



# Althea J. Casiroman

Growing up in a poor family, I learned at an early age the value of perseverance and hard work. I am Althea Jabique Casiroman, 16 years old, a Grade 11 student of Sisters of Mary School – Girlstown, Inc., Talisay Campus. I was born on February 16, 2009, and I was raised by my farmer grandparents in the province of Samar because my parents were too young at that time, and my father's part-time job barely covered our day-to-day expenses.

Life became more difficult when my parents separated when I was nine years old. It was a devastating experience for me as a child who bore the burdens of the family. It did not take long before my parents built families of their own, leaving us in the care of our grandparents. As the eldest among four siblings, I grew up with a strong determination to lift my family out of poverty and to provide them with a comfortable life. From that moment on, I knew that education was the surest way to achieve my dreams in life.

Nothing could measure my happiness and gratitude when I was given the opportunity to study secondary education at the Sisters of Mary School in Cebu, a place that serves not only as a school but also as a home to me. This privilege brought immense joy to both me and my family because I am now closer to achieving the dreams that once seemed impossible. I worked hard and persevered to achieve high grades because I hope to attend college through scholarships despite our financial limitations.

I firmly believe that God will never abandon me, even though my family is not fully convinced that going to college will bring any benefit and often persuades me to work immediately to help provide for our needs. There were moments when I felt discouraged, but these did not stop me from dreaming bigger. I trust that God will send His instruments at the right time to help me.

Today, I am deeply grateful to be one of the Bona Via Foundation Scholars, a privilege that continues to give me hope and motivation. This scholarship means so much to me because it serves as a significant stepping-stone toward achieving my dreams. In return, I will do my very best academically and put sincere effort into everything I do for the glory of God. I also offer this blessing to Venerable Aloysius Schwartz, who is the source of the courage I draw upon in facing life's battles.

I plan to take Political Science or Psychology as my pre-law course because I dream of becoming a successful lawyer someday. When that time comes, I hope to extend a helping hand and a compassionate heart to those who are in need.