

# GRATUS

CFC ANCOP Australia Ambassador Program Souvenir Magazine May 2018

WHEN CARING AND  
SHARING HAPPEN

BEING  
GRATEFUL

INSPIRING STORIES  
& REFLECTIONS



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# *Gratitude continues*

**I**t always seems impossible until it's done! And today we come together to affirm what we have accomplished even in such a short time of three and a half-months' intensive campaign for our mission of building the Church of the poor. We thank our ANCOP Ambassadors from all parts of Australia for being at the forefront of this campaign, you are our heroes, truly the Magnificent 13!

And so, this magazine is to commemorate your courage in saying 'yes'. As we said from the start, this year's ANCOP Ambassador program is especially challenging. The change from Child Sponsorship Program to Education Sponsorship Program as well as our duty of care with regards to Child Protection inevitably requires us to reflect and communicate new insights and re-understanding of what compels us to give.

This magazine is also for our donors, partners, and volunteers here in Australia. With featured sharings from our beneficiaries and Project Implementation Team who work on the ground, we hope to give a picturesque representation of the fruits of their generosity.

But more than these, this magazine is a token of our unity in heart, mind and spirit. Our work is a partnership with all those who care and hope in love. Our beneficiaries always express how grateful they are. Through the ANCOP Ambassador program, we in turn express our gratitude to all our family partners in the ANCOP global network. Thank you, because you have made us discover that our capacity to give and love is so much more than we thought we were able to.

This magazine is called *Gratus*, Latin for "being grateful". We are very grateful to God...very grateful to you!



# MESSAGES



## O

In behalf of the board of CFC ANCOP Global Foundation and the CFC International Council, I greet and thank you all-- very dedicated partners of this noble undertaking-- for your commendable efforts to raise awareness for the work of ANCOP and to raise funds for our less fortunate brethren.

I understand this is the fourth edition of the biennial CFC ANCOP Australia's Ambassador program to raise funds for ANCOP's various programs, including the provision of support to very poor but deserving students. Through the kind and wholehearted help of partners like you, we have been able to send more than 6,000 children to school. This year, the educational sponsorship program also includes financial assistance to parents. This supports their participation in a one-year vocational training program to enable them to acquire new skills to get a job. We have collaborated with Don Bosco Vocational Schools in this undertaking.

CFC ANCOP (mission with the poor programs) will continue to support programs and projects that help alleviate poverty. CFC ANCOP Australia has been very active in their support not only of the programs in the Philippines, but also in Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, and hopefully soon in other countries in Oceania.

We sincerely appreciate the efforts of CFC Australia in harnessing its members, friends, and supporters to partner with ANCOP in our endeavors. Together with the global CFC ANCOP community, you continue to make a difference by living out your faith and sharing Christ's transforming love with the poor.

Let us not tire of doing good!

In Christ,

Lito Tayag

Chairman, CFC ANCOP Global Foundation

# MESSAGES

# G

reetings and peace!

We welcome you, on behalf of the CFC Community, to our 2018 CFC ANCOP *An Evening of Gratitude!*

Fr. Raniero Cantalamessa tells us that we sometimes tend to place a double glazing between ourselves and the poor:

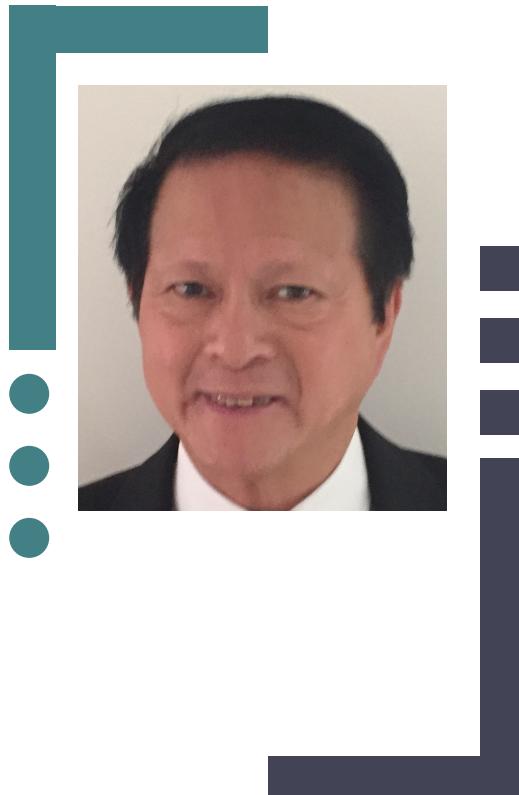
"The effect of double glazing, so much in use today, is to keep out cold and noise. It dilutes everything, deadens and muffles every sound. So, it is with the poor: we see them on our TV screens or in the pages of newspapers or missionary magazines, but their cries are a distant echo that never reaches our hearts. We protect ourselves from them".

"Blessed are the Poor in Spirit for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven". We praise God for our ANCOP Ambassadors and their selfless and untiring desire to love the poor. The CFC ANCOP Ambassador 2018 program was a resounding success! From birthday celebrations to gourmet dinners, from acoustic/talent shows to movie nights, and from Bingo socials to formal dinner dance, zumbas and radio interviews, all ANCOP Ambassadors radiated extraordinary passion and drive ... they were all amazingly inspiring! They do not desire to "have more" but to "be more" in greater gratitude towards their Creator and compassion towards the poorest of the poor - our fellow human beings.

Congratulations and more blessings to our donors, benefactors, friends, and the CFC community – in gratitude, we extend a big THANK YOU for your generous hearts. Together with the ANCOP Ambassadors from Sydney, Canberra, Melbourne, Adelaide, Perth, Darwin and Cairns, let us rekindle our gifts and fulfil our ministry to become the "Church of the poor ... for the poor" (Pope Francis).

May God's enduring love touch hearts and transform lives.  
God be praised!

Denis Reyes  
Chairman, CFC ANCOP Australia Pty. Ltd.



## HOW I WOULD LIKE A CHURCH WHICH IS POOR AND FOR THE POOR..."

In an audience, a few days after his election as pope, his Holiness Pope Francis confided to the assembled journalists why he chose the name Francis: "That is how the name came into my heart: Francis of Assisi. For me, he is the man of poverty, the man of peace, the man who loves and protects creation; these days we do not have a very good relationship with creation, do we? He is the man who gives us this spirit of peace, the poor man ... How I would like a Church which is poor and for the poor!"

**T**hirteen men and women campaigned intensively for ANCOP in the last few months.

Their aim was to raise awareness for ANCOP, and to rally financial support for its various programs and mission with the poor. We express our deepest gratitude to them— our **ANCOP Ambassadors of 2018-19**.

**Ambassadors of 2018-19.** They have been very generous with their time and energy. We thank them for their toil, humility, and the willing spirit to become instruments of God's love. The following pages speak about their experience, reflections, and heartfelt thanks.

# ANCOP

## AMBASSADORS OF CARING AND SHARING



Lyz Salcedo, Cairns



Karren Dapar, VIC



Lira Capco, NSW



Bobby Edmilao, NSW



Helen Festejo, NSW



Rachel Bernabe, ACT



Bleisha Rivera, NSW

*"Lord, teach me to be generous, to serve You as You deserve, to give and not to count the cost, to fight and not to heed the wounds, to toil and not to seek for rest, to labour and not to ask for reward, save that of knowing that I do Your holy will. Amen."*

St Ignatius



Simone Bautista, NSW



Rose Narag-Greenrod, SA



Erika Mae Lu, NT



Gemma Perez, NSW



Arnold Tan, WA



Ian Alcazar, VIC

We also thank the ANCOP coordinators, and the many other ambassador mentors whose names would be too long to list here, for their support of the campaign.

