

By Jesse Jose

A Cup O' Kapeng Barako

I went to Florida last week to see my sister, Rose Mary, who was very sick. But I didn't know then that it would be the last time I would see her alive. Three days later, she passed away, her body destroyed by that evil disease, known as cancer.

At Palms West Hospital, I saw her and saw, too, the unimaginable pain on her face. I held her hands right away. She held them back, and for many hours, we held hands silently. I told her that I love her and I prayed to God to ease her pain.

For the next couple of days, whenever I would visit her, we did just that: held hands, silently, for hours.

Perhaps, she couldn't handle the intense pain anymore that she asked to "die peacefully." Perhaps, she meant, painlessly. The pain medication she was allowed to have at the hospital wasn't enough. Finally, the Jose family decided to transfer her to a hospice, where she could have the right amount of pain medication to ease her pain.

When I saw her there the following day, she seemed resting comfortably. The pain medication she needed flowed almost incessantly into her body. The frown on her face had disappeared.

I asked her: "Are you comfortable?" She nodded. That was our last conversation. She died hours later, painlessly, I hope. And peacefully. She got her last wish.

Rest In Peace, Rose; I'll Miss You - MabuhayRadio

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Wednesday, 12 March 2014 16:04 - Last Updated Tuesday, 01 April 2014 05:27

Before she was taken away to a funeral home, I caressed her hairless head and still-beautiful face, and told her, "Rest in peace, Rose."

At the wake, my sister, Margaret, who had assumed the leadership of the Jose clan in Florida, told us that each one of us, siblings, will have five minutes -- no more and no less -- to relate our fond memories of Rose Mary.

When I got up to the microphone to say something about Rose, I said that "five minutes" would not be enough to relate my fond memories of our family *bunso*.
For I could talk about Rose for hours ... or even for days."

I don't exactly remember now what I said about Rose to those roomful of people at the funeral home, who came to say their final farewell to my sister. What I remembered saying was when I joined the U.S. Navy in 1960, all of us recruits had to have our heads shaved, before reporting back to the Recruiting Station inside the base. When Rose Mary saw me bald, she playfully rubbed my head and asked:

"Kuya, bakit ka kalbo?"

She was only four years old then....

What I saw of Rose Mary through the years, between years actually, whenever I could get the chance to visit the Motherland, was of Rose, growing into a beautiful rose.

During their growing years, all my sisters had pet names. Cora, was called, "Manang Cor." Raquel was called "Yeng." Margaret was "Anggot." And Rose Mary was simply called "Rose." And that's because she was the Rose of the family. All my sisters grew up beautiful, but Rose was the most beautiful one, and she stayed beautiful till her death.

That was my memory of Rose that I managed to spill out in five minutes, without tears spilling out from my tear-stained eyes.

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ROSE MARY'S OBITUARY:

Together with my sister, Raquel, we wrote this obituary of Rose that was published on the *Palm Beach Post*, and seen as well, on cyberspace. Condolences and kind words from relatives and friends in faraway places came in droves.

Rose Mary B. Jose of Wellington, Florida passed away February 28, 2014. She was born in Manila, Philippines on June 4, 1955.

She graduated from St Joseph's College for her high school, Class 1973 and earned her college degree from St. Paul's College, Manila, Class 1977 in Food and Nutrition. Upon graduation from college, she worked at Manpower, Inc. in Makati, Metro Manila, as an Administrative Assistant.

In 1979, she came to the United States and worked as a teller in a bank in California. Then, she moved to Florida and worked for the United States Postal Service for more than twenty-five years.

She traveled extensively all over the United States and Europe and other countries. Her main hobby was shopping for vintage jewelries and fashionable clothes. She loved to savor different gourmets and delicacies of the world.

She was a bubbly, vivacious and beautiful woman and she had led a wonderful life.

Rose Mary's memories will be cherished by her son, Nicholas Schaefer, by her mother, Mercedes Belbis Jose, by her sisters, Corazon Jose, Raquel Lim, Margaret de Jesus, by her brothers, Jesse Jose, Socrates "Soc" Jose, Joey "Os" Jose, and by her several nieces, nephews and friends. Rose Mary loved her family, especially, her mom, Mercedes, and son, Nicholas.

Rose Mary was cremated and laid to rest in a family plot next to our late brother, Emerson, "Sonny" Jose and sister-in-law, Agnes, the wife of Joey, at Our Queen of Peace Cemetery in

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A LETTER FROM SISTER GRACE MARIE: Sister Grace Marie is a nun at the St. Joseph's Carmelite Monastery in Seattle, Washington, and the sister of my wife, Maribel

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Dear Jesse,

I and all the sisters are praying for the eternal repose of the soul of Rose Mary, and also for the comfort, consolation and peace of heart for you, your Mom and Rose's son, Nicholas and all of your sisters and brothers.

Our Mass on Friday, March 7, 2014, was offered for Rose Mary. God bless and have a safe trip back home to Seattle.

(Signed)

Sister Grace Marie.

LAST BUT NOT LEAST, MAY I QUOTE JOB 1:21 FROM THE HOLY BIBLE:

Naked I came from my mother's womb,

And naked I shall return there.

The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away.

Blessed be the name of the Lord.

Rest in peace, Rose. I'll miss you. That's all.

JJ

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