

## MARIA LUISA BUENAOBRA DIVINAGRACIA

I am Maria Luisa Buenaobra Divinagracia, one of the eight children of Mrs. Helen B. Divinagracia and Mr. Danilo C. Divinagracia, Sr. I am currently the president of our section, and a helping sister of St. Mathilda Family. I grew up in a simple family, literally poor in material things but rich in love and support. My eldest brother has his own family, and he has two children. My twin older sister, who graduated in college because of scholarship, is now working as an office worker. Kuya Danilo Jr. is currently working as a bagger in one of the malls in our town. Kuya Jason is one of my older brothers, who stopped his studies to help my mother and father to support us financially. He wanted to become a mariner, but because of the high tuition fee he chose to tend pigs so that he could sell it and collect money for his tuition. My youngest brother is now in Grade 8 and our family experienced a lot of trials, criticism, problems and even belittled by the people around us. There was a time when my kuya Danilo Jr. stayed for almost one month in the hospital because of his sickness. He has a kidney problem. That time I need to be brave and independent because my mom and dad worked not only for one job but any job that can help us to pay the hospital bills. I was left in the house together with my youngest brother, we experienced eating only twice a day and our food is just rice mixed with water and salt.



One night, I saw my mom crying. It seems that our house will be flooded by her tears. She is very problematic at that time thinking about how to pay the bills, buy food etc. It's terribly a hard time for us. But my mom is a positive thinker, she told me to trust and pray to God. She just graduated in elementary and after she graduated, she went to Manila to work and earn money. I admire her so much. For me, she is very much sacrificing, lovable, and the best mom in the world. She never thinks of herself, she always gives us the things that make us happy, even though she cannot buy things for herself. She has taught me how to face the hardships in life. My father is very industrious, even though he is tired working on the farm, he accepted different jobs that were offered to him. He work with love and happiness. He seems not tired after all the work he has done, because every time he returns

home there is always a smile on his lips. No one can balance his worth. He is priceless. He is my superhero in every trial that I encounter, he is my counselor every time I feel discouraged. Both of my parents did not finish their studies. So, I want them to be proud of me. I salute them in everything. None of the words in the dictionary can describe them, they are incomparable, and unique. Most of my classmates, friends, dormmates, and even relatives asked, “Why do you still choose to be a teacher?” “Are you sure about that?” I didn’t answer them vocally, but I have an answer in my mind. I want to help those students like my mom and dad who cannot afford to go to school. I want to help them understand and realize that no one can stop every individual from dreaming. Not even poverty because we didn’t choose to be born in a poor family, but it is a great blessing that God has given me. Some of our neighbors’ children are not attending school. Some of them don’t know how to read, write, or even how to count. This scenario inspires me to pursue teaching. I don’t care about the salary even though it’s not that high, my purpose is not to earn money, but to gain students who are well-disciplined and God-fearing. It doesn’t matter where you come from; what matters is what you have wanted to become.