### ANCOP Coordinators

#### ACT

Ruel and Annie Abello

#### NSW

Nick & Juliet Vargas  
Chito and Mylene Sarmiento  
Jomar and Liberty Foronda  
Allan and Irma Torres  
Michael and Maricet Blancia  
Portia Mariano  
Grace Tonel  
Werner Torres

#### NT

Almir and Jasmin Navarro

#### QLD

Roland and Belle Tenorio

#### Northern QLD

Brian and Joms Uy

#### SA

Leon and Juliet Navarro

#### VIC

Lolit Navarro  
Alida Schembri

#### WA

Joy and In-In Intervencion



The ambassador campaign revealed to me the innate goodness in people.

# RE AFFIRMED

Earlier this year, I stayed with a family living in a resettlement village in Taysan, Albay. The village was built and supported by ANCOP. The villagers are full of life and love in their very modest accommodation, despite the overcrowding, the looming threat of typhoons, and even of volcanic eruptions. In their village hopes and dreams are encouraged through faith and a renewed sense of optimism, that they have a chance for a brighter future. Spending time with them, I experienced how the help of charities like ANCOP can transform people's lives.

It is easy to feel detached from the plight of the poor especially for us living in the comfort of a first world country. The trip made me realise that these people are more than mere statistics. Everyone has their own story... stories of hardship, resilience, inspiration and happiness, that our help can really make a lasting, positive impact on them.

With this experience, I was inspired to accept the role of an ambassador.

The ambassador campaign reaffirmed to me the innate goodness of people. There were many people willing to help in whatever way they could. Some even approached me and suggested an idea for

a fundraiser or an idea to help the poor in other ways. Their enthusiasm revealed to me their charitable and selfless hearts. This reaffirmed my notion that people would always be there when an opportunity to help others is presented.

During the campaign, we had opportunities to spread awareness about our mission. We set up information stalls at the *Rise Conference* hosted by the Archdiocesan Office for the Youth, and at the University of Melbourne's *Night Market*. I was overjoyed with people volunteering to help out at these events. They brought awareness about our mission to people outside of the community. I realised that as an ambassador, part of my responsibility is to turn other people into advocates for ANCOP. I believe that people who accept the call to help ANCOP also become ambassadors.

I have been with the CFC community since joining Youth for Christ in 2008. My experiences have affirmed that our community practices what the church preaches, with CFC members extending helping hands to fulfil our mission for the poor. Whether it is time, treasure or talent, I am overjoyed by their willingness to serve our less fortunate brothers and sisters.

I would like to express my sincerest gratitude to those who supported the campaign in helping the poor. Having seen the hardworking ANCOP team in the CFC Global Mission Centre in Manila and having a glimpse of what ANCOP has done through its community development program in Taysan, I assure you that your contribution to this campaign will reach the less fortunate. But the mission is never over, please continue to support the mission of ANCOP and be an advocate for our mission to Answer the Cry of the Poor. Again, thank you and may God bless you!



# FEEDING THE HUNGRY

**"The hunger of today is so much greater: for love, to be wanted, to be loved, to be cared for, to be somebody" and through ANCOP's mission we can do something about this."**

**A**NCOP has always been something that I've kept close to my heart since an immersion trip during a YFC - Oceania Great Adventure Tour four years ago in the Philippines. On the first day of our visit I remember waking up in my host family's house and feeling a sense of warmth and joy being in their presence. The families living in the village had very little material things. Despite living a simple life their hospitality and the love that they shared with us was immense.

After the immersion trip I felt the urge to give some of my time to assist those who are less fortunate and that's when I took on the role as team coordinator for Vinnies Sydney Night Patrol (Food Van) Services. I was inspired to take on the ANCOP Ambassador role because it allowed me to continue serving the poor by raising awareness about ANCOP's mission to help continue their amazing work across the Philippines, Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands. When I was given the opportunity to take on the role I saw it as an opportunity to give back to families—just like the one who hosted me four years ago.

The campaign has taught me that there can never be enough kindness and love in this world. In today's society we often wake up reading news about terrible events that have occurred around the world and this campaign showed me that people can still be kind to each other. Even the smallest of things that are done with great love can have an incredible impact on others.

The ambassador role has allowed me to go a little bit out of my comfort zone in order to spread the mission and vision of ANCOP. I am grateful for the opportunity to encourage others to give their time to help people restore their dignity by overcoming

poverty. It has also reminded me of the power of a community like ours who are willing to rally together for a worthy cause. The CFC Community is filled with dedicated and charitable individuals and this is definitely something I witnessed and encountered in the SFC Ministry. The Ambassador role also showed me that it isn't just about trying to raise money but it's also about encouraging others to work together to really make a positive change.

Through my volunteer work with both Vinnies and the ANCOP campaign I have come to realise that a lot of people experiencing poverty don't only require handouts. In order to help them have a brighter future we also need to help them with long term improvements and we can start by listening to them and working with them through education programs and community development. Their living situations are often unsafe or overcrowded and this consequently

**SIMONE BAUTISTA**  
SINGLES FOR CHRIST, NSW



affects their ability to feel a sense of worth and dignity in society. This program has inspired me to really look into how I can help individuals and families' living situations in order to help them feel safer in participating in family and community life.

Saint Teresa is one of my favourite saints and she once said "Let us not make a mistake - that the hunger is only for a piece of bread. The hunger of today is so much greater: for love - to be wanted, to be loved, to be cared for, to be somebody" and through ANCOP's mission we can do something about this. CFC is an incredible community filled with kind, loving and generous people. It made me feel blessed to be part of a community that shares Christ's love with the poor. The events and money raised would not have happened if it were not for the team and supporters that assisted me along the way. The events required a lot of effort and time and I owe it to the amazing people who assisted me and kept ANCOP in their prayers— the SFC ANCOP team, area leaders, coordinators, families, friends and generous donors. Thank you! Let's continue doing great work in serving families who hope for a brighter future.





# THANKFUL!

“This is how I could give back, by serving others.”

**B**eing born in and growing up in Australia, I am just so blessed that I haven't experienced any of the hardships that many suffer through daily. I have always wanted to give back for all the blessings I have received. When I discerned about taking this role, I really felt God telling me that this is how I could give back, by serving others.

The extent of poverty in the world is far too big for us not to do anything about it. The work that we do might be a small drop in the ocean, but that drop is changing one life at a time. Our caring and sharing make the world a better place for someone else.

From my campaign experience, I learnt how much further my dollar goes when it is spent on others and how fulfilled I feel when it is shared. I am closer to the CFC community now and for that I am truly grateful.

I want to express my sincere gratitude for all the support I have received from my family, friends and strangers through this campaign. It has been an intense period but I found so much joy in this new service. I would like to thank the CFC community for their support and welcoming me to their homes and households to present about ANCOP. I also want to say a big thank you to my CAST— Core Ambassador Support Team — who were my parents and ANCOP coordinators Tito Ruel and Tita Annie Abello. I am so grateful for my coordinators' support in arranging and attending all the household visits with me and supporting me through all endeavours. I am also so grateful for my immediate and

extended family for everything they've helped with during the campaign. All my family members here in Australia, even from Canada, supported me. My lolo and lola would talk about ANCOP to their friends and the parishioners at church, distribute pledge forms and even sell homemade food to their friends and make food for us to sell at CFC prayer assemblies. Thank you to my parents who attended every household visit and were with me at every ANCOP event. Thank you dad for running for me when I got sick and was unable to do the Australian Running Festival for ANCOP and thank you mum for all the days you spent preparing food, handmade items, ANCOP signage for presentations and other events. Thank you mum and dad for being my biggest support!

