

Graduating during the pandemic | A personal journal by Jirah May A. Millano

Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng Maynila held its commencement exercises virtually this June 30, 2020. They broadcasted this virtual graduation on their Facebook page and official website. Many students and parents were looking forward to the original plan, which was to hold the event traditionally at the PICC, where all other commencement exercises were held before. The graduation of Batch 2020 is the first of its kind for the Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng Maynila.

Weeks before this, graduating students were asked to take their own photos wearing appropriate school uniform and with a white background. These photos were then put to a template to achieve uniformity of the photos. These were flashed during the virtual graduation.



Figure 1 My photo, which was flashed during the virtual graduation.

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The way families celebrated the graduating students' milestones also changed. Before, others would dine out for lunch or dinner after the ceremony. However, at this time of the pandemic, many just ordered in food to celebrate, which is what I did.



Figure 2 My boyfriend, who was residing in Cavite, had these delivered to me in Pasay via a third-party food delivery company.



Figure 3 Because of the risks of going outside, I ordered in food for lunch as part of our celebration at home. Ordering food has already been a thing for so long, but I think this pandemic really increased the demand for such.

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On that day, my mother was at work and was to go home the following day. She is a midwife at a local health center in Parañaque City. Because of unavailability of public transport, she cannot commute to and from work on a daily basis. She goes to work on Sunday and goes home on Wednesday. Since she was not at home at the day of the virtual graduation, she watched the event on her mobile phone at her workplace.

This reminds me that even on Mothers' Day, May 10, 2020, my mother had to be at work. She could not celebrate with us. That is why on May 13, Wednesday, my sister ordered food as our mother came home.



Figure 4 On May 13, 2020, I did a sketch on the spot. It was a picture of my mother lying on the couch the night she came home from work.