



FALL/WINTER 2017

Sari-Sari Stories

Volume 5 Number 2

A Newsletter of WIN - USA Ladies

One Thing is Needed Margaret R. Sharpe



But one thing is needed: Jesus said: Mary has chosen that good part. -Luke 10:41-42

The Call

It was Friday evening after two general surgeries. The surgeon came to my room and said:

"I'm sorry Margaret, it was cancer and 2nd stage to the lymph glands." What? But no, no, that's not what's supposed to be. I was shocked- I fainted!

I woke up the following Saturday morning – it was sunny outside. I got up, closed my hospital door and looked at the window, where I saw a graveyard. My focus fell on an eight- to nine-foot concrete cross in the centre of the yard. I looked at it for hours. I was kneeling at the window and the front of my hospital gown was very wet. Tears were flowing down my face but I was not crying. I was weeping silently! As I continued to focus on the cross, these words came from my lips: "Ok, Ok, take my life, I give it, do something with it," then I went back to bed. Amazingly, I began to sing: "Jesus loves me this I know; at the cross, at the cross; it's the blood that covers me..."

Then, several scriptures jumped out from my heart: "For God so loved the world...The Lord is My Shepherd... In my Fathers house...Let not your heart be troubled." Seeds from my youth came to life in my spirit! Peace flooded my body and I slept. When I woke up, there was no pain, no symptoms – just peace and the thoughts that this is not supposed to be!! Now, what? John 11:4 spoke to me: "This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God's glory so that God' son may be glorified through it."

My Home

I grew up in a Christian home. We went to church two to three times a week, but legalism ruled: don't do this, that-don't go there, be good. I was always told I needed to be a good girl to be right with God. I never knew God *loved* me even as a sinner! At 17 years old, I rejected it all and couldn't wait to get away. I went in nurses training, got married, gave birth to two boys, and had all the perks that life could offer: a lovely house, cars, friends, travels, and even got my heart's desire to be in a nursing administrative position. Yet, I was empty and unfulfilled. I was dead in my sin!

But God knew me. He loved me and was calling me to my destiny. I was to receive God's grace and mercy and I would choose to obey! As *Romans 12:1-2* says: *I urge you...by God's mercies present your body...It is your reasonable service and transforms your mind..to prove: the good, acceptable and perfect will of God.*

The Call Continues:

One month after the surgery I was invited to hear a young man preach. There, God filled me with His Spirit and gave me a new language to speak to Him. And I was never the same. God's word got my attention, and my heart was opened to it. I remembered by faith, I had committed myself and told God: *Take my life and do something with it.* I was willing; I began to hunger for God and His Word-- for freedom. The change started in my thinking and knew that I needed to understand faith so I can believe.

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One Thing Is Needed

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I found the answer in His word at Romans 10:17: *Faith Comes by hearing, and by hearing the word of God. I believed, therefore, I received!* The renewal of my spirit was complete, my soul (mind, will, and emotions) would follow and my body would listen! By His Grace, I gained knowledge and understanding of healing and health. I learned that I was (and so are you!) three parts that work together to make me whole and healed. We are spirit and soul, and we live in a body, as 1 Thessalonians 5:23 says.

In awe of God and his word, I learned that **“one thing was needed...” and that is to sit on His feet and listen to His word just like Mary in Luke 10:42.**

I knew that I’m a new creation and I’m on this journey to fulfill His purposes for my life. He showed me early on the Way and the cost of following Him. He requires ALL of me, and I resolved to give my all. I learned that I have to die to myself if I want to follow Him. And as I began to die to myself, I started living to be free and healed in whole! Yes there is a cost to following Christ, my friend, but a there is also great reward.

