



**Maria Teresita B. Buenaventura**

After finishing completing her degree of A.B. in Philosophy at the University of Santo Tomas (the oldest university in Manila), Tess pursued her masters in Philosophy also at the University of Santo Tomas. She was on the verge of writing her thesis at that time when she plunged into the Deaf world. Tess started as a classroom teacher for elementary and high school Deaf students at the Southeast Asian Institute for the Deaf, then considered a model school in the Philippines. She has spent 18 years of her life with the Deaf working as a teacher, college instructor, professional interpreter, NGO worker, pastoral worker and advocate. At present she is teaching religion, social sciences and Deaf Studies courses at the De La Salle-College of St. Benilde School of Deaf Education and Applied Studies on a part-time basis. Tess' full-time work is as the Human Services Supervisor at the Catholic Ministry to Deaf People where she is into advocacy and coordinating work.

Almost half of Tess' life has been in contact with and immersed in the Deaf community and she considers this as giving meaning to her existence. Working with the Deaf has given her benefits and privileges which she is thankful for. Tess says that being with the Deaf helps her in her personal goal of transforming people's lives so they can in return create changes in the lives of other people.