**A**long with the overwhelming support from the CFC community, I want to thank my family and friends outside of CFC who showed such support and generosity. Thank you to the students from my old school, St Clare's College as well as others I met through Youth Ministry who were so willing to help. In particular, I want to thank *This is Heaven* who held an 'ANCOP week' and donated to my campaign. I also thank *Delikase* for their own initiative hosting a Bingo Bonanza. Thank you to Kiki Hernandez from *AKT Fitness* for

RACHEL  
**BERNABE**  
YOUTH FOR CHRIST, CANBERRA

**ANCOP**  
AMBASSADORS  
OF CARING AND SHARING



Rachel, with biggest supporters Mum Gladys and Dad Roger

holding a Zumba fundraiser and to Tanya Joveski from Go Figure Fitness for her huge support and generosity throughout. I also want to thank Phillip Joveski for running in the Australian Running Festival and for assisting in many ANCOP fundraisers. Thank you to 1Way FM Christian radio station for interviewing me and helping me spread ANCOP to their listeners!

Thank you CFC for allowing me this opportunity to help the poor. I will continue to pray for ANCOP's mission. God bless you all.



# RUE JOY

“My ambassador experience made me realise that I am actually at my happiest when serving.”

**I**saw the ANCOP ambassador role as an opportunity for me and my family to give back to the community. I strongly believe in ANCOP’s vision, and in focusing on providing support to children’s education. Education breaks the vicious cycle of poverty. Knowing that my family can be an instrument to change the life of someone we don’t even know or have never met gives us a true sense of joy.

The ambassador campaign has taught me how most people are willing to help support a good cause if given the opportunity. It has also given me a renewed appreciation of all that I have or don’t have. It also made me re-evaluate my life goals. Before, our goal as a couple was to work hard to be able to have a good life. Now it’s more of working hard not just for our family, but also for others. This experience made me realise that we don’t just live for ourselves — there is a reason why God is blessing us with so much and that is to be an instrument to help other people.

My ambassador experience made me realise that I am actually at my happiest when serving. This gives me a sense of fulfilment totally different from when I achieve something at work. I realised that in order to have more you must give more, both in material and non-material things. The experience also confirmed to me that the people in this community truly live and breathe the vision of CFC and ANCOP. That no matter how busy they are, everyone is

willing to contribute in whatever way they can. I felt their sincerity and care for the poor in every activity.

Everyone who contributed to our campaign is an inspiration. Everyone’s tireless efforts for this cause is something that I will forever remember. I am lucky to be surrounded with people who were always ready to help and support every activity that we had. Most of them gave of their time to help, which I consider special considering how busy we are here.

I am very grateful for my family who gave me full support, especially for my husband. He was not able to join me in some activities due to his work schedule, but he made sure that I had everything I needed ready in every fundraising activity.

I would like to thank the CFC community for their support. To all the households who contributed, gave of their time to serve and made themselves available even at very short notice, thank you! Without you the activities would not have been successful.

Our current campaign might have ended, but I hope everyone’s support for ANCOP will continue as it is making a huge difference to the lives of our less fortunate brothers and sisters. All our efforts put together will surely have a great impact

towards helping them achieve their dreams of a better life. To ANCOP beneficiaries, we care for you! No matter what life throws at you, always remember that there are good people out there who are willing to help. So don’t give up, keep pushing on your dreams. If you fall, get up, move on, and most importantly, always ask God for strength and guidance.



“People from all walks of life have the capacity to love and share.”

# LOVE AND HUMILITY



Photos above: With Tita Lolit; and CFC leaders of the Southwest chapter.

I just migrated to Melbourne by myself last year, have no family or close friends to begin with, and am still trying to establish myself in this new-found home. When I was asked to be an ANCOP ambassador, I didn't hesitate to say yes – even though I'm just new – because I felt that God is calling me to do so. Back when I was in Singapore serving in SFC, I had the opportunity to go on mission in the Philippines for ANCOP and immersed myself in the work of ANCOP. It was truly a humbling experience and the memories linger on up to now. I believe that ANCOP is God's vehicle to reach out to the poor and that inspires me to allow myself to be used and be empowered by God as an ambassador.

One of the highlights of my campaign was the movie fundraising. Liaising with the cinema, posting digital ads and inviting everyone to attend the event can be draining and a daunting task, but the help of CFC leaders in my area lightened the load. Tickets were sold out three days before the event and it felt great to see heaps of familiar faces at the event to show their support. What a satisfying moment it was knowing that all the effort and hard work were worth it.

From this experience and my other campaign activities, I've learned that people from all walks of life have the capacity to love and share what they can. We just have to spread the awareness of ANCOP's mission and let people know how they can help. I've also realised during this campaign that people who most succeed in life are the ones who genuinely practice humility.

The ambassador role has taught me that I can't be a real servant if I don't have a humble heart. There were times when I thought that I don't deserve this role but I've learned to acknowledge my imperfections, listen to my mentors and

admit that I am vulnerable. I am an introvert, I don't talk a lot to people and I only knew few CFCs in the community. But when I became an ambassador, I had the chance to meet almost all CFC members in my area. I've heard many different stories of victories and defeats which broadened my perspective in life as a single person. It is a learning experience for me as well to present and speak to people with diverse personalities. Truly God has equipped me to do things I've never done before.

Even if the campaign period has ended, I will still continue to support and promote the work of ANCOP. The challenges I've encountered during the campaign have made me a tougher servant of God.

**T**he CFC community has that vibrant and welcoming vibe. Only few CFCs knew me personally but I can feel their warm support and affirmation throughout the campaign. Their sincerity to help and a common mindset to work towards a common good manifested through their actions and responses. The love and support to one another is evident and admirable.

To all who supported the campaign, especially the Southwest Chapter and SFC Melbourne, my sincerest thanks for your support and trusting me to represent our area. Thank you for your encouragement to keep me going. To the ANCOP Core Group headed by Tita Lolit, thank you for your guidance and for always pushing us to go beyond our limits. To my family and friends, thank you for all your donations. And of course, to my coordinators Kuya Arman and Ate Irene Nunez, praise God for your servant hearts! You are truly an inspiration to everyone. Above all, I thank the Lord almighty for sustaining me and for allowing me to encounter Him in the unfamiliar. May God be praised in all that we do.

**M**y experience as an ANCOP ambassador has confirmed my belief that people are innately good and willing to lend a helping hand whenever they can. While some gave generous monetary contributions, a lot of people supported this campaign by giving their time, talent, food, extending whatever help they could. Initially I was very nervous and

was one of those who donated early. I will forever remember her as a strong and brave woman with a generous spirit.

Another unforgettable moment of my campaign was during the Valentine's Day Dance Party at Stanhope Gardens. The Hawkesbury Chapter members kindly gave of their time, talent and heart to decorating the venue, serving



Throughout my campaign, I realised that support is always there, you just have to ask for it.

# PUTTING FAITH INTO ACTION

**“Sometimes those who have less are the ones who surprise us.”**

hesitant to approach people to ask for donations and support. But the inspiration I got from the community, my family and friends gave me the confidence to try harder and reach out to everyone.

Throughout my campaign, I realised that support is always there, you just have to ask for it. Whenever there is an obstacle, there will always be someone to solve the problem. God will always be there to help and protect. He will always send His angels to guide you on the right path and to conquer your fears. I realised how blessed we are to have so many angels in our community, including people who were not members of our community but willingly volunteered to perform for free to raise funds for our cause. The amount of time and effort they took to practice for a fundraising concert we had was unbelievable. We are truly blessed.

Sometimes those who have less are the ones who surprise us by giving more. I was deeply touched by a donor who despite losing her husband to cancer and facing the future of raising her son on her own, donated generously to ANCOP. She sponsored not one but two children! She

food, cleaning the hall, setting up musical equipment and donating drinks and food for the service team. It was truly wonderful to experience firsthand the support and dedication of the CFC community.

If given the chance, I would definitely do this role again. It is a challenging role but it is also very fulfilling. It has taught me how to be humble, patient, resilient, and how to deal with different kinds of people. But most of all it has taught me to put my faith into action... as faith without works is dead (James 2:17). My heart sings every time I receive a pledge or donation no matter how small not just because of the prospect of educating one child but because through these actions we affirm our faith and transform our lives and that of others.

