

A day in the life of a mananabtan

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Mananabtan, Elvira Urot, awaits for people who will ask her to pray for their dead at the Mandaue City cemetery. (FE MARIE DUMABOC)

In this season of the dearly departed, the services of those locally known as mananabtans are in demand.

Seventy-year-old mananabtan Clemencia Urot hops the cemeteries in Mandaue City to offer prayers for the dead and earns P60 to P150 per day.

During All Souls and All Saints Day, her earnings double and even reach P500.00

Praying for the soul of the dead is not easy though, she admits.

“I became a ‘mananabtan’ because of my urge to help them (souls), they need our prayers, they can no longer ask God for their salvation,” she said.

“Makagaba gihapon ang mga kalag, kon mangadye ka nila aron lang gyud maka-kwarta, magabaan ka. Kinahanglan kon mangadye ka para nila, kinasing-kasing bisan di nimu kaila (If you pray for their souls just because you are paid. You may get cursed. We have to pray heartily everytime.),” she said.

Urot goes to the cemetery every day except Sundays when she attends Mass, plays and takes care of her grandchildren.

But she can also entertain appointments on Sundays.

Urot, a widow, lives with her daughter and five grandchildren in barangay Basak, Lapu-Lapu City.

She travels as early as 6 a.m. from Lapu-Lapu City to barangay Guizo in Mandaue City where St. Joseph's Parish Roman Catholic Cemetery, Municipal Cemetery, Man Park and Rose Mar cemetery are located.

She recites 'Munti Kalbaryo', a rosary and reads the prayer book she called 'gozos' intended for the souls every time her service is asked by the family or loved ones of the departed person.

Marilyn Saladaga whose husband died last May, said she regularly requests the services of Urot since she doesn't know how to recite the prayers for the souls.

But Urot said the best prayer for the souls is a Mass offered for them.

Urot said, she was a catechist before she became a 'mananabtan'. She said she was encouraged by her younger sister, Delfina Delos Santos, 61 who also prays for the souls for 27 years already.

The two are among the 12 'mananabtan' in Mandaue City cemeteries, who also accept services during wakes inside a house or funeral homes.

To be a mananabtan, Urot said one should not only know how to pray the rosary but should have also frequent confession, and communion and attend Mass regularly.

"How can you pray for the other's salvation if your own soul also needs to be saved?" Urot said.
/Fe Marie D. Dumaboc, Correspondent

Look more here: www.Death.PhilippineCulture.ph