Have you heard Jesus say: *One thing is needed? Make a decision today to choose His presence...sit for a while and attend to His word. Read it, meditate it, hear it and let it take root in your heart and it will give you life! As Proverbs 4:20-27 says – pay attention to what God says and turn your ear to his words...for they are life to those who find them, and health to one’s whole body.*

Ministry: Favour-Blessings

Two years after this cancer diagnosis, I was led to buy a beautiful farm property. It is 120 acres with open meadows, apple orchards, aged trees, and wildlife. It is surrounded by nature’s beauty and my home is there--a prize on the Eastern Shore of Nova Scotia, Canada. Two years later, in the same area, I bought a Roman Catholic convent just five minutes from the farm lands, which is now a Registered Charity that is called Covenant Place Support and Renewal Organization.

The support and renewal centre and farmlands have become a platform to help people get healed and be whole. The Centre is an 18-room historic building on the inlet of Chezzetcook, Nova Scotia, Canada. I founded the Centre 25 years ago to provide hope and healing for women diagnosed with breast cancer. Now, the Centre is available to those seeking for support during a time of life’s crises such illness, distress, family or work-related issues. It has become a place of rest and healing by promoting spiritual, emotional and physical growth. The Centre has been a refuge from the cares of life by drawing close to God, sharing His word, and, having fellowship with others who believe in Him.

Today, I know God loves me and His Son died for me to have LIFE...abundantly! Beloved, all the prayers sown in your life and in the lives of those you have prayed for have all been heard and they will produce a harvest. Never Give Up! Only believe and let God love you through the circumstances you are experiencing. Trust Him. He worked my diagnosis for His good and for mine.

Covenant Place



God's Well-Disguised Blessings

Cynthia De Castro



*"When you pass through the waters, I will be with you and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior."
Isaiah 43:2-3*

"I'm really glad I am dying from cancer," whispered the man beside me.

It was a Thursday in 2008, my chemo day at the hospital in Los Angeles. I was in the Infusion Room where around 20 of us cancer patients were lying down on beds or recliners with the chemo medicine going through our veins. I quickly opened my eyes and regarded the older man beside me, a *kababayan* I have come to call "Tito". Did I hear him right? Did he just say he's glad he has cancer?

"*Bakit niyo po nasabi yun, Tito?*" ("What made you say that, Tito?"), I really wanted to know.

"Because I could have died suddenly from a heart attack or a stroke, and then I would not have had the chance to fix my life, say good-bye to my loved ones, prepare for my death. But now with cancer, I have been given a few months to live. And I have been given that time to prepare for the inevitable," he explained before he closed his eyes to sleep.

Oh, how that remark made my day! I marveled at the man's ability to embrace his terminal disease and find something good in it. His statement reminded me of the quotation - "There is blessing hidden in every trial in life, but you have to be willing to open your heart to see them."

I came to America in late 2006, excited for the new ministry, new adventure, new chapter in my life. But just 18 months later, I was diagnosed with breast cancer, stage 3. I had to undergo an aggressive, one-year treatment of surgery, chemotherapy and radiation. And just when I thought it was all behind me, I found myself going under the knife again in 2013, this time due to ovarian cancer.

My bouts with cancer were not easy but God's grace was truly more than enough. Every day, it was grace that got me through and His grace never ran out. It was amazing, unlimited and comforting. I have learned so many lessons and came to know my Lord like never before because of cancer. Yes, I can agree with my "chemo classmate" and declare that in many ways, cancer has been God's well-disguised blessing for me.

I give the Lord Jesus all the glory for my healing and continued good health. There have been days I woke up with aches and pains, but I thank God that I woke up. The chemo pills I have been taking for 10 years now have had adverse side-effects on my body, but I praise God I am still alive and able to live a normal life. Many of the people who underwent cancer treatment with me have passed away, but God

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Sis. Cynthia is the wife of Nitoy. She is an Associate Pastor of WIN-Los Angeles, California in charge of Christian Education. They have a son, two daughters and six grandchildren.



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The plan through healing was to obey and believe and receive the perfect, acceptable and pleasing will of God. Will you choose the “*one thing is needed*”? It will cost you to die to your old self, BUT it will please Him to give you the prize.

I have a prayer card with healing scriptures. For 26 years I have read this prayer daily, and it has become life and become a medication to my flesh. Just write to me at the address below and I would be happy to share my prayer card with you.

