Why did you become a nurse?
I want to help people reach their optimum level of functioning. Respect, compassion, dedication to work, and love for God have been my cornerstones as a nurse. Being a nurse has fulfilled the American dream for me and my family after years of struggle and hardship.

What about your job as a nurse makes you happy?
Seeing patients recover slowly but surely and knowing I was part of that recovery gives me a sense of joy. Also, it is meaningful when patients die with dignity and peace, with their families supporting them. The warm camaraderie, unity, and support I enjoy with my coworkers mean much to me as well. All in all, being a critical care nurse is a blessing because I am able to develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes I want in my daily life.

Tell us about an extraordinary experience you’ve had as a critical care nurse.
A few years ago I was on an American Airlines flight when the crew announced that they needed a doctor or nurse because a passenger was having a health problem. Together with another nurse I gave first aid treatment to the passenger, who was experiencing severe hypoglycemia episodes. We gave her orange juice, crackers, and a carotid massage, then took her vital signs. After a few minutes, the passenger’s condition stabilized. This situation taught me that helping people get back on their feet and be healthy not only applies in health care facilities but in everyday life as well.

What are the challenges you encounter and how do you overcome them?
My major challenge, which is personal, is not fully trusting myself. Every day I try to overcome it by praying to God, asking questions, and seeking advice from my family and coworkers.

What has your journey as a nurse been like?
My journey has led me to discover so many new things along the way, like high-tech equipment, materials, and procedures; electronic medical records; new friends; and breakthroughs affecting the health care delivery system—all for the betterment of patients and their families.

At the end of a busy day, how do you find balance in your life?
I find balance being with my spouse and our child. We pray, attend church, watch television, and do things around the house together, all of which strengthen our family relationship. We prioritize quality time together despite our busy schedules, and adhere to our motto, “The family that prays together, stays together.” It is important to be able to relieve my stress and tension from work because before I can take care of my patients I need to be strong and healthy, physically and emotionally.

What would we be surprised to know about you?
I come across as a serious person but really I am a cheerful guy and I like to joke around, especially to lighten up stressful times. Also, despite my hectic schedule with both family and work, I am still able to make a difference and help build a better world through community service and prayers as a member of the Knights of Columbus Council and Men’s Club at St. Gabriel the Archangel Catholic Community.

How has AACN played a role in your career?
AACN has given me the tools I need to be an exceptional critical care nurse. I take the free CNE tests, and the journals keep me informed of the latest news, trends, and research in critical care nursing. AACN is offering review materials I need to prepare for the Adult CCRN certification examination. AACN has been a resource for both personal and professional goals.

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I Am a Critical Care Nurse features the extraordinary in a critical care nurse’s ordinary experiences. To be featured in this department, contact Critical Care Nurse via e-mail at ccn@aacn.org.