

*Blessed  
with Success:*

**Vanessa Ross  
brings joy  
and  
inspiration  
to helping others**



PHOTO COURTESY OF VANESSA ROSS

*By Anita Oubre*

**I**f there is one message that Vanessa Ross wants the world to know about her it's that every success that has been presented to her has been "a blessing and a gift from God."

"I give all the credit, glory and honor to my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ," she proudly declared. "Spreading the gospel and doing the work of God through community service is my mission."

As an evangelist, author, motivational speaker, clothing designer and New Orleans Baby Doll, and family caregiver, Vanessa credits all of her success and endeavors to a higher power.

"I want people to know that, despite our struggles, trials, tribulations and everything else we go through, we can still make it. We can get through it. We don't have to feel down about ourselves. We have to remember that God is right there on our side," she emphasized.



Vanessa's testimony is a powerful one. When she lost her daughter Eboni to sickle-cell anemia at the tender age of 28, she knew that she would have to raise her two grandchildren who were ages four and ten at the time. They are both in their twenties now and Vanessa will attest that it was not always easy but she kept going nonetheless.

"Those kids were my lifeline," Vanessa continued. "I kept their mother's memory alive by sitting down with them and talking about her. I wanted the kids to know her favorite color. How she liked to bake muffins at 3 a.m. Little things like that. The good memories that they could hold onto for a lifetime. That was God."

It was also "the hand of God," Vanessa says, that showed her she needed to write. As a teen who attended Walter L. Cohen High School, she always had a pad and pen in her hand. She loved English classes, speech and debate and acting. Singing and dancing were also passions of hers.

"I did a two-year program in child development at UNO and, at that time, I also dabbled in poetry. I ended up getting an Associate Degree from Delgado Community College in child development," Vanessa noted.

Writing stories was not only a pastime for Vanessa but also an activity that kept

her mind at ease. She says that when she writes she is in her "comfort zone." She always keeps a notebook and pen handy because she wants to be ready to jot down any ideas that may come through. Even if she's riding in the car with someone, she stays ready.

As a published author, Vanessa has three books under her belt, the first of which is titled "A Mother's Journey Through her Daughter's Eyes Following a Higher Calling." It is a story of inspiration for her as she recollected the challenges of caring for her sick daughter.

"I wanted to share my story in the hopes



that it would help another family going through medical challenges. I wanted the readers to know that there is a God," she explained.

Her other books are "Encouraging Affirmations to Uplift, Encourage, & Strengthen: Testimonies of God's Love, Faith and Blessings" and "A Mother's Prayer-Love Letter to my Daughter."

Vanessa hopes that this collection of affirmations and powerful testimony will touch her readers' hearts and give strength to those searching for healing and hope. She also has a collection of calendars,

prayer journals, Christian-inspired apparel and other wares available on her online store. In addition, she is working on hosting an inspirational podcast aimed at helping people cope with challenges and debilitating illnesses.

When she's not writing, Vanessa enjoys being a faithful member of Believer's Temple of Faith Baptist Church. She loves her church family led by Pastor Kenneth Davis. She sings in the chorale choir under the leadership of Minister Sam Lovely and she also assists with the children's choir.

"I've been singing since I was about five years old. Mahalia Jackson was my cousin," Vanessa proudly noted. "My mom and my grandmother loved to sing. My grandfather had a quartet group. When I was coming up, there was always music in the background and singing, playing the keyboard and playing the tambourines. My parents played the drums and so I'm musically inclined. It's in my blood," she added.

As a busy member of Believer's Temple, it is in liturgical dance where Vanessa thrives.

"I was a person who loved liturgical dancing, and I would get in the mirror and just practice, never knowing what I was doing," Vanessa excitedly expressed. "And



one day I just asked God to show me and help me with this gift that he had for me.”



Liturgical dance is a form of worship that combines movement and expression to enhance the spiritual experience. Vanessa also incorporates flags into her dance. Each color of the different flags represents different scriptures and traditions. For example, the yellow flag represents faith, red represents the blood of Jesus and blue represents heaven.

“All of these amazing feelings come through my body when I am dancing and I know God is still working on me and with me. I know He has a lot more to do,” she said.

Vanessa also enjoys dancing throughout New Orleans as a member of the Le Bon Ton Baby Dolls. The Baby Doll tradition dates back to the Storyville era of the late 19th/early 20th centuries where women of color plied their trade. Vanessa enjoys the community service aspect of serving the homeless and the elderly with her doll group. They are meaningful experiences for her.

“I joined the Baby Dolls in June 2021 and I’ve always loved to dance,” she said. “As a little girl growing up, I learned about the Baby Dolls. I saw them in parades and I would say, ‘I’d love to do that.’”

“So that’s been my thing and I love what the Baby Dolls do,” Vanessa added. We serve lunches to the elderly and it gives me such a great pleasure to see them enjoying

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our Baby Dolls performances. I just love the Baby Dolls. I love what we do.”

Vanessa is also active with Covenant House, the shelter for homeless children where her other daughter, Rheneisha Robertson, is the C.E.O. “I do a sleep-out with them every year in November and it is a blessing,” she said.

“We raise money for the kids who are less fortunate,” she explained. “It helps them with their education. They have a lot of kids who are picked up off the street and Covenant House helps them make something of their lives.”

Vanessa also helps care for her 91 year-old mother who lives about ten minutes away from her.

In her spare time, Vanessa enjoys traveling with her grandchildren. They are avid cruisers. Vanessa enjoys the quiet time on board the ship where she can sneak away and have plenty of quiet time for writing. She hopes to have some songs she has written recorded in the near future.

Vanessa looks forward to publishing more of her writing and her hope is that the readers can build a better relationship with God through her testimonies and life story.

She concludes by saying, “I just believe in helping people because I know that, down the line, God is going to take care of me always, and I know I’ll be blessed. I can’t complain. No matter what the situation is, I won’t complain. I will continue to focus on the blessings.”

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