

## **CWL Diocesan Community Life Communique #3 – August, 2018**

**To:** Parish Council Community Life Chairpersons

**From:** Marilyn Schuck, Diocesan President

Because Marjorie McFarlane has had to resign this position because of her health, I decided to send you these 2 immigration stories from 2 ladies in the Regina diocese who recently immigrated to Canada. These stories along with many others were featured on a wall at the National Convention in Winnipeg, August 12 – 15. Both these women have become CWL members. Their stories are very inspirational! Thank you to Lynn Rogers for making them available for this communique.

### **Ifeoma Tony-Osondu Immigration Story**

We got our Permanent Residence Visa through the Provincial Nominee Program (PNP) of Saskatchewan Government under the Occupation In Demand of their Skilled Worker Program. I have always been a staunch Catholic and also a member of Catholic Women Organization (CWO) in Nigeria. As soon as our Flight was confirmed, I quickly researched about CWL not just in Canada but Regina in particular. We did not know anyone in Regina as we were coming to start a new life in a strange land.

We left our country Nigeria via Egypt Air MS 876 on Sunday September 17<sup>th</sup>, 2017 by 1.30pm. We transited from Cairo International Airport and landed in Toronto at the early hours of Monday September 18<sup>th</sup>, 2017 by 7.30am (Toronto Time). We had about 7 hours lay over which was just perfect for our schedule, as it enabled us to complete our Immigration landing formalities therein. We left for Regina same day aboard Air Canada, AC 1115 by 1.30pm Toronto Time and landed by 3.30pm Regina time. On arriving at Regina International Airport we were received by a Catholic Priest who came with his friend and two members of Catholic Women League (CWL) together with their husbands. My husband and I are blessed by two boys and two girls.

My family and I have been one of the readers of Dr. Benjamin Carson's books. In one of his books titled "Gifted Hands" (Chapter 13 Pages 124-135) Dr. Carson had shared how he and his wife migrated to Australia without knowing anyone and he also carefully explained how he contacted his Church prior to their landing: not only did we read it, we learnt from it, pocketed it and applied same to our Immigration success story.

I got a reference letter from my Parish Priest in Lagos, Nigeria as well as a letter from our beloved Archbishop of Lagos, Most Revered Dr. Alfred Adewale Martins (The Metropolitan see of Lagos). I sincerely believe that we will get the companionship and networking needed in a new place by being under the canopy of my co-women. I sent out mail and also called some CWL parishioners on phone. I was so glad when I received a reply from Lynn Rogers informing me that "a member of CWL will contact me". Towards a month to our arrival, I exchanged many emails with her and also faxed some documents to her too. God used her as our Angel in Regina. Along the line I contacted some Nigerian Priests in Regina and it was just awesome. I was also so blessed to be introduced to Sharon Mayor who also played lots of great parts towards our settling down. Day by day my relationship with Lynn deepen and trust was established through series of emails we exchanged.

On arriving to Regina Airport, Mr. & Mrs. Lynn Rogers, Mr. & Mrs. Sharon Mayor together with a Priest and Mr. George Diloha were all live in the airport to welcome us. They all came with their Truck as we have 12 big bags, 6 hand luggage and some other stuffs. They came with lots of goodies, Muffins, Fruits, Books and Canada Flag. Mr. & Mrs. Diloha offered us a sumptuous dinner and thereafter we retired to the home of the Priest to get refreshed till the next day.

It will interest you to know that while in Lagos, Team Lynn and Sharon had already prepared a schedule of how we will be taken out for the first five days of our arrival. It was just awesome. Our knowing the Catholic Priest was a blessing which flows only from heaven. The great involvement of Lynn and Mayor in our settling down makes us to believe that truly Angels come in human forms. This is our 10<sup>th</sup> Month in Canada in General and Regina in particular, gradually we are settling down. All the people we met on our first day in Regina makes us lack nothing in till date, they took care of us as a new born baby and shows great concerns in our affairs. Everyone we met on our first day of arrival is still part of us till today. Each passing day we were provided with Provisions, Toiletries, winter clothing, books, furniture, bed sheets and cloths etc. A lady who was doing a Garage Sales was also contacted by one of the CWL women and she brought about 7 boxes of good tidings to us including Xmas Tree and others. I will also not forget to mention Patricia Marvin who also played great part in our stay in here. Patricia also bought iron, blender, dolls and books for the kids. Is so amazing to know that Lynn still has all our birthday date stored in her memory, she keeps sending us birthday present in each of our birthdays. Honestly I love this woman, I feel proud and tall each time I have her beside me. Sharon Mayor cannot stopped sending us books, she made us book wormers, and I cannot just help liking her. Many times John Mayor had played "santa" in our house. In spite of Sharon Mayor's busy schedule, she dedicated a full day to escort me to Job Fair to ensure that I met with prospective recruiters. I also appreciate Mrs. Aurley of St. Peters Church who also visited us and gave us her one and only winter jacket. My family and I are very grateful to our newfound Love in sweet Regina City. We got everything working for us. We thanked God for not just making us see the good of the land but also eaten from its fatness.