I Bless You!

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Margaret is a member of WIN International Church in Nova Scotia, Canada. Her love to preach, teach and disciple is her mission, her passion. Twenty-six years ago she founded the Covenant Place Charity, where she is presently a member of the Board of Directors.

God's Well-Disguised Blessings

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extended my life, so I got the incomparable pleasure of meeting and enjoying my six grandchildren (baby #7 on the way!) Every day is a bonus; every moment, a miracle; every breath, a blessing!

Jesus said, “in this life you will have tribulations”, but Psalm 91:4 assures us that “*His faithful promises are your armor and protection.*”

Multiple times a day, I find opportunities to remind me that our God is faithful, that I can trust Him, and that His love for me is a shield of protection around me. Yes, there will be difficulties but my reaction is always my choice. When I choose to focus on my Savior and not on the problems, eventually, I see behind the well-disguised trials the amazing blessings the Lord has prepared for me.

⁷ But blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in Him. ⁸ He will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the streams. ⁹ He does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green, ¹⁰ It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit.

Jeremiah 17: 7 - 8



God's Got Me!

Rosemarie Jose

One night in September 2015 I suddenly started to cough excessively; non-stop. It was about 11 pm. I could not sleep. I spat out a very thick combination of blood and mucus (about an inch in diameter). We went to the ER. And that started the round of appointments with specialists: pulmonary specialists, special-specialist pathologist; cardio-thoracic surgeon.

My case became a subject of discussion at a cardio-thoracic conference. Then they gave me the option to see an oncologist whose specialty is in rare cancers. In the midst of this scare, my left eye was going blind. After seeing an ophthalmologist I was told to go to a retina specialist immediately.

At this point, I was really feeling special. I was officially diagnosed with metastasized Endometrial Stromal Sarcoma in June 2016. Also around that time, I was diagnosed with exacerbate macular degeneration in my left eye and needing injections for 7 months.

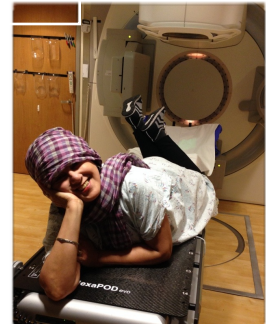
By the way, my cancer is stage 4 but it's only a number. It's Stage 4 because it moved to another organ, my lungs. Here's the miracle. My cancer, they said, started in my uterus. I had a hysterectomy more than 20 years ago and God allowed me to do ministry in the Philippines (not knowing I had cancer then). I have 3 tumors: 2 in my upper right lung and 1 on the lower lobe of my right lung. I had a nodule also on my left adrenal gland.

After my second eye injection, my retina specialist was in awe. He kept on shaking his head and said, "This is not a bad thing, but you are my only patient whose healing is fast." The bleeding behind my retina is almost gone. I told my eye doctor that "God is healing me!" After my 4th injection I told him that I will have to stop coming here because I will undergo lobectomy – lung surgery. They will have to scrape off my two big tumors on my right upper lobe and wedge off a part of my lower left lobe. That's the plan.

But God had a different plan. The anesthesiologist said they will do an epidural for pain management. As I was being

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"Photo Shoots"



Before Radiation

Radiation technicians



Adrenalectomy

Fun after the surgery



God's Got Me!

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wheeled into the operating room I was singing a praise song but as I saw large instruments, it gave me the chills. I prayed, Lord stop this surgery if it's not your will. I was not yet sedated. They told me to sit up and grip the arms of the nurse. (They were some hairy arms.) For the epidural they poked me four times with a thick needle on my upper back. I was yelling "Jesus help him!" (the anesthesiologist) because the needle was not getting through. Four times! But Jesus did not help him because HE had other plans. The surgeon did a bronchoscopy first before slicing me up. And what he saw was something that was never seen in all the CT scans and X-rays I had before. He did not go through with the lobectomy because he said that I was already sedated and I knew that I will only have parts of my right lung removed and not my total right lung. He then called my oncologist and they decided not to go ahead with the surgery and will do radiation instead.

