



FALL/WINTER 2015

Sari-Sari Stories

Volume 3 Number 2

A Newsletter of WIN - USA Ladies



LIFTING UP MY CUP OF SALVATION

Ching Mapeso

There's no doubt about it—GOD IS REAL! And GOD IS GOOD! Yes, indeed, He is so very good. He never fails. His love endures forever. I can say this without any hesitation and without any shadow of doubt from my own experiences knowing Jesus Christ as my Savior and serving Him as my Lord all these 28 plus years.

What shall I render to the Lord for all His benefits toward me?

I shall lift up the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord,

I shall pay my vows to the Lord, oh, may it be in the presence of all His people...

To Thee I shall offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving, and call upon the name of the Lord.

I shall pay my vows to the Lord, oh, may it be in the presence of all His people...

(Psalm 116:12-14, 17-18)

When I answered an altar call back in May, 1987, I didn't know what I was getting myself into. I just knew I felt so empty and that my emptiness couldn't be filled up with anything I tried nor anything I could possibly think of. So with all sincerity I answered the altar call for

prayer in one of the tent meetings conducted by American missionaries in Mindanao. I was the pianist of the Christian band that performed the music. I joined the band because my husband, who was just a new Christian then, was the band's lead singer. At that particular time, the band was doing crusades in the evenings and providing music in the meetings. I didn't understand much of what they were talking about, but I felt that I needed to have more meaning in my life and to fill the emptiness inside of me. That evening when I saw people responding to the altar call, I too went along after fighting off the initial feeling of embarrassment.

The American missionary who prayed for me told me to read Jude 1:20. I was so eager to read it hoping to find an answer to my need. So that night, after doing my nightly beauty

To Thee I shall offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving, and call upon the name of the Lord. ~ Psa 116: 17

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Lifting Up My Cup

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ritual and making sure that the other three ladies with me in the hotel room were already asleep, I finally opened the bible to read the verse. Because I was not familiar with the bible, it took me awhile to get to the book of Jude. Finally I found the verse and read, *“But you beloved, building yourselves up in your most holy faith; praying in the Holy Spirit.”*

My initial thought after reading the verse was that maybe the missionary gave me the wrong verse because it didn't make sense to me. I did not understand what it meant. So I looked at the verses before and after it but it still didn't make any sense to me. I just kept repeating the verse over and over again sincerely hoping to understand and receive whatever it was supposed to give me. My heart was desperately looking for something but I didn't know what it was. Then, I felt something unusual happening with me so I looked at my face in the mirror in front of where I was sitting. Looking at my face, I saw my lips moving as if they were forming some words but no sounds were coming out!

The next day, I talked to the American missionary about my strange experience that night and he told me to just let it go. I also didn't understand what he meant by that and just continued attending the meetings that day. That night my husband's cousin took us out for dinner so instead of sleeping in the hotel with the ladies, I went with my husband to the dorm where the men were booked for the night.

As I sat on the bed beside my sleeping husband, I felt a very strong desire to pray before going to sleep. The problem was that whenever I would start the first line of the memorized prayers that I learned as a child, I would stop feeling it was empty. I felt so helpless having such an intense desire to pray and not knowing how.

Suddenly, my mouth was speaking words I couldn't understand. I didn't know what language I was speaking, never ever heard it before and it was as if a floodgate was released which I couldn't stop. It scared me that I had no control over it. It also scared my husband even more who suddenly woke up from his sleep, turned on the lights to see what was happening to me, looked at me like I was going crazy. He even went out of the room to ask for help from a youth pastor in the other room. Because I couldn't stop myself, I signaled with my hands to reassure him that it was all right, pointing up with my fingers that it was from the Lord. I knew in my heart without any doubt that what was happening to me was from the Lord. I felt such an amazing release speaking in that strange language and not having any control over my tongue. My husband was so scared of me that he asked the youth pastor to sleep with us beside him in the bed!

The next day, the team members explained that I was speaking in tongues. That was the first time I ever heard such a thing. I didn't understand what that was, neither did anyone explain to me what “speaking in tongues” was about. Somehow, it frightened me because in the next couple of days that followed, every time I wanted to pray, the language would just burst out from me and I had no control over it.

A few weeks later, I was in UP taking my masters in musicology. I met a childhood friend from our hometown. I shared my experience with her because she was a Christian and a member of the Campus Crusade for Christ. She asked me whether I already did the sinner's prayer and I asked her what that was about. Right then and there, she led me in a sinner's prayer and did one-on-one discipleship with me for several weeks.