I realised how generous our members are in giving their talent, time, and resources. Most of those who supported this campaign are our members. I did not have a hard time at all in soliciting financial support from them. I know that we have been asking so much from them, as there were

several fundraising activities already, but they showed their compassion for the poor in all activities.

The ANCOP Ambassador has been a rewarding experience for me and I would like to thank God for this wonderful opportunity. To all those who in one way or another contributed to the campaign, may God continue to bless you and your families for your generosity. A special mention to Chito and Mylene Sarmiento, my ANCOP coordinators. They were always there to help and inspire me. I also would like to thank Lorie and Nanette Estera, my mentors who gave valuable advice, and pulled me up whenever I fell. Truly, they are angels sent from heaven. I also would like to thank my lovely wife — she is my rock, my light, and my avid supporter. She was a tremendous help in soliciting pledges!

May the work we do transform the lives of those who need it most and may they feel God's love and compassion. Let us pray for all the people and volunteers involved in ANCOP that they may continue to do this work for the glory of God almighty. Please continue to give generously to ANCOP.



**W**hen I was shown the work of ANCOP and asked to be the Ambassador, I could not turn my gaze elsewhere. I said Yes without hesitation. Feeling really humbled, I remembered what Pope Francis said, that "in all circumstances, all Christians should listen to the cry of the poor". I felt that this was my call to action. It has always been part of my daily prayer to ask God to show me my purpose, so I feel this is His answer to that prayer.

Being the Ambassador, I have learned to look at poverty for what it really is. We were in Manila earlier this year and I had a clearer view of the social landscape—seen with a fresh set of eyes. This has strengthened my resolve to do something; to be an agent of change, to be a channel of God's blessings. Having this in mind and heart, giving becomes easier, and 'asking or begging' on behalf of the least becomes less uncomfortable.

As the ambassador, I believe I have been able to influence others to follow suit. This is shown in the increase in the number of Handmaids making a commitment to support ANCOP. They really inspired me a lot. During the household visits, I got the chance to know my sisters better and understand their individual circumstances. While some have full time jobs and partners, most of them are on their own, facing their own adversities and fighting their own battles. In them, I saw the power of the human spirit. With a little inspiration and encouragement, they have been able to tap into their creative space to translate their time, talent and treasure into something so tangible, which enables them to be of help to others. I realised that the Handmaids are very enterprising!

The Handmaids and I had a lot of joyful times during the campaign. The silent "Market Market" was fun! We were selling all sorts of things through Facebook Messenger. Including macaroons! The "Autumnfest" was a joyful occasion where we gathered and had fun – without even thinking of how much we are supposed to raise. This was a great opportunity though to present to non-CFCs what ANCOP is about.

I found the biggest consolation from St Peter Chanel parish, after speaking to the parishioners after the mass. Tita Josie Pangilinan emailed to say that we have touched the hearts of the listeners. Many

**HELEN FESTEJO**  
HANDMAIDS OF THE LORD, NSW

**MY CALL TO ACTION**

**"In all circumstances, all Christians should listen to the cry of the poor". [Pope Francis]**

people came up to us that weekend and praised and affirmed us for caring for others. It did not matter how much money we received, all that mattered was how many hearts had been touched.

The campaign has taught me a lot about myself. I realised that I am more courageous, daring and bolder than I thought I could be. I was able to put away my reservations, especially when it comes to asking for donations, and be seen and become vulnerable out there. Speaking before an entire congregation at St Peter



Chanel and St Joseph was most nerve wracking but I braved it. I was graced! To beg for the poor, I faced the risk of rejection. There were instances when I was turned away. This sense of vulnerability has somehow become the motivating factor for me to be creative. This in fact has given birth to the humble "Handmaid Macaroons" – flavoured with love, filled with grace!

There are so many people to thank. I'd like to personally honour Tita Tey. At the height of her major battle, she gave something which she probably was also in most need of. Through her self-sacrifice, more children will be in school next year. The Parable of the Widow has come to life! I thank my husband and daughters who have been so understanding and supportive. Our family routine was disrupted by my frequent absence, attending meetings, visiting households, etc. My husband has generously sacrificed his time, to be my personal uber driver, and took on the duties of both mother and father when I was away doing my ANCOP duties. These times provided opportunities for father-daughter bonding times, and numerous KFC meals!

I'd like to thank CFC ANCOP for this wonderful opportunity. I am deeply grateful to the HOLD for nominating me to be the ambassador. Without their support, I wouldn't have been able to do this on my own. A lot of miracles happened through this journey because the Handmaids worked solidly. I am deeply grateful to everyone who responded to the invitation to support this mission. It is your generous support that allowed all of us become channels of God's transforming love.



ERIKA MAE  
LU

SINGLES FOR CHRIST, NORTHERN TERRITORY

ANCOP  
AMBASSADORS  
OF CARING AND SHARING



I come from a small, simple and loving family and was raised in the province of Albay, Philippines. I belong to a family filled with hopes and dreams. Australia was a blessing to us. It has given us a better life, a brighter future. So this year, I decided to celebrate my birthday differently. My family and I organised a party in a remote area of my hometown, and invited the poor children there to attend. It was heart melting to see the looks on their faces when they saw Jollibee, the party host mascot. Their priceless reaction will always be in my heart. It made me realise how my small gesture was BIG for them! That I made something REAL for them. It made me more grateful for all the friends I have, the people in the community I belong to and serve with, all the inspirational people I have met, and everything that I have. Those children inspired me to say YES in answering the cry of the poor. Thus I agreed to become an ANCOP ambassador.

Being an ambassador can be challenging for a university student like me. I believe in the value of good education and I'm doing my best to finish my Bachelor's degree and do good works to glorify God, while balancing all my other work and service commitments and family life. However, I

came across a very challenging week when I had to present to four households during the weekend, I had to do a quiz for my University class, I had to finalise and submit three class reports, and I had to go to work since I have a casual job. Sadly, I started to cough and eventually had flu after that eventful week. I prayed for God's healing and decided to see a doctor a few days after trying to self-heal myself and after having a sleepless night because I could not stop coughing. It was indeed a very eventful and challenging week for me but praise God that He healed me. I may have been physically weak but the spiritual strength and protection He provided allowed me to continue in this journey.

The campaign made me fully see Christ through the people I encountered. I am honoured that I became an instrument to show how truly generous and kind people are. I am grateful that they gave me the opportunity to witness their big hearts for our poor brothers and sisters.

This experience moulded me into a person who believes that even though we are just one out of billions of people in the world, we can make an impact and we can help change someone's life. One of my favourite saints, Saint Teresa of

Calcutta once said, "Not all of us can do great things. But we can do small things with great love." Hence, no matter how small we think our act of kindness is, we do not know how BIG it can be for others.

My family not only supported and inspired me all throughout this campaign, but they have also been my rock. In those times when I felt really tired and down after a long day, going back home to my family calmed me down.

This ANCOP Ambassador campaign had been a challenging yet great experience. I have been truly blessed and honoured to be an advocate of hope. For all of the support, prayers, and inspiration I received from my beautiful family, Mama, Papa, and Kuya; from my dedicated and supportive coordinators, Ate Mimi and Kuya Almir; from my Titos, Titas, brothers and sisters in my CFC Darwin community, particularly my family ministry, Singles for Christ; from my friends especially Janry who became my stress reliever and Ate Angela who guided me since day one, from the bottom of my heart, THANK YOU. Thank you for affirming that I'm doing a great job whenever I doubted myself. Thank you so much for believing in me.

And to the Almighty Father, I am beyond grateful for this opportunity to serve You. Thank You for giving me strength and guidance. Thank You for not leaving me. Indeed, God does not call the qualified but He qualifies the called. If given the chance, it would be an honour and a great blessing to do this ANCOP Ambassador role again. The challenges and hard work may be BIG but the BIGGER joy I received by sharing my time, talent and treasure to the beneficiaries of ANCOP, and the BIGGEST blessing we give to them are simply incomparable.



