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November 8, 1940
Malolos, Bulacan

Becoming a Deaconess



My parents, Leopoldo and Apolonia Nicolas, were avid members of the Methodist church; in fact, my father was a minister. There were six of us siblings; among the six my dad picked me to go to Harris to become a deaconess.

However, my mother and I were totally opposed to Harris; we preferred I go to the Seminary Conservatory of Music. You see, I was a self-taught organ and piano player since the early age of Grade 4, in elementary. Our parsonage was close by the church where I played the organ every day. By the time I was 1st year high school in Cabanatuan, I was the organ/piano accompanist at church. For this reason, father knew I could be a deaconess.

I had a lot of respect and admiration for all the young deaconesses assigned along with my father in different churches when I was growing up. From them I learned acceptance, kindness, hard work, establishing good relations with people, honesty, and endurance. The deaconesses were knowledgeable, respectful, were excellent teachers, organizers, and leaders, above all, they were spiritual people. As a young girl I looked up to them. They inspired me. In addition to that, there was my pastor father who was totally dedicated to the Lord's work. Because of all that inspiration and my total immersion in church work, to become a deaconess was a natural evolution.

I entered Harris Memorial School (HMS) in June 1959. 1st year at Harris, after some organ lessons, my teacher, Miss Ragindin, confirmed that I did not need to have lessons anymore. In my sophomore year I was assigned as a Music Student Teacher in piano and organ with 3-4 students at a time; this went on until my senior year. I graduated in 1963 with a major in Kindergarten Education.

Assignments

After graduation, I was given a teaching position in Music at Harris Memorial School. This post included Music Theory, Choral Conducting, Piano and Organ, handling several class choirs, and recital productions.

On Sundays, I supervised Harris students at their church assignments as their Field Work teacher. I guided them on how to accomplish the lesson's objectives and purpose. I then made suggestions on how to improve their teaching techniques.

One day, while rehearsing my student choirs at Harris reception area, Pastor Beltisezar DePano of Pandacan UMC came by to see Dr. Fabro passing the reception area. After the rehearsal, Miss Fabro approached me about the special request from Pastor DePano: he requested I be sent to help the Pandacan UMC with their music on Sundays. The following Sunday I attended Pandacan UMC service and from then on handled their music, playing the organ/piano and conducting their choir. Soon after I went on Saturdays and was provided free board and lodging at the Pangilinan family home. The family were prominent members of the church.

Marriage and Family

At the Pandacan church I met this young, vibrant, active member of the choir, who captured my heart. Alex Pangilinan was actively pursuing a Mechanical Engineering degree at that time. We married in 1965, at which time I resigned my post at Harris, but continued my position at the Pandacan church as the Choir Director. We were blessed with 3 boys (our ABCs) Alvin, Bryan, and Clark. Alex is an incredibly wonderful husband, a loving father and grandfather and great grandfather and a very good provider to his family. I praise God!

Coming to America

We have lived in San Diego since 1973. I have served as the choir director at Linda Vista UMC for 10 years. I also found a regular job as a Chargeback Specialist at Union Bank of California, a post I held for 18 years. Alex was a Design Engineer for 40 years at General Atomics Aeronautical System in San Diego; he recently retired.

Beginnings of a Filipino Church/ Ministry

In 1980, we formed a "Filipino United Methodist Association" where we held services at the Boy Scout building at the Chula Vista First UMC where I organized the choir while Rhoda Ablola Dealy organized the children's dance group. This Filipino church was instrumental in promoting the Filipino heritage by generating various programs such as Filipino/English musicals and Filipino folk dances. Filipino Sundays were celebrated in church with Filipino constituents. The successes of the dance troupe led them to perform in various places as far away as Chandler, Arizona, UMC.



In 1990, National City UMC offered the use of their church building for Sunday worship and other activities. Our Filipino group eventually merged with the National City UMC under the stewardship of Rev. Adiel DePano. From 1990 to present I have been the Music Minister. We produced musicals, Christmas Cantatas, Ester Concerts, as well as anthems for Sunday Worship.



Since 1977 our family has been involved in the Philippine-American Society and Cultural Arts Troupe (PASACAT). This is a Filipino American Organization which fosters Filipino Cultural dances and music. At present our sons and four grandchildren are actively involved in the organization. They will be celebrating the 50th anniversary of the founding of the organization this coming August 2020.



For 54 years, truly God has been good and blessed us with three sons: Alvin, Bryan and Clark, daughters-in-law, seven grandchildren and two great grandchildren.

I want to share these Bible verses that gave us strength and faith in life.

Philippians 3:12-14. "Not that I have already obtained all this or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. People, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. (NIV Serendipity Bible).