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Year-End Reflections

Tess Cordero

...He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives, ...to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor,to comfort all who mourn, ...to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the LORD for the display of his splendor. (Isaiah 61:1-3)

The year 2015 was probably one of the most difficult years of my life. I had moments that were so painful, I don't know how I made it through, were it not for God Himself. But there were also the tender loving moments when I could feel God beside me, assuring me that it's okay to hurt because He's right beside me.

My Mom passed away in the Philippines after one month of being diagnosed of cancer. We did not expect her to go so quickly, but I was able to care for her, read her Scriptures, pray with her, and worship with her. I was there when she saw the saints calling her home. She died in my arms while I was talking to her about heaven. It was such a tender moment.

My Dad went home three and a half months later. But with Dad, it was different. We were in Scandinavia ministering when Dad was hospitalized. I had a Ladies Retreat coming in Los Angeles. I could not leave work after returning from a 2-week trip. I asked Dad to wait for me. I begged God to sustain Dad till I arrive. He died an hour before I preached at the Ladies Retreat. It was heartbreaking.

Those of us who experienced being away from aging parents, seeing them grow old and get sick from afar understand the pain of not being able to

say goodbye. I wished I spent more time with Dad. I wished I dropped everything and rushed back to Manila. I wished I called home more often. I wished....

I was stricken with guilt and regret. While I was in Norway, I dreamt that my Dad was with my Mom in a garden. Why didn't I get it? How could I have missed it when God was trying to tell me something? Although I knew death was coming, I did not understand the timing. I regretted not being able to give my Dad the same care I gave to my Mom.

So I had this thing against God. He knew I was doing His work. Why didn't Dad wait for me? My grief and resentment carried over for some time. I could not pray, could not read the Bible the way I used to. Not only that, there were more unexpected deaths and more curved balls in the family that are too long to talk about.

However, my difficult moments have been my most valuable. He gave me assurance of my parents' salvation. That was the greatest cry of my heart for years. Dad even left a poem assuring us that he is saved. In addition, among his personal items were pages of his favorite Scriptures which he personally typed with a manual typewriter.

God taught me more about His love during these darkest hours than during the happy times. I experienced God's love for me which is flawless, full of mercy and forgiveness. One night, when I said I could not wallow in grief any longer, I cried my heart out to God, and worshipped Him from deep within. I felt His peace and healing flow like never before, washing me of guilt, regret and resentment.

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Year-End Reflections

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2015 was a year of goodbyes in many levels. Goodbye to Mom, goodbye to Dad. It was also goodbye to guilt, regret and things that were holding me back. I was set free!

My pain and struggles aside, 2015 was also a year of favor. In spite of several trips to the Philippines for my parents' sickness and subsequent deaths, my company allowed me time off to travel to Norway and Denmark for ministry. I was also allowed a fourth (yes, fourth) trip to the Philippines for my high school reunion. And my ticket was free due to accumulated mileage, plus an upgrade to business class! Such favor! We also saw the hand of God in our daughters' lives. This year Sandra and Joanna experienced so much unexpected blessings in their respective careers.

The year ended with more favor. At work I won 2-day hopper tickets to Disneyland for

the whole family and received gift cards to cover our hotel and meals! God fulfilled our desire to be able to have some family time.

Whatever it is you went through in 2015, I hope you realize that these occasional pains are opportunities to discover God in new ways. Allow Him to wash you anew. Leave behind the hurts and baggage of 2015. Allow His unfailing love to replace your broken heart with a heart of praise.

As we enter 2016, let us draw even closer to God that we *"will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the LORD for the display of his splendor"*. I declare that 2016 will be a year of favor!



Tess is the wife of Pastor Chito Cordero, International Missions Director and Senior Pastor of WIN-Los Angeles, California.

Lifting Up My Cup

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What a miracle! My life changed completely. God filled me with His Holy Spirit. God saved me. It may be an unusual occurrence but God is in the business of doing miracles in His own way and time. Surely, His ways are higher than our ways and His thoughts than our thoughts.

I still remember the countless miracles that made me thank and praise God while I was a baby Christian in Ipil Dorm in UP: water that stopped and came back while I was in the middle of a shower, the bus that I got in perfect time for me to catch the last seat in the last jeepney going inside the campus because I came from a church service, bible study or prayer meeting, . . . and a place for my family to stay when they came to join me in Manila and serve in the church where I was already serving.

My desire was no longer for the material things of this world. My priorities changed. In later years I realized that the altar call that I responded to was for the infilling of the Holy Spirit.

