

Thursday



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By Vilma Angela Simon Bond

Mother Rita the Humanitarian

Rita Simon a mother of three girls, humanitarian and devout spiritual Baptist, known as Mother Rita, has had a tough life, but she was able to take care of herself and her three daughters on a piece of land in Trou Macaque, Laventille Trinidad. Back then, she called a tapia house home, with a makeshift fireside to cook what little food she had for her family.

Now at 80, still living on the same property but in a home of bricks and mortar, she still gives to those in need or whoever she can help. Rita established a legacy of giving 52 years ago, she gave her first thanksgiving in 1974 by feeding her neighbors at her tapia home. Then Rita began to do her charitable exploits by feeding the poor at various venues, the Corpus Christi Carmelites’ “Lost Peace” facility, Charlotte Street Port of Spain, Tamarind Square Port of Spain, she took supplies for patients, to Port of Spain General Hospital, Riverside Plaza Dry River Port of Spain. Later on, Rita was able with the help of friends to purchase a plane ticket on the Hazley Crawford jet and travelled to Tobago to feed the homeless at the poor house, she returned to Trinidad on TTAS the historic State-owned Airline founded in 1974. (1974-1980)

Rita reaching a milestone birthday of 70 years 10 years ago, decided to give out 100 food baskets to her community from the money she saved. That year as usual the bakers and the cooks came to her house, breads, cakes, sweet bread, curried chicken, stew chicken, roti, peas and rice, callaloo, and all of the Trinidad and Tobago goodies were made for the community to come and feast. According to Rita “This is just me, this comes from within, that is not acting but humility, you have to live peaceably. As long as you possess these qualities, these are the fruits of the spirit.” Rita continues, “what motivates me more is a mother with children, because I know what hungry days looked like.”

Trou Macaque was not an easy place back then. Although, it had nothing to do with its reputation for shootings and killings these days. Back then, everyone had hardships but somehow each person found a way to survive. According to Rita, “it’s the case of a generation who was not born here in Trou Macaque Laventille”. Rita recalls a young man who lived in the area, he was 15 or 16 at the time and he was sitting on a wall. “That little boy was becoming bad, I ate with him, and I prayed with him”. One day I talked to him and told him “Can you tell me if you are sorry for the things you did and the life you lived? God wants you to say it from your heart. He then confessed because he truly meant it, but three days later, he was shot and killed. The whole thing is this - all can’t be saved. But you just can’t stop talking to the young people who live a life of crime. We have to endure.”

Vilma



Valerie



Judith



Mother Charity
Legacy- Live in peace

Love More

Be Content



Rita/Mother Charity &
her 3 Prized Jewels

Tribute

To our Mom Rita Rosalind Simon
Happy 80TH Birthday Mom

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#2

A SONG CREATED FOR
Rita Simon

“Hands That Never Ran Dry”



Crafted with love by Lisa & Jamie from the Song Team
Our Song Team poured their hearts into every note and lyric of your custom song

Rita/Mother Charity a true gift to Trou Macaque
Road Laventille, Trinidad & Tobago

In her day, the survival strategy was how to earn money so that she could keep her family together. Rita was a student at Success RC School, but her greater education came from her experiences growing up. At age 15, Rita had dreams at night of reaching water. Later, she said, she got the conviction that she had to be water baptized. She was later baptized at Maracas Waterfall. But even so, her spiritual journey was not a smooth one.

“I was getting real horrors and worries,” she said, at that young age, she had already begun smoking, and a mother at 16. “I didn’t have it easy, but I was a real warrior,” she says. “Sometimes I went a whole year without work. I used to wear my clothes short and my knees black from praying. I had plenty of friends, but I had to let them go and pull myself in like a morrocoy. I prayed continuously because the rice pan was empty and the sugar pan was empty, and I walked every day with a mind full of worry.”

But it didn’t stop her from caring for the children in her community. When she was working at the club, she realized a little girl was living in a car parked in her yard, and Rita let her stay with her although her house was not complete. The little girl’s mother mi-grated to the United States and never came back, but Rita helped the little girl to get her school uniforms, and school supplies so she can go to school. Eventually, she was placed in an orphanage. “I never cry so in my life,” she said, when the little girl left.

From her daughters Vilma, Valerie and Judith, Rita was considered a tough mother. “We were afraid of her said Judith, the youngest daughter who lives with Rita. The eldest Vilma, said she understood the reasons why Rita was so tough on them, she shielded us from a life of crime.

“As a young girl growing up to my early 20s, we were not allowed to smoke, drink, use foul language, and even wearing short pants was a big no, no! licks like peas! anything she could spank us with we got it. “Back then it was licks like peas” said Rita, but if I had to do it over again, I would do it differently.” But Vilma, who took dance classes with the reputed Astor Johnson Repertory, said she doesn’t regret the tough love she received. She said her strong life values came from Rita, and it boiled down to respect for self and others.

“Today I still practice some of the disciplines she chiseled into me. We came from her, but never lived the life she lived, because she was successful in forcefully carving out a unique path for us to follow, a path that kept us out of the hands of the law, and out of ever-present danger.” Now living in Washington DC, Vilma says she plans to follow her mother’s example by feeding the poor, or children on her birthday. She says it is her way of keeping her mother’s legacy alive. As for Rita she said as long as she has life in her, she will continue to give to those in need, in any form she can give. Rita says, “whether it’s a small or a big way I have to give, this is my life and this is my commitment to God.”