# BLESSED TO BE A BLESSING

**I** was inspired to take on the ANCOP ambassador role because it allows me to love and care more for the poor.

Loving and caring for the poor is everyone's responsibility. As Jesus said, "Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me" (Matthew 25:40). We have so much here in Australia and we need to share it with our poor brothers and sisters in other parts of the world.

As a community building the Church of the Poor, we are committed to sharing God's love to others. Our simple acts of kindness and helping the poor can make a big difference to the lives of people wanting to escape from poverty, especially the young children who need support to get a good education.

What has my campaign taught me about people? Well, people are always ready to help. Through people's prayers asking for God's grace, any campaign is possible. We have lots of people in the community and also outside who were willing to support. They just needed to know what ANCOP is all about.

**M**y ambassador role changed me a lot. I learned to manage my time and schedule wisely. As a mother of three. It's a bit of a struggle but through God's grace and guidance, with the help of my husband and brothers and sisters in the community, I considered the role not as a task but as a mission to share God's love. Being an ambassador helped me appreciate more the value of sharing one's time and gifts with the community. which was what my brothers and sisters in the community did. They were supportive—giving of their time, talent and treasure continually, which inspired me a lot as I pursued this mission.

My ANCOP experience taught me to appreciate more what I have. The material things are not that important. God calls me to share with those in need. Sharing does not only bless those we give to but it blesses us as well! I know I will never know a full and

Sis. Dae Tabinas helped me discern to accept this role. She has a servant heart which inspired me to serve God through ANCOP. Of course I would like to thank the whole CFC-South Australia for the support and for allowing me to use the



joyful life unless I am able to give generously and share what God has given me. God doesn't give us anything just for our own benefit. After all, we're blessed to become a blessing to others.

**T**o the ANCOP beneficiaries, and also to ANCOP partners, put God first in the centre of your life. God will help you overcome your challenges. With God's help and through your hard work and perseverance, you will achieve your dreams for yourself and for your family.

The supporters who inspired me a lot are my HOLD sisters, especially Malou Jacinto, Flor Canonoy and Josie Labrador. They are truly examples of 'giving without hesitation.' Their love for the poor is beyond imaginable. Also,



gifts that God has given me. The journey of caring, sharing and giving is not yet finished for all of us. I will end with Proverbs 19:17 "Whoever is kind to the poor lends to the Lord, and he will reward them for what they have done."

**DR. GEMMA  
PEREZ**

CFC, NSW WESTERN DEANERY

**“What would you do if  
God calls you to serve?”**

**D**uring our first HH meeting for 2018, the topic was “What would you do if God calls you to serve?”. My husband and I had different opinions of what service is. For me service is for the family, and that is why most of my life before I got married was dedicated to helping relatives who are not doing well financially. For my husband, service should be outside of the family, and that is why he serves in the CFC community and in our parish. Two weeks later, by coincidence or perhaps God’s providence, we had a visit from our CFC leaders and ANCOP coordinator, asking me to be an ANCOP ambassador. This is it, the answer to our discussion. How can I say no to God asking me to serve others after all that He has given me? This is my chance to give back to Him and show my gratitude.

My experience of being an ANCOP ambassador helped me realise that service should extend beyond families, that there are more people out there who need to be served, those who need to feel God’s love and experience the goodness of humanity. Yes, serving your family is important but helping people that you do not know is serving the least of God’s people, so you are doing it for the Lord Himself.

**I** have been so blessed that I am able to help a few of my relatives, especially younger cousins who could not go to university because of financial difficulties. I am very happy because they are now doing very well. When I shared my *Everyday Hero* page on Facebook, one of the very first donors was a cousin whom I was able to send to university. I was very touched by his gesture and his message was Proverbs 19:17 “Whoever is kind to the poor lends to the Lord, and He will reward them for what they have done”. My cousin does not have a lot, and yet he gave generously. He gave

# WHAT IS SERVICE?



When I was first asked to be an ambassador I was a bit reluctant to accept, not because I didn’t want to serve, but because I was afraid that I would not be able to do what is required. I knew that being an ambassador entails a lot of public speaking. I am a naturally shy person, and I thought it is out of my league to be one. But God really provides. He equips us with everything we need to be able to do our mission. He gave me all these good and generous people around me who were with me all the way. He gave me courage, strength and enough confidence to perform my duty. Through this experience I found that when I set my heart and mind to do something, with God’s grace and blessing, I was able to overcome my insecurities.

me so much inspiration to try and do more for the poor.

This campaign reinforced my belief that people are different. Some people are willing to give almost everything they have, despite their own difficult circumstances. On the other hand there are people who appear to have so much in life, but seem to need a lot of convincing to give. But whatever differences we have, we all have to accept people as they are, and avoid being judgmental. We just need to respect each other as God’s people.

My wish for the ANCOP beneficiaries is for them to see God in ANCOP’s work. Maybe one day they will also be able to share themselves to others. This way they will be able to continue the legacy of helping those in need. Their deeds can proclaim to others that God will not forsake us.

I look at this whole journey as a great blessing from God. I am truly grateful to Him as He has given me joy and fulfilment in helping people we do not know. I cannot thank enough my husband, my family, my sister, my brother-in-law and

our Western Deanery ANCOP team. No words will suffice in expressing how grateful I am for everything that they have done to support me on this journey. This experience has shown me that so many people in my life are willing to help, to give support to this cause. My heart is so full of joy and gratitude to every single person who supported ANCOP. To God be all the glory!



# MEANINGFUL

To our Lord Almighty, thank you for letting me understand that life is meaningful when we help and love others

I was inspired to take on the role of ANCOP ambassador by the compassion and love that I witnessed from my friends and the CFC community so generously given to others. I am, likewise, truly blessed to have everything in my life, and accepting this role is my chance to give back. Keeping in my heart the same values that my parents have instilled in me, I wanted to share my blessings especially to children in need.

As an ANCOP ambassador, my most unforgettable moment so far was when I had to give my first ANCOP speech. I may not be a good speaker but I felt that the big audience present that night understood my message of hope and generosity. I also felt so much love from our supporters and events coordinators. I did not expect the turnout of donors. Since then, I have developed my confidence in spreading the work of ANCOP and I am encouraged to do more for such a meaningful cause.

This campaign taught me that in people's hearts there is a huge space for helping and caring for others. Often, all that is required is to knock on those hearts to remind them that there are people out there who need our support. Everyone can be an ambassador for others. Being an ANCOP ambassador allowed me to have a better understanding of the work of ANCOP - its mission and purpose, and explained these to people whose hearts are just waiting to be touched.

I learned so many things by being an ANCOP ambassador. Personally, I learned how to express myself comfortably and allow God to use my talents and skills for His purpose. I also learned that I could change the world in my own humble way.

I am so blessed that God made me part of a wonderful community where I see brothers and sisters living lives filled with love, compassion and generosity. I always feel the overwhelming love by our brothers and sisters despite their busy



lives and schedules. My CFC brothers and sisters are always present to lend a helping hand or provide encouraging words especially when I need it most. I am truly grateful. I am also very thankful for my who family has shown unconditional support since I started my role as ANCOP ambassador. My husband and my children have unfailingly helped in many ways such as setting up events, waiting the whole day and just being with me. They always join me in prayer as we ask that events go according to plan, God's plan, and that it can help many children go to school.

I would like to thank my Auburn Bankstown Chapter family and the coordinators for their love, help and support. No words can express how thankful and loved I am by my brothers and sisters. I am also grateful that I have a husband who has a generous and loving heart. The company he works for likewise pledged to match whatever donations we will receive so that more children can go to school.

I am truly grateful to our supporters and donors. Because of you, we could help and send many children in need to school and receive the education they deserve. Most importantly, to our Lord Almighty, thank you for letting me understand that life is meaningful when we help and love others.

My message that I love to spread to everyone comes from Mother Theresa:

"Love begins at home, and it is not how much we do... but how much love we put in that action."

