



## **Turning 52 is a piece of cake, or January prayer requests**

**Dear family and friends,**

Recently I had another birthday, and I am now 52! Time flies.

My Christmas break ended Jan 3rd, and I started teaching my sewing students once again on that date. I had been sick the week before Christmas break started, so hadn't seen my students in 3 weeks. I wondered how much they had forgotten in my absence. I found out that the answer was, A LOT!

By my second day back in class, I had spent too time correcting mistakes that shouldn't have made by students who had been studying sewing for 9 months already. At the beginning of our class time that day, I told the girls that they had to greatly improve, and quickly, and that I was serious! I was quite frustrated with them, and as I don't hide my feelings very well, they knew it.

My birthday was the 5th, and I had decided before the 3rd, that I would follow a Filipino tradition for the first time in my life, and throw myself a birthday party. I baked a cake a couple days in advance, and stuck it in the fridge. I planned on inviting my students and the dorm moms, and my sewing assistant to our apartment for a quick bite of cake. Afterwards, we'd take the short walk back to the sewing room and continue our usual sewing class.

However, on the 4th, after class, the last thing I wanted to do was throw a party and invite my slow, frustrating students to it. I was so disappointed that they had forgotten so much of what is foundational in sewing. The thought crossed my mind that they may not take me very seriously if I threw a party the day after I had a serious talk with them. I talked it over with Daryl, and thought about the cake in the fridge, and the fact that it was a lot of cake for the 2 of us to eat. Daryl thought that I should still have the students over. In fact he said that it was the Christian thing to do. I prayed about it, as I didn't want my students to think that I was going soft on them, or wasn't still going to hold them to a standard of excellence.

The morning of my birthday arrived, and as I was eating my breakfast, one of the staff wives at 2nd Mile brought over a dozen rice flour muffins, called puto. It's a Filipino delicacy, and it was her birthday gift to me. A short time later, a staff couple brought over a small cake from a local bakery, and wished me a happy birthday. I was touched by their thoughtfulness, and felt that the extra food was confirmation that I have my students over to help celebrate my birthday.

Early afternoon, as sewing class was beginning, after our introductory prayer, I told the girls that they were invited to my apartment for cake. I did remind them that I care about them, but also would continue to hold them to a standard. As I started leading the way to our apartment, I went out the door, and there stood the 2 dorm moms, with another cake from the local bakery! They were just lighting the candles on it. I was quite amazed to see yet another cake for me, and I knew beyond a shadow of a doubt that it was a very good idea to have my 10 students over to my house for cake!

When we got to my apartment, just before they got their plates of cake, each girl handed my a handmade birthday card! I was quite amazed, as I had chewed them out the day before. Besides that, this is my 5th year of teaching sewing, and never before have my students been so thoughtful. We had a nice quick party, and then walked back to the sewing room.

The girls started sewing and in the process of checking on them, I went through the door into the room used for cutting out fabric, and almost ran into a former student of mine. She lives a couple hour bus ride away, so I was surprised to see her. She was in the process of lighting candles on 2 little cupcakes from the local bakery! When I saw her, I just burst out laughing. I could hardly believe all the cake I received. It made getting older quite fun!

I share this with you as an example of the blessings that come alongside of ministry that is sometimes challenging, exhausting, and frustrating. All good things come from God, and I am truly thankful for his goodness to me.

Daryl and I celebrated our 2nd Christmas as parents without our kids. Living with them half a world away is becoming the norm. We miss them, but we don't dwell on that, and find so many things to be thankful for.

At the end of this month, the Working Hands students will be graduating! It such a joy to have boys from 3 different skills training programs graduating. After so many years of only offering auto mechanics training, alongside the discipleship course, its wonderful to have boys also graduating from the wood shop, and the computer course. Please pray for these young Christian men as they go out into the world, looking for work. Pray that they find work, and that they continue to grow in the Lord.

Next month, the Mustard Seed girls will graduate from their discipleship and sewing course. It is a blessing to have had all of our girls continue with their training. Please pray that they will be able to remember what they are being taught, and that they will follow the Lord's leading in their lives.

Lastly, Daryl and I are looking forward to our upcoming furlough! Its hard to believe its time again to see many of you. We reserved our tickets today, to arrive in the States on February 23! We plan to start our furlough by participating in the missions conference at my sister and brother in law's church, starting March 2.

Later in March, we plan to visit Hilary in Spokane, as Daryl will be able to sort out her car situation. We've purchased a used motorhome as our home away from home for this furlough. We hope to take it to Spokane, and then park it and live in it in Snohomish, next to Betty and Bernie Sellers home. We started out our married life over 26 years ago in a trailer next to them. We appreciate their kind tolerance of us!

Feel free to email us before we get to the States, so that we can have putting together a schedule for visiting as many of you as possible.

Thank you so much for your prayers and interest in our lives.

**Daryl and Sharon Germaine.**

**If you would like to give you can make checks payable to Action International Ministries, P. O. Box 398 Mountlake Terrace, WA 98043-0398 or 3015 A 21st Street NE, Calgary, Alberta T2E 7T1, Canada. Note that your check is for support of the Germaines.**