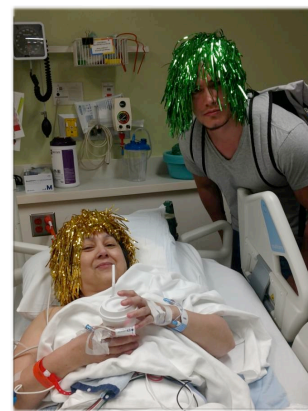
What did they see in that bronchoscopy? The surgeon said, my big tumor leaked and latched on to my windpipe; in a tear drop shape. Radiation was scheduled every morning except weekends and holidays in November 2016. It's by the grace of God that I was able to work in the afternoon. Every four months I went to Seattle Cancer Care Alliance (SCCA) for X-rays, CT scans and blood works. After some months I had another bronchoscopy and THAT THING! that latched on to my windpipe WAS GONE. In hindsight, the Lord just placed it there to stop the surgery and removed it after the radiation. My tumors are slowly shrinking. It's taking its sweet time. That's that for my cancer.

During my radiation days, Rene's schedule was such that he was able to bring me to UW Medical Center then go to work in the afternoon. Praise God. After my radiation I had to undergo Adrenalectomy. I had tumors in my left adrenal gland. They removed my left adrenal gland successfully. The surgeon was on vacation but he came to do the surgery in December 30, 2017, as I pleaded. If my surgery was done the following month, I wouldn't have afforded the surgery because of the new deductible. God's grace!

Then here comes another challenge. I had this pain from my right lower back shooting down to my right leg. It was very painful that Rene had to always tuck me in bed and help me get up and out of bed. My oncologist ordered CT Scan and X-ray to see if it was related to my cancer. In the meantime I was going to a chiropractor 3 times a week. He would pray for me and not charge me. Praise the Lord!

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Spine Surgery
with Dr. Michael, my
anesthesiologist, nurses,
friends, Kenny and Rene



God's Got Me!

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I was referred to an orthopedic surgeon at SCCA who, after seeing the results of the scan and 16 images of x-ray referred me to the Harbor View Spine Center. This was really scary for me more than my cancer. The chief surgeon of Harbor View Hospital (No. 1 trauma hospital in the state) recommended an L4-L5 surgery. A soft muscle was blocking the path of a nerve. As if it was any comfort, I was assured that among the spine surgeries this one has the lowest risk. I prayed so hard and asked God to direct me, to speak to me through my Christian chiropractor. He advised me to go for it. That was in June 2017. I was out for two months. Rene took a leave to take care of me for two weeks. Through it all God provided for our needs.

My church family was a great comfort to me and Rene and still is. What a good support group. It's difficult to be thankful for my disease but in a way I am. I work in a skilled nursing facility as an activity director and I deal directly with my residents. The ministry side of it is deeper as I can identify with them in their illness, fear, discomfort and pain.

My having cancer has a good purpose.

The battle isn't over but I know GOD'S GOT ME!

A recipe card for 'Milk & Cookies Fudge' by Sapiin-Sapiin. The card is white with a red and white logo at the top that says 'sapiin-sapiin' and 'God's love made delicious.' Below the logo, the title 'Milk & Cookies Fudge' is written in a bold, black font. The card lists ingredients and preparation steps. The background of the card is a light green with a subtle pattern of small flowers and leaves.

Ingredients:

- 3 cups white chocolate chips
- 14 oz sweetened condensed milk
- 1 1/2 cup chopped chocolate chips (freeze any cookie)
- 3 tbsp mini chocolate chips

Preparation:

1. Line an 8" pan with parchment paper & set aside.
2. In a large glass bowl, heat white chocolate & condensed milk in microwave for about 90 seconds, stirring every 30 seconds until melted & smooth.
3. Quickly stir in frozen cookies & pour into prepared pan. Sprinkle top with mini chocolate chips. Refrigerate at least 4 hours. Once set, cut into small squares & store in a sealed container.