It's not how much we give, but how much love we put into giving.

Yesterday is gone. Tomorrow has not yet come. We have only today. Let us begin."



# PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS

Happiness does not come from material things; it comes from the heart, from the simplest gestures, from the little things, from being truly grateful.

I grew up in a small provincial town in the Philippines, poverty is something I've been exposed to since I was a child. My parents also went through a lot of hardships when they were young, so when they were able to overcome those struggles, they taught me the importance of being grateful and generous.

In 2015, I had the opportunity to participate in YFC OCGAT in the Philippines, and during that time, we had an ANCOP immersion at a village in Calape, Bohol. The ANCOP beneficiaries in that village welcomed us with open arms, they showed us love and hospitality. It was within that experience that I was able to fully understand the meaning of happiness. It changed my perspective in life, I became more grateful and more appreciative of the simplest things. It truly changed my life. I remember leaving the village with a joyful heart, and a burning passion to serve and give back.

Hence, when I was asked to become an ANCOP ambassador, I did not hesitate in giving my "Yes".

The ambassador experience has made me realise that happiness does not come from material things; it comes from the heart, from the simplest gestures, from the little

things, from being truly grateful. Happiness does not necessarily have to be extravagant or spectacular, it just needs to be genuine and sincere. I have also realised that being grateful means being able to celebrate not just the ups but also the downs of life; acknowledging that every experience brings us lessons and the opportunity to become better individuals. These realisations gave me a new perspective in life... I aim to live each day feeling happy and grateful for everything that God has bestowed upon me. I aim to always see the bright side, the positives, and the rainbow in each situation. I aim to take nothing for granted. I aim to continue holding onto the values that CFC and ANCOP have taught me. I aim to be an instrument of God's unconditional love and mercy.

I would like to thank the whole community of CFC Cairns for the support they've given me. Although we are smaller than those in the big cities, the CFC Cairns community has such big passionate hearts. The overwhelming help I have received from them is truly awe-inspiring. From the household presentations, to the fund-raising events, down to the words of encouragement that they have imparted onto me... they have truly been the wind beneath my



wings in this ambassador journey.

Special thanks go to my ANCOP mentors, Kuya Brian and Ate Joms, the ANCOP coordinators of Cairns. I would not have been able to reach the target if not for them. They are truly God-sent, and are a huge blessing to the CFC Cairns community. Their passionate hearts have been such an inspiration for this ambassadorship.

This journey has truly been a great experience. Although it had its set of ups and downs, in the end the good always prevailed. Thank you to everyone who journeyed with me in this ambassadorship... my parents, my family, the CFC Cairns family, my SFC household, my ANCOP mentors, and my fellow ANCOP ambassadors.

I consider the ambassador role as a blessing rather than a responsibility or a challenge. Being able to represent such a beautiful cause, being able to be the voice of those who are in need, and being able to be the instrument of God's love and mercy... is a great blessing. I am both honoured and humbled to be given this role, and if I were to be given another chance, I would gladly take it.



# SELFLESS

ARNOLD  
TAN  
CFC, WESTERN AUSTRALIA

ANCop  
AMBASSADORS  
OF CARING AND SHARING



## "We will leave an imprint, a legacy, which will not be forgotten by the future generation."

I come from a poor family and experienced the hardship of being a full-time student, working long hours during the day and attending university at night just to accomplish my goals and to support my family. This has inspired me to take the opportunity to become an ANCOP Ambassador. When I accepted this role I knew that I can help give the less fortunate hope for a brighter future. Especially the poor children. Dr Jose Rizal, a Philippine hero, famously said "The youth is the hope of our nation." Like Rizal, I believe in the power of education to break the vicious cycle of poverty. The best way to invest in the future of any poor nation is through the education of its young people. Under the guidance of parents, teachers, CFC volunteers and mentors like the Cornerstone, the children that we are supporting via ANCOP will develop to their full potential. The end result will allow them to support their own family as well as setting up a better future for themselves.

The ambassadorship was not easy. It took a lot of courage and faith. But it has taught me how to become a positive influence to others; to harness help for

the needy. There was satisfaction in knowing that by giving of my time, and exerting effort to raise funds for the less fortunate, I and many others have helped change lives for the better.

During my ambassador campaign, I got a lot of support from my family, the CFC community, and friends outside of CFC. I am forever grateful to them. My wife and my children in particular are my firmest supporters. Their endless love is my source of strength. Without them I would not have the courage to take up this role.

One of the donors I have had the privilege of meeting is a Vietnamese woman named Yeung, who owns a local fruit and vegetable shop in Perth. Her continuous generosity to those in need has inspired me to follow a



similar mindset in that she never refuses a call for help.

If given the chance, would I do this role again? Definitely! If there is an opportunity to offer hope to a community that needs it, then there is no doubt that I will participate again. It is my desire that more and more people join the ANCOP Ambassador campaign in the future.

I would like to take this opportunity to say thank you for trusting me to participate in this journey. Through the years ambassadors will come and go. However, they will leave an imprint, a legacy, which will not be forgotten by the future generation. Fulfilment comes from the realisation that I was part of helping that generation. "True service is the ability to give up, to be selfless, to be willing to give up oneself in order to benefit the needy."





# ONCE AN AMBASSADOR, ALWAYS AN AMBASSADOR

By Patrice Penas, 2016 National ANCOP Ambassador

**B**EING AN ANCOP ambassador has been nothing but a transforming experience. It meant being able to share Christ's transforming love with the poor, and in doing so we ourselves are transformed.

I first said yes to running for the ANCOP ambassadorship in early 2016, right after experiencing CFC Youth for Christ's Great Adventure Tour in the Philippines. The GAT involved spending a few days in the ANCOP-sponsored schools and villages. Inspired by what I had witnessed during GAT, I said yes to continuing to be a witness for the work of ANCOP.

**“God continues to grant us the grace to keep on saying yes to the mission.”**

The ANCOP ambassador campaign lasts for roughly three months, which flew by with countless household presentations and fundraising activities. The campaigning ended on the Proclamation Night in Sydney in May. That night was also when I got to briefly meet the rest of the state ambassadors, who I would later call my ANCOP Immersion Tour family. The ANCOP Immersion Tour occurred in 2017, wherein we ambassadors spent a couple of weeks in the Philippines visiting the volunteers and beneficiaries of ANCOP.

As an advocate for literacy and the right to education, spending time with the Cornerstone and ESP-supported students was a joyful experience for me. Hearing the testimonies from the ANCOP scholars firsthand truly made me appreciate ANCOP's role in building hope through education, and the role of education in lifting the future of the student, the family, and the greater community.

We also spent some time in the ANCOP villages, particularly villages that were built after Typhoon Yolanda. Hearing true stories from survivors and witnessing their resilience and gratefulness reminded me of God's faithfulness through the toughest of times.

I was also inspired by the generous service of the ANCOP volunteers in the Philippines. They made us all feel welcomed and part of the bigger ANCOP international family. It was more than feeling good or feeling rewarded that we are all part of a noble endeavour - it was being called to fulfil our mission in knowing the poor and loving the poor. And in knowing and loving the poor, we also get to know and to love our faith.

Two years after, I find myself in the reality of the “once an ambassador, always an ambassador” lifestyle. Long after the campaign and the immersion, the mission continues. God continues to shower us with His grace through new avenues and continues to grant us the grace to keep on saying yes to the mission. I found myself, along with the ANCOP Victoria team, exploring new opportunities to spread the word about ANCOP's mission. This includes forging new partnerships with businesses and other associations. I can only be grateful with every transformative encounter with Christ that I have experienced and continue to experience through ANCOP.

Patrice continues to be an active member of the ANCOP Core Group of Melbourne. In March 2018 they sealed a partnership with the *Pampangueño Club of Victoria*, resulting in the sponsorship of one university student in the Philippines. Shown in the photo are Ian Alcazar (current ANCOP Ambassador of Melbourne), Lolit Navarro (CFC member), Charlie Yao and Roy Carbungco (Pampangueño Club), and Patrice.



