

A TRIBUTE TO MY MOTHER

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Mommy Sollie celebrated her 90th birthday last May 10. All of us siblings, except one, were able to visit her at Moonwalk, Paranaque City, together with our spouses, children, and children's children. All in all, she has 8 children (7 of whom are married), 31 grandchildren (including spouses of those married), and 7 great grandchildren (plus 3 to be born this 2023). The ones who live abroad and could not travel joined us via Zoom.

It was a whole day of celebration with lots of food from breakfast till dinner; it was a fun-filled and heartwarming family reunion as we recognized God's grace that sustained Mommy Sollie throughout the years. The trivia game that ensued allowed the children to reminisce about who she is to us. The grandchildren and great grandchildren had the chance to learn interesting facts about her.

We shared our fondest memories of Mommy Sollie. She is a very good cook. I love her *kare-kareng buntot* paired with pork adobo with liver. Her *morcon* and *mechado* are superb. Her *lumpiang shanghai* is irresistible. Her *siopao*, especially the dough, is to die for. When I was around 12 years old, she requested that I fry *pampano*. Knowing how strict she is and what a good cook

she is, I was nervous about taking on the task. During those times, we did not have Teflon pans yet, so I needed to make sure the cooking oil was hot enough so the skin of the fish would not stick to the pan.

When the oil was hot enough, I gingerly slid the *pampano* onto the pan. When the bottom side was already crispy, I flipped the *pampano*. After a few minutes, it turned golden brown, and I took it out of the pan. I brought the *pampano* before Mommy Sollie. I was nervous like a candidate from the Iron Chef. With her face looking stern, she took a knife and fork, cut a small piece of the *pampano*, and slowly slid it into her mouth. Then she looked at me and said, "*Ang sarap ng luto mo, Lito!*" I heaved a sigh of relief! I felt like a young master cook. This experience I had with Mommy Sollie inspired me not only to cook but to have a deep love of cooking!

At 90 years old, Mommy Sollie no longer cooks. But she has made an indelible mark in my life, not only in cooking but in how to face life in general. She has been living a full life. Though she is not as physically strong as she used to be, her mind remains sharp. Moses wrote, "The years of our life are seventy, or even by reason of strength eighty" (Psalm 90:10a). Mommy Sollie has been blessed

beyond measure. We pray for God's steadfast love to continue to hold her up in the next 10 years or so.

One of the greatest privileges I have as a son to Mommy Sollie is leading her to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ in January 2005. She was then with my late father, who was based in the US. When my father passed on to God's glory in April 2017, she decided to live with my sister here in Paranaque City. She started to attend our in-person worship services at GCF South Metro before the pandemic hit in 2020. And, she continues to do so online.

Today is a good time to remember how our respective mothers made an impact on our lives. If they are still living, give them a word of encouragement. If they are with the Lord already, share who your mother is with your children. For mothers who are alone, rest assured that God is always with you. For those of you who are praying for the salvation of your mothers, never stop praying for them! Keep praying and sharing the gospel with them through the power of the Holy Spirit. Be confident in God's timing that they will soon profess their faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior!

To all mothers out there, Happy Mother's Day! ✨