We will not complete our story without appreciating St. Augustine's Community School. The Principal of the School, Mr. Paul Van Betuw, the Vice Principal, Mrs. Tricia Shynkaruk and the Community coordinator, Mrs. Bondy are all one of a kind. They ensured that the kids are not left out in the extra curriculum activities, they also send us winter clothing and also ensured the four kids are in one school. Paul Van Betuw takes it upon himself to give our dear son a ride to & fro basketball training. May the good lord from whom all blesses flow, enrich and bless you all till the day of Christ.

We sincerely appreciate each and every one who has in one way or the other extends her kindness to us. May the joy and peace of the most High God live and abide with you all.

**Catherine Tolentino Immigration Story** (see next page)

I am Catherine Tolentino, 35 years old, a Filipino from North Luzon Philippines. I lived in a small town called Samal Bataan for 31 years with a big and happy family. My father name is Librado Carabeo, he died when I was 6 years old because of heart attack. My mother is 78 years old living in the Philippines with my sister. She is a strong, blessed and healthy women. And I thank God for that. I have seven siblings and I'm the youngest. Four brothers and three sisters, one of my sister is working at Saudi Arabia as a princess dressmaker, a foreign worker for 30 years now. When our father died she stands as our breadwinner especially to me. Our eldest sister died last May 2013 due to asthma. And our eldest brother died on motor accident last April 2003. And the rest of my siblings are living in the Philippines with their families.

I am married for 12 years to Karl Tolentino with two children. Our daughters name is Kian Caleb and she is 12 years old now. Our sons name is Dylan Kirby and he is 8 years old now.

April 7, 2014, when I left my family towards Canada. In search for a better future for my family especially to my growing children, pushed me to sacrifice and be away from them. At first I taught it would be easy hoping that soon I will get them here at Canada with me. But it wasn't.

I graduated as BS Computer Science back home and worked as Assistant Manager in a fast food chain we called Jollibee for five years. I can say that what we earned back home is not enough for a family like us. The value of money we got there is way way different on what we got here, even we got a nice position on a company.

I came first at Revelstoke BC, I arrived at Vancouver BC airport with Brian and Donna Lecompte (my employer at Tim Hortons) who was there to welcome me. I worked as a Food Counter Attendant for three years. I was hoping from the very start of my journey that after a year or two I can get them because that is what I know on the first place. I tried a lot of times to get approved for our residency when I was still at Revelstoke BC. I applied many times and also tried to get first my husband if that decision is way better that time, but we got refused five times, and that is twice for BC Provincial Nominee, I felt very hopeless when that happened knowing also that my work permit is about to expires soon. I don't want to go home with nothing after all the sacrifices that I been through.

Life sometimes is not fair, especially when you just believe and hope on yourself. I knew God when I was a teenager, myself and my mom attended Family Appointment with Yaweh El Shaddai back in the Philippines. When I moved to Canada I brought the faith and believed that God is with me wherever I go. And that belief was never wrong. I met people who helped me know God deeply. It is true, No one can live alone. God sent me people who become my family here in Canada. Whom you can tell and count on with your problems, whom you can asked for help and whom you can lean on. Being apart from your true family is the hardest part with the situation you don't know what to do, but despite of what is happening my family stays supportive and won't stop praying that everything will be okay.

Prayer from good people with good heart is very powerful. January 2017, I sent an application online from one of the agency at Regina, Saskatchewan. On March 2017, just two months after that application a good news arrived. I got a job offer from one of the employer from Assiniboia SK, and got approved for our Saskatchewan Nominee Program application, in just two months God answer us. From BC I moved to Saskatchewan, new province, new beginning, new people but the same God that I trust from the beginning. Another adjustment come along, I knew no one when I came here but it's not a barrier for God's overflowing blessings. He sent people once more to be my new family here in my new home. The priest (Fr. Dennis Remot) here in Assiniboia is a good friend of Fr Aaron De Dios from Revelstoke BC. It's one of God's plan for I to meet this people that He would used as a vessel for His blessings. Father Dennis introduce me to CWL, they become friends and family to me. After a few months I became a member of CWL in my new home, my heart's filled with joy and happiness. I continue serving God and His people by attending mass every Saturday and try my best to help the League. I continue listening to the word of God thru You Tube at DWXI (El Shaddai channel).



Truly GOD is faithful to those who believe and wait patiently♥. Last December 14, 2017 ,my husband came after 3years and 8months I finally hug and kissed him physically. And last May 4 this year I went back home in the Philippines to see again my mom, my two kids and my whole family. I stand in the church on the family appointment with Yaweh El Shaddai to testify the goodness of the Lord to me and my whole family. May 18 , 2018 I came back to Canada this time with my two beloved kids! And last July 10 we had our medical examination for our permanent residency. I never expected everything will come so quickly. Right now where on the process of waiting for our visa as permanent resident here in Canada.

We made a decision as an individual, a mother, a wife, a daughter, a human where all we want is a happy ending , a fulfillment to our dreams. We all have a reason for everything and for everything there's a reason. I know God don't want us to feel the pain, the sadness, alone. On my own experience, I believed sometimes we have to go through with it, to realize that we are never alone, God is always here for us. He never left us. He Is Our Big GOD.

I came to Canada as an immigrant. Even its miles and miles away from the Philippines, I am proud to say " it feels like we're home too" .

Thank you for all my friends, my brothers and sisters in Christ, my CWL family who stays at my side throughout my journey. And thank you for taking time to read my story.

God bless us all and more power,  
In Christ,  
Catherine Tolentino