

Mother's Sustaining Grace



by XERES VILLANUEVA

MILLIONS OF WOMEN played this leading role. Audition lines can be as long as ten blocks. Despite the long lines, many women managed to make it through the audition landing the role. This role requires a demanding and dynamic performance, willing to work on it for hours and days on end. It requires depth and flexibility to perform the role well. Yet, millions and millions of women came into this role every year. For those who do not know what it is, it is the role of a mother. In this case, Leila Aquino plays the role being my mother.

When people were willing to give up on me because of my autism, my mom refused to give up on me as a human being. She will not let circumstances define who I am. With great courage and thought, she left her travel agency business and moved to the US so that I can get the help I need. She often makes the best out of any situation. She would find something meaningful or worth taking notice. My mother has been doing that ever since she was a child. My mother always finds a way to make good out of something even though she grew up poor. I still amazed on how compassionate my mother was to people. Her faith in me challenged me yet moved me into being a better person. I would have remained in remedial classes for the rest of my life if it

were not for my mother. I remember my mother saying that I have become more than what she ever dreamed. It was only a decade ago when she just only hope that I could talk. Now, I am here in college, having friends, and living up to my convictions. I owe my mother more than I can say.

Mothers come in many backgrounds, shapes and size. There are so many ways to play the role of a mother. To become a mother, a woman takes on the responsibilities of a caregiver either through bringing a new life into the world or through adopting a child as your own. My own mom did that. She nurtures me and my sister, Natasha, so both of us will grow strong. Her love for both of us is her source of courage to perform the most selfless and life changing acts that go unnoticed. Mom finds a way to protect me and my



Leila Aquino(left) and daughter Natasha(right)



sister so that we will live well. Mom makes sure that Natasha and I know that our lives mean something. The greatest gifts anyone can give to my mom is a word of prayer and one's loving presence. During my own life, I have seen many women who perform the mother role well. Through many moments and hard-

ship, I can see that my mother, Leila Aquino, live up to her role as a mother. Have a good Mother's Day, mom. ***

Xeres attended Azusa Pacific University as an English and Communications major. She has written many things including her award winning speech "Living Miracle."

Charice reveals her real inspiration

by THEA ALBERTO
Inquirer.net



MANILA—At the age of 17, singer Charice Pempengco conquered the world, receiving standing ovations in concerts abroad as she shared the stage with music icons.

Some may attribute her success to a YouTube clip uploaded by a fan that eventually led to her guestings in popular US television shows Ellen DeGeneres and Oprah. But for Charice, credits should go to her mother Raquel.

"Super po akong humahanga sa kaniya," said Charice, noting that although her mom was a single parent, she was able to send her and his brother to school.

For this, Charice lovingly dedicated her newly released second album entitled *My Inspiration* to her mom, in time for the upcoming Mother's Day.

"For Mommy po ang lahat ng ito. At pati na rin po sa lahat ng mummies sa buong mundo, lahat ng mummies na naghilirap para sa anak," Charice told the entertainment press at the launch of her new album, which features 12 revivals including *Wind Beneath My Wings* and the mother-daughter duet *You and Me Against the World*.

The album, only produced and recorded in one month, also includes a minus-one compact disc.

In her album, Charice thanked famous host Oprah Winfrey whom she calls "Mommy Oprah" and popular musician "Daddy David Foster," her international mentor.

Charice said she personally picked some of the songs that would describe her relationship with her mom. In her next projects, Charice intends to include some of her compositions, also inspired by her mother.

But Charice is not yet ready for another "inspiration." She'd rather focus on her career unless the right one comes. If that happens, Charice hopes she need not choose between love and career.

"Kahit anong lahi basta't mamahalin niya ako, na kahit mawala ako sa showbiz mamahalin niya pa rin ako," said Charice.

But for now, Charice is set to do more shows abroad and to record her international album. Her voice will be included at *Alvin and the Chipmunks* to be shown on December.

Charice, still euphoric about her success, said she is still surprised that people always ask for an autograph or a photo with her.

She also takes pride in having bought some properties from her earning. Now Charice owns a seven-door apartment, a house in Royal Estate in Tagaytay, and a white Ford Expedition.

"I still want to do a lot of things. I want to be a lawyer...I also want to be called a singer-song writer," said Charice. ■

Fil-Am Mom...

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doing our Christmas shopping at Ralph Lauren, my kids wanted to buy something and they asked my husband for permission. The manager of the store overheard my kids talking to my husband. He was so pleased with my kids that he gave them each a shirt. He said that it is very rare nowadays for kids to be so respectful in asking something from their parents. Me and my husband are so happy. We know that we raised our kids right.

AJ: How were you able to apply the learnings you gleaned from your own parents when you raised your kids?

Anna: I tell my kids to always put Christ as the center of their lives, to be kind and respectful of others. I also tell them to always do their best. Much is given and much is expected. My grandmother would always tell us, "Ang suwerte ni Juan ay iba sa suwerte ni Pedro."

"It's okay to be different, never be ashamed of who you are. We all have our destiny but everything can change through prayers. If I am unsure about something I always ask Mama Mary for her guidance. Teach your kids to be kind. Be positive. Encourage your kids, at the same time, challenge them to achieve their fullest potential."

AJ: Do you have a message to impart to other hardworking Fil-Am mothers?

Anna: It is okay to be different, never be ashamed of who you are. We all have our destiny but everything can change through prayers. If I am unsure about something I always ask Mama Mary for her guidance. Teach your kids to be kind. Be positive. Encourage your kids, at the same time, challenge them to achieve their fullest potential. ■

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