In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words; and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will

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Celebrating God's Goodness

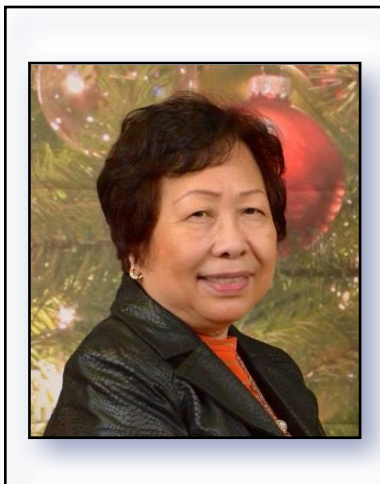


“I shall remember the deeds of the Lord.” ~ Psalm 77:11

During this season of celebrations – Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year, we give thanks for how God has been involved in every minute of our lives. When you look back at your life experience in 2015, you will be surprised how many times you’ve experienced God’s goodness.

We celebrate Thanksgiving for the bountiful blessings God provides for us each day, we celebrate the gift of hope and salvation in the birth of Jesus Christ, God’s Son during Christmas, and we celebrate a New Year as we look ahead to what God has in store for us to bring us closer to Him.

Here is a collection of special moments, miracles and blessings God has lavished on these ladies in 2015. May their stories inspire you and encourage you on your journey in 2016.



Nena A. Latoja

WIN-Los Angeles

Lead, Prayer Line; Leadership Team, Deborah's Fire Ladies Ministry

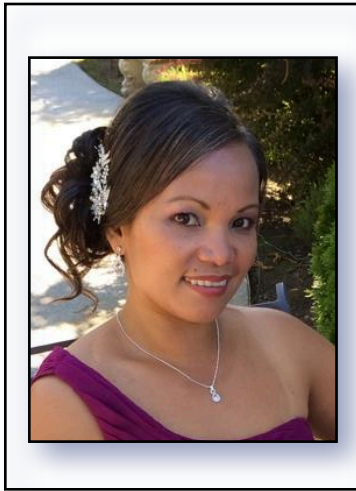
With Christmas just two weeks away, we are in a season of the year when we are thinking about miracles more than usual. The greatest gift we could ever receive was the gift of God's Son. But miracles are not just in the past!

Almost three months ago, I witnessed the miracle of life. My granddaughter Katherine Elizabeth Lechadores (Kate for short) was born in September 27th, 2015. My son told me their child was due September 15th. Upon hearing the news, I prayed and beg God to allow me to be present during the birth because my scheduled flight was September 26th on a red-eye flight from Los Angeles to Atlanta. True enough, God

is ever faithful, from the airport and still groggy from lack of sleep, I was taken directly to the hospital where an hour later Kate was born. Oh, the joy of holding her for the very first time, she’s a precious bundle of joy!!!

Celebrating God's Goodness

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Ida Lockhart

WIN-Seattle/Tacoma
Ladies Ministry Head

I'm not sure one sentence is enough for me to describe God's goodness and involvement in my life. God has definitely lavished his blessings and miracles in me and my family this year. In the beginning of the year He took care of my throat cancer. He informed the doctors and guided them with my surgery. He also took care of the hospital bills. He gave me time to heal by not working from April - October. And He took care of our financial needs during those months of unemployment. Just as my voice was finally normalizing, He blessed me with a new job. My co-workers and manager were so nice and they made me feel that I belong with this company. I enjoy what I do. I can

see myself in another long term employment.

Maria Wong

WIN Los Angeles
Leadership Team, Deborah's Fire Ladies Ministry

2015 is a year of many challenges, deliverance, healing and blessings for me. Recently I got sick. I usually don't drink medicine but this time I took the medicine for 5 days. It didn't help; my cough and colds become worse and developed into asthma. I decided to stop the medicine and started to pray. I sensed in my spirit I need to bind the sickness in my body. That morning I prayed inside my car before I went to work. I rebuked the asthma in Jesus' name and declared and decreed, "By His stripes I am healed!" I declared the promises of God that He took all my pain and all my diseases on the cross. After I prayed I felt better! Praise the Lord for the healing!



I thank God for all challenges that I had at work. Truly God will discipline those whom He loves. He humbled me He showed to me how He delivered me from all the troubles. I thank God for all the storms that I went through in 2015 because I became closer to Him. I thank God for all the blessings He gave to us- for our jobs, for our families, for providing for our needs, for keeping us safe always and for giving us good health. To God be all the glory, honor and praise!

