were absent from class to see how they were doing, and at the same time, to establish connections with their parents.

The church had an amazing group of young people who were motivated and actively participated in the church activities. They were my constant companions and support; they showed up after their school and that was when we did most of our visitations. To these young people, I introduced the program called Christmas Institute. They did attend and had a wonderful time.

In 1982, I applied to be commissioned with the Harris graduates of that year. I then attended the Nueva Ecija Philippine Annual Conference. Mr. Armisticio Vilorio, who was then the Dean of Eveland Junior College (EJC) in Isabela, had requested for my appointment due to the need in their school. Upon EJC's request, I was assigned there, my high School Alma Mater. My multi-task assignment: a) Head of the Kindergarten Department, b) Supervisor of the CE Student Fieldwork Practicum, and c) Teacher of Music and Bible studies.

Other churches I served were:

1983-1984, St. Michael Kindergarten School, Binondo, Manila

1984-1985, Church of the Risen Lord, UP Diliman, Quezon City

Family Life & Migration to US

In 1984, I married my long-time boyfriend, Ruben Dugay. We raised a family of two boys and a girl. In 2002 our family migrated to the US, which soon after, Ruben found an employer who petitioned for a working visa for him. As my husband's dependent with children, we hurdled the challenges of acquiring permanent residency through Work Certification. Going through this process was not easy. By the grace of God, we were able to overcome the tests and challenges that came our way. In 2007, we finally started to savor the taste of the "American Dream!"

Life in US

Living in Los Angeles we attended services at the Wilshire United Methodist Church. During my early years in this country, I worked as a volunteer cook in our church. I sang in the choir directed by my husband. I volunteered to prepare meals for the choir and later on for the whole church during the fellowship hour. Eventually, I earned the title, "Chairperson of the Food Committee" in our church!

After more than six years as an unpaid cook, a friend of mine encouraged me to apply for a job at Kaiser Permanente Medical Center where she worked. I did apply but due to lack of local experience, I was not hired. But I did apply in their Food and Nutrition Department.



After waiting a few months, a call came for an interview. During the interview I did not have any work experience to report, but I shared my experiences in the church as a volunteer food preparer for more than six years without compensation. My volunteerism story amazed the interviewer and she decided to give me a shot.

During the first few weeks at my job, I got traumatized by looking at the patients' conditions. I wanted to resign and spoke to my Supervisor. She advised me to write a resignation letter to give her the next day. That night I prepared the letter. To my surprise, she went on a two-week vacation that next day.

It was during her absence that I got adjusted to my new job. By the time she got back, I was already confident and happy with the routine of my responsibilities and I decided to stay. I am currently serving my 10th year as a Nutrition Ambassador at Kaiser Permanente Medical Center in Los Angeles.

Conclusion

As I reflect on my experiences, I realized that for all the years that I volunteered in an American church, God was preparing me for this job of providing nutrition service to the patients. I now consider this my mission and my ministry.

It was a total joy to have served various churches, survived challenges, and made good witness for the Lord God. I still keep in touch with some parents and their grown-up children. There is joy in service.

Dear Lord, I praise and give you thanks! Amen.



With my husband, Ruben