

THANKSGIVING FOR 100 YEARS
Sister Mary Fidelis Atienza, RGS Celebrates Centennial Birthday!

(This was the Introduction to the Mass of Thanksgiving, December 22, 2018)

We have come together this morning to thank God with our dear SISTER FIDES FOR TWO PRECIOUS GIFTS – the GIFT OF LIFE, all of 100 years and counting, and the GIFT OF VOCATION; of the 100 years, 64 have been as a Good Shepherd Sister. (Next year, please God, on Good Shepherd Sunday, Sister Fides will join our Sisters who will celebrate Silver, Golden and Diamond Jubilees. Sister will celebrate the 65th jubilee Of her religious profession.

Sister Fides was born on December 18, 1918 in Libjo, Batangas City. She grew up in the warm and loving care of the Quinio - Atienza family. It was an atmosphere that nurtured and formed her to be a person with a sense and love for God and spiritual practices, a natural flair for caring for others, and a capacity for good relationships and lasting friendships.

In 1951, she left for the Novitiate of the Good Shepherd in Los Angeles, California. She made her First Profession on September 8, 1954 and her Final Profession on April 24, 1957. Her various ministries included Villa Maria in Cebu, Good Shepherd Convent in Quezon City. (In the 1960s they had the Marian Bakery and Sr. Fides creatively made use of host cuttings for the delicious “*Crispies*”, forerunner of the *Angel Cookies* of today). Then to Kaunlaran – Tahanan in San Andres, Heart of Mary Villa in Malabon, the Provincialate, Baguio where she started the now famous *Ube Jam* (Purple Yam), two foreign missions – a long time in Hong Kong and a shorter stay at the Mother House in Angers, France, and the longest mission assignment – here in Maryridge for 25 years.

Today with her natural family and religious community, mission partners and friends with her, Sr. Fides gives praise and gratitude to God, for the 100 years and for her Consecrated Life. How has LIFE been for her? Beyond the many interesting and colorful and successful externals, we can glimpse at the core and the substance — through a centennial song written by our own Sisters (words by Gemma and music by Aimee) for the centennial of the GS Congregation’s presence in the Philippines, *YAKAP NG PASTOL* (Shepherd’s Embrace). It starts with “*Isang daang taong pagyakap ng Pastol sa kanyang liyag. Pinalakas,*

pinatatag, nagbigay buhay sa lahat.” (A hundred years of the Shepherd’s embrace. Of strength. Faithfulness. Life-giving for all.) It is the story of the Philippine Province, it can be the story of a single Sister. It is the story of Sr. Fides whose life has been an authentic journey of the Paschal Mystery – passion, death, resurrection. Made possible, naisabuhay dahil sa Yakap ng Pastol. We will sing the song as our Communion Hymn. It is our thanksgiving to God for the life of Sr. Fides; it is also an invitation to all of us who have made sacred and beautiful commitments in life – our ordained priests, consecrated persons with vows, married couples, all others who have made worthwhile choices. It is an invitation to remain in the embrace of our Shepherd-God, to love and give and live for others. To be faithful to our covenant. Then God will reward us not only with length of days, but we will taste the greatest measure of earthly happiness allowed to human beings on earth!

Our Eucharistic presiders are faithful friends of Maryridge: Fr. Randel Marero, Fr. Ega Titoy, Fr. George and Fr. Jerry Oblepias.