# COMPANIONS ON THE JOURNEY

By Jeorge Verba, ANCOP scholar

**B**ill Gates, one of the richest men in the world, once said "If you're born poor, it's not your mistake; but if you die poor, it's your mistake." I've been exposed to poverty since childhood. My family need to work hard to survive each day. So, I committed myself to do everything to uplift my family from this misery. At a very young age I learned to do things to earn a living—sold street food after school, took a sideline job in a rubber factory, prepared rice treats at night to sell the next day, tutored, etc. I studied hard and never lost sight of my goals. Despite graduating Salutatorian in primary school and Valedictorian in high school, I had serious doubts about continuing to university. I knew my family would not be able to afford the costs.

Still, I enrolled in university despite the financial difficulty. There were times when I failed to comply with the payment requirements. I didn't mind all the hardship and just focused on my studies. I held on to my belief that God would never leave me. Out of nowhere, someone called and asked me for an interview. I didn't know what for. Someone told me later that my high school teachers filed an ANCOP scholarship application on my behalf. After going through the process, I officially became an ANCOP scholar and that was one of the best things that

Jeorge has been an ANCOP Australia scholar for four years now. He has five siblings. His father is a plumber and his mother is a vendor in a poor Manila district. He finishes next year.



happened to me. ANCOP helps me finance my school expenses, which lessens the burden on me and my family. Aside from monetary assistance, ANCOP also helps me with value formation, and uplifts my personal and spiritual well-being. I became friends with other ANCOP scholars. I gained Titos and Titas in Couples for Christ. They became my second parents who guide and support me, and above all, have helped me strengthen my bond with God.

**B**eing an Accountancy student is really hard; it is not just an academic challenge but also a test of perseverance and endurance. I know that I can't afford to fail for the sake of my dreams and the hopes of the people believing and supporting me. I can tell you gladly that I am a consistent Dean's lister since first year uni. I also bagged first place in the recently concluded Accounting Quiz Bee in our school. This coming school year (2018-19) will be my last year in university. I am hopeful to graduate with flying colours and to work in my chosen field. For these, I am so grateful to all the people who are with me in my journey.

Thank you to all the people in ANCOP, my sponsors in Australia, our Titos and Titas, the staff, volunteers and donors, for your overwhelming support to the less fortunate like me. Above all, I want to thank God for all His blessings and guidance, for being the shoulder I am leaning on.





Ed and Leony Naco, and family.

# Taking the Road Less Traveled

**A Volunteer's Story**

By **Ed Naco**, as interviewed by Noemi Pamintuan-Jara

**"I figured out why I accepted the ANCOP volunteer role. I said to myself, "What I do for the ANCOP scholars are things I wasn't able to do for my kids."**

I'm Ed Naco, 56 years old, a volunteer of the ANCOP Education Sponsorship Program Project Implementation Team (PIT) in San Mateo, Rizal. I'm married to Leony.

I used to be a tricycle, jeep, and "FX" (utility vehicle) driver. I wasn't able to make it past high school because I came from a poor family. Luckily, I was able to work abroad for a year as an electrician in Iraq.

#### MY KIDS

Leony and I have three children. Two of them are in Japan. One is working as an English teacher, the other as a chef. My youngest has been working as a programmer for more than two years now. They all help us augment our income from our small *sari-sari store*.

My eldest son, the chef, took up Information Technology (IT) but then went

to Japan to study Nihongo. When he was already proficient in the language, he worked at a restaurant where he was eventually promoted as a chef. He now has a working visa.

My daughter, the English teacher, is also a Computer Science cum laude graduate but she is adventurous. She patiently looked for a job in Japan through the internet. She was interviewed online and eventually was invited to go to Japan. She can't even speak their language. She just speaks English, and I'm very happy because she got the job. She's now teaching primary students and also adults who want to learn English on the side. She got married in 2016 to a fellow English teacher from Nepal.

#### AS A FATHER

I admit that I am not a perfect father.

When my kids were small, I wasn't able to fully support them. When their teacher requested for a meeting with the parents, I did not attend. I just focused on earning a living for the family. I left the parenting responsibilities to my wife. I only went to their school during graduation or when they received awards. My kids always received awards, my daughter was even a valedictorian when she graduated. When my kids had school projects, I did not help them.

#### START OF THE ANCOP JOURNEY

We joined Couples for Christ (CFC) in 1996. We served as KFC Coordinators for seven years until we had to ease out of service due to a serious problem at that time. In 2012, our chapter head approached us to do an ANCOP volunteer work. I said, "*Bro, I may not be fit for that*

role. What is ANCOP anyway?"

Later, I figured out why I accepted the ANCOP volunteer role. I said to myself, "What I do for the ANCOP scholars are things I wasn't able to do for my kids."

#### ANCOP RESPONSIBILITIES

When my wife and I accepted the ANCOP volunteer opportunity, I started doing things I had not been able to do for my own kids.

One of these things is going to the scholar's school when they have academic problems, such as if they have a failing grade. I talk to the teacher or the principal. I don't want their scholarship to go to waste.

Sometimes, I'm shy to post my pictures with the scholars on Facebook when we buy their school supplies, shoes, and other materials they need because I wasn't able to do this for my own kids. I worry that if my kids see the photos, they might say, "Daddy didn't do this for us. How come he's doing it for other kids who are not even related to him?"

**W**e also experience having problematic kids. Sometimes, I bring home this load on my shoulders. I get to share it with my wife, Leony. This is why I always like Leony to be with me because we share the responsibility of looking after the ANCOP scholars. It seems like we suddenly have a bunch of kids!

When the scholars' benefits are released to us, Leony and I immediately deliver them to the scholars. We do it fast. If we receive the

benefits in the morning, we have to hand it over to the scholars by afternoon. If we receive it at noon time, we must give it by evening. We don't delay the release of funds. We know that the scholars badly need it. It may affect their class attendance the next day if, say, they don't have any more money for transportation.

When my wife and I leave the house, we close down our *sari-sari store*. So, if we are out in the field doing ANCOP volunteer work the whole day, the store is also closed the whole day.

#### SUPPORT GIVEN TO ANCOP SCHOLARS

Aside from the financial support given by ANCOP, the PIT members are there to care for the scholars. We treat them like our own children. We give our full support in their academic and personal lives. We constantly encourage them to press on with their studies and advise their parents to help and guide their kids too.

There are scholars who do not excel academically but are determined to study. Poverty and its consequential problems often weigh down their performance in school. This is why I walk the extra mile to reach out to their class adviser or principal to give the scholar a chance to meet ANCOP's grade requirements.

#### MY MOTIVATION

We feel great joy when we see scholars who take their studies seriously. We also feel sad when there are scholars who

sometimes get failing grades.

ANCOP has changed me a lot in many ways since Leony and I joined the organization in 2012.

We were able to reach places we had never thought we'd even visit, and we get to talk to strangers who've now become our associates.

I can't explain the transformation that happened to me, which is similar to the transformation of St. Paul. I used to be a quiet person who wouldn't even bother to



Ed Naco's *Brigada Eskwela* with ANCOP scholars clean and maintain school grounds before classes open

talk to strangers. But suddenly, I am now confident and courageous in talking to anyone, whatever their status in life.

When we visited isolated areas in Barangay Banaba to evangelize for the Christian Life Program, we were exposed to destitute families who were deprived of the comforts of life.

As we visited households, we learned their colorful life stories. It brought back memories of my family's life when we were still drowning in poverty and seemingly hopeless. But hearing the stories of families in these households, I realised my problems are not as big as theirs. There were times when I had to get out of the house while talking to these families because I couldn't hold back my tears anymore.