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Celebrating God's Goodness

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Cynthia de Castro

WIN Los Angeles, Associate Pastor

WALKING ON WATER!

*“Spirit, lead me where my trust is without borders
Let me walk upon the waters,
Wherever you would call me.”*

The above lines come from one of my favorite Christian songs the past couple of years - “Oceans”. The lines speak to my heart as I imagine myself to be like Peter who asked the Lord Jesus to let him walk upon the waters at the height of a mighty storm,

amidst tumultuous waves.

2015 has been like a rollercoaster ride for me. There were fun times and scary times, sad times and happy times. But through it all, God’s goodness has been there. I have had His peace and His joy in my heart, as I walked upon the waters.

- Last January-February, I was able to go home to Manila as my company sent me there to supervise the filming of 4 TV commercials. Nothing beats a free trip to the Philippines where my mother and siblings live.
- Then, from May to November, my job went from fair to not-so-good to bad until the company (PLDT U.S. Mobility) finally decided to close and lay off its employees. But since God has seen me through worse times, I took it all in stride. The God who controls the universe controls my life, so I can be confident and rejoice through the trials.
- Our family gained a new blessing when my 6th grandchild, Stephen, was born in March. This brought our family to 14, with 6 adorable grandkids. What a gift from the Lord to be surrounded by precious “gifts from the Lord” who are truly “pampaalis ng pagod!”
- The ministries God has given me (The WIN LA Saturday service and Deborah’s Fire Ladies Ministry) has brought me joy and fulfillment as we continue to see God work His greatest miracle- transforming lives- among us. And then, just before the year ends, He has given me the desire of my heart- to see the Holy Land and minister to our WIN churches there, in Jordan and Israel, come January. God continues to amaze me!

Yes, God lets you walk on water if you ask Him and believe. And that is why, whatever 2016 may hold for us, we can be filled with hope and confidence. Just keep your eyes on Jesus- far above the waves!

*20 Now glory be to **God**, who by his mighty power at work within us **is able to do far more than we would ever dare to ask or even dream of—infinitely beyond our highest prayers, desires, thoughts, or hopes.** 21 May he be given glory forever and ever through endless ages because of his master plan of salvation for the Church through Jesus Christ. ~ Ephesians 3:20-21(TLB)*

Lifting Up My Cup

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of God. And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. (Romans 8:26-28)


Thank you, Jesus, for sending Your Holy Spirit who is always with us, who helps us in our weakness, who intercedes for us according to God's will, who guides, instructs and gives us wisdom, convicts and grieves when we fall into temptation and commit sin, purifies and sanctifies us, leads us to worship in spirit and truth, leads us into all truth and causes us to grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ, even as we bear His fruit of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness,

faithfulness, gentleness and self-control, and Holy-Spirit-fruit-bearing Christians can walk together in the unity of the Spirit with one mind—the Mind of Christ.

I shall lift up the cup of salvation...to Thee I shall offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving.

(Ps. 116: 13a, 17a)

Ching Mapeso, is the wife of Pastor Butch Mapeso, Associate Pastor, NE Houston, Texas. She oversees the music ministry of WIN Houston.



Cashew, Chocolate & Butterscotch Cookies

Last Christmas our cookie exchange at work was so successful my coworkers wanted to do it again this December.

For this recipe, I used pecan pieces instead of cashews.

My cookies came out perfect! Praise the Lord!

Makes 48 cookies.

Nickie Paulate

Ingredients:
1 c. butter, softened
1 c. packaged brown sugar
1/2 c. granulated sugar
1 1/2 tsp. baking soda
1/2 tsp. salt
2 eggs
1 tsp. vanilla
2 1/4 c. all-purpose flour
2 c. rolled oats
1 c. coarsely chopped cashews
1/2 c. butterscotch-flavored pieces
1 c. semisweet chocolate pieces

Procedure:
1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees F.
2. In a large mixing bowl beat butter with and electric mixer on medium to high for 30 seconds. Add brown sugar, granulated sugar, baking soda, and salt; beat until combined, scraping sides of bowl occasionally. Beat in eggs until combined. Beat in as much flour as you can with the mixer. Using a wooden spoon, stir in any remaining flour, rolled oats, cashews, chocolate pieces, and butterscotch pieces.
3. Drop dough by rounded teaspoons 2" apart onto an ungreased cookie sheet.
4. Bake for 6 to 7 minutes or until edges are golden. Transfer cookie to a wire rack; let cool.

Source: Better Homes and Gardens