This made me commit to help at least one of their kids to finish school so they can escape poverty. To see former street kids graduate from school is such a beautiful experience for us. It inspires us to continue our volunteer work for ANCOP. And for the parents, we know it's tough. But as parents who weren't able to finish our own studies and who went through difficult life challenges but didn't give up for the sake of our own children's future, we share to the scholars' parents that if we were able to do it, they can too!



My wife Leony during a home visitation for scholarship applicants. We assess the family's income, health and living condition, amenities at home like toilets, electricity, access to drinking water, clothing, access to medical care and other indicators of need.

# LIVELIHOOD THROUGH EDUCATION

By the ANCOP Communication Team



**A**ccording to a report by the World Health Organization, Papua New Guinea is one of the most dangerous places in the world to be a woman (Putupai 2016). Women are often disadvantaged for a range of cultural, financial and educational reasons. Recognising this, the Couples for Christ elders in PNG, through ANCOP, offered some help.

Last year, CFC ANCOP Australia was able to sponsor the participation of eight women in a short-term vocational course on dressmaking. Even before completing the course, they already had offers to sew school uniforms. But having the skills alone is not enough. The next hurdle was to have sewing machines and a place to set up their shop. Holding tight on the opportunity, CFC PNG were quick to mobilise communications and logistics. With the help of CFC ANCOP Australia, donations for sewing machines quickly came in. Delma Dumas, a member of the CFC Handmaids of the Lord, generously offered her garage as a place to set up shop. Late last year, they also had an offer to sew bags for a cement factory. This was a very empowering change for these women. Below are messages of gratitude from some of them.

**My name is Alice Banang.** I am 32 years old and I am married with two kids. I have no experience in sewing but was thankful to the CFC ANCOP Scholarship which sent me to St. Therese Vocational School. I learnt Garmenting for three months. After graduating, I was given an opportunity to continue my sewing skills at sister Delma Duma's workshop. I normally sew 10 to 20 blouses per week and earn almost K100 to K200 per week. This way, I am able to help my husband with our children's school needs. In the next two to five years I hope to set up a sewing workshop of my own and also assist other sisters.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank ANCOP for helping me.

**Hello! I am Anita Gidam.** I would like to thank ANCOP Australia for your generosity in sponsoring me. I now sew meri blouses and earn money to sustain my family of five. I am an ex-teacher without any source of income and now I am really experiencing God's wonderful love, shared with my sisters who are also ANCOP beneficiaries. Just saying thank you is not enough, I don't know what to do, only God knows my heart.

Laikim na Bikpela tenkyu stret.

**My name is Louise Kenny.** I am 37 years old, married with two kids.

I was blessed to be chosen to attend the sewing course. After the training, we were so blessed to have sister Delma's workshop so that we can sew on our own. I sew about five to 10 blouses a week and I sell them at K15 or K20 just to help my kids with lunch money and our expenses for the house. It helps us a lot. I sometimes cry if I don't have anything to sew but I am so thankful that I can earn something on my own. I am hoping to become a teacher. I want to teach my dear sisters how to sew so they can earn money too. I gain confidence in myself and know that through God everything is possible.

**Hi! My name is Lynette.** Being a single mum without a job is really a big struggle. Learning the skill of sewing is a really big experience in my life, a big change from all the obstacles I've been through. I am really blessed. I can sew 15 to 20 blouses a week and earn every day. I do the sales in front of my house. I buy a packet of rice or protein every day and save for my daughter's lunch money every day, which is something I had never done in the past. Thank you for sharing. God bless you.

Reference:

Putupai, R.A., 2016. 'Women in PNG still suffering from violence', *Loop*, accessed on 29 April 2018, <http://www.looppng.com/content/women-png-still-suffering-violence>

# A Mother's Relief

By Zeny Lacson, mother of an ANCOP scholar

I'm Zeny Lacson. 50 years old, a mother of three children.

I have a simple dream for my children-- to see them happy in everything they do, for them to become humble and loving persons, especially to their family, and most of all, for them not to experience the hardships that we currently encounter.

It is a big opportunity for my daughter, Larra Jane, to be an ANCOP Scholar. Before, I don't even know where to find the additional income to sustain their schooling. My husband is just a fish vendor and earns just enough for a day. That is why I was forced to borrow money from my neighbours. Now that my daughter is an ANCOP Scholar, it is a very big help in budgeting. We don't worry anymore where to find her allowance, especially for her needs in school.

To the sponsor of my daughter, I just want to say, thank you very much for your generosity in continuing to support her studies. Even if we don't get to know you, see you, meet you, or show you her diploma, hopefully

through the graduation pictures I have attached, we can show how we really thank you a lot and let you know that your help was not in vain.

We promise to look after her in her studies so when the time comes, she will be able to help others too. God bless all of you!



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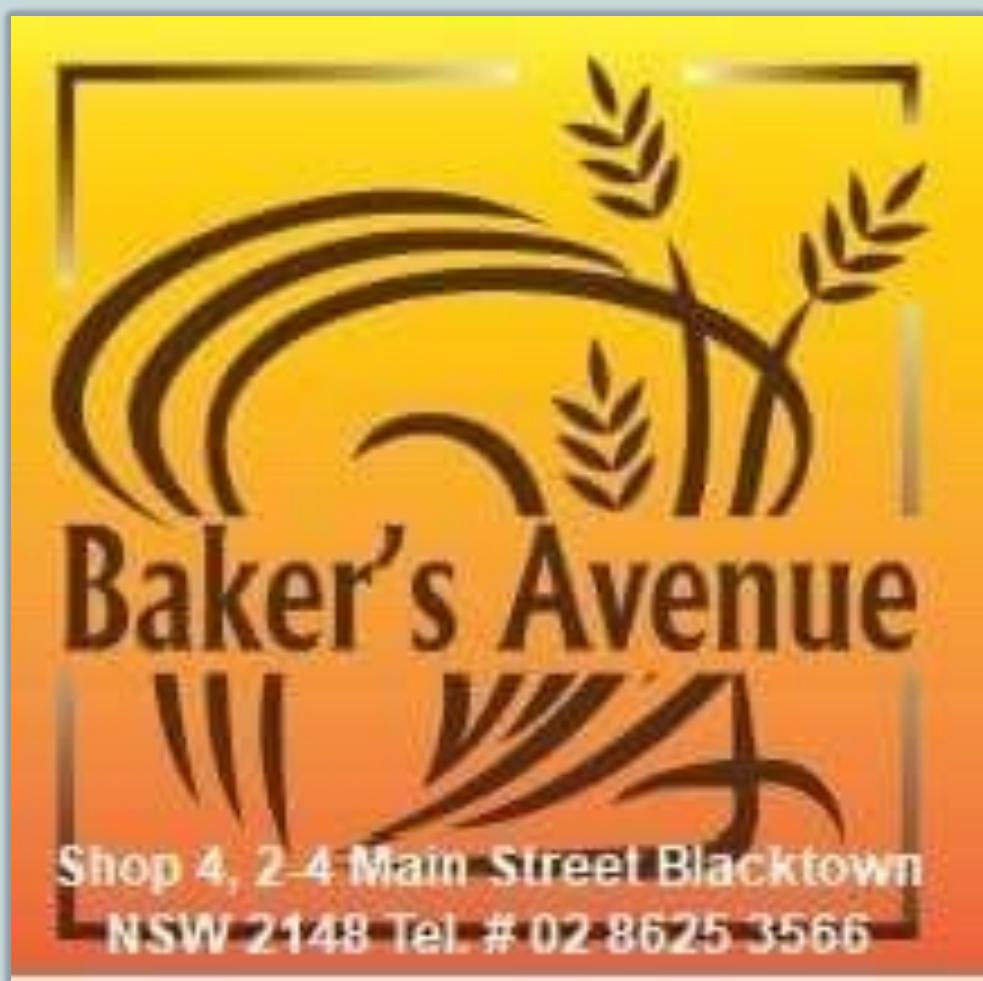
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