

Testimony of thanks to Chicago Family Church for supporting me

Sahara Cardenas

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Sahara Cardenas shares the testimony of her twelve-year-old daughter's leukemia diagnosis in December and the overwhelming love and support she has received from her Chicago Family Church community since 2002.

Many of you probably don't know what's been happening with my daughter. I'm sure you've seen the GoFundMe that, thank goodness, Hill Marino was able to start for our family. This is something new for me, and I'm growing into it. On December 8th, my husband took our daughter to the hospital, and we were given the news that what we thought was elbow pain was actually leukemia. She's been struggling with it ever since, and through all of this, I've been able to touch many lives.

Many people at work, at home, and in our family keep calling me asking, "Why you, Sahara? Why is this happening to you?" And I say, "Well, why not me?" If we are truly faithful children of God, this is going to happen to all of us. Are we really, truly faithful children of God? I am so blessed to have this community. I met this community in 2002, and all I've ever received from it is goodness. So many of the answers I'd been looking for my whole life, I found here.

I'm just so grateful for every one of you, for continuing to show me the true love that exists in this world. So many people have reached out, and the love I've experienced through each and every one of you is unlike anything I've known - not even with my own biological parents, my own siblings, or my own aunts and uncles. You have elevated my understanding of love to a whole different level, and I mean that from the deepest place.

There are so many of you I can't name individually, because it would be every single person here. Some

of you I don't even know by name because of the culture - but I know your face, and I know how much you love my children. My twelve-year-old - well, she's almost thirteen now - has the little body of a child, but the strength of an adult, and she surprises me every day. We're told the process is two and a half years. That doesn't mean exactly two and a half years - it could be longer, it could be shorter. An ex-employee of mine reached out with the same thing - leukemia - and she was done with the procedure in less than a year.

Every day in my house is a different day. Truly. Sometimes she wakes up and wants to get up and go for a walk; other days she can't even do that. But look at her - she's here, she's coming. She's teaching me every day how strong her little body can be. When Pastor Habancha showed up at the house, her energy lifted right up. I was amazed. Our Filipino sisters came over with so much love, and she was transformed into a different little girl. The next day, she was a whole different little person.

I'm so grateful to have this community. I really am. I have never experienced anything like it. I've been a faithful churchgoer all my life, but nothing like this. And she's here with us again - she wants to come to church. We are given challenges all the time. My car suddenly wasn't running, and thank goodness Mrs. Takami reached out and said she'd take care of it. I'm grateful that Mr. Makawa drove an hour to help me out. That is what true brothers and sisters look like. Not even my biological brothers and sisters have done that for me.

I have always been the one taking care of people. Taking care of my siblings, because I'm the oldest. Taking care of my employees, because I was a business owner. A mom of six. Always taking care. But you guys are feeding me now, with a love I'd never acknowledged for myself. Sometimes as individuals, we put ourselves behind. And here I am, so grateful that you keep giving my daughter spiritual energy. I was in the hospital twelve days. Everyone told me, "It's usually three to four days - why were you there twelve?" And I had to ask myself, "Why am I questioning why?" Twelve could have been a month, could have been five months - like my old neighbor who was in the hospital for five months. I told myself: you need to stop asking why.

My mom has a cousin who passed away from cancer about six years ago. He came to me in a dream dressed in a plumbing uniform, looked at me, and said: "Don't worry, Sahara. I'm taking care of your daughter." That was reassurance from the spirit world - it's okay, I'm taking care of you. The first day I was finally able to come to Chong Seong prayer, I kept asking: "Why? What's going on? What do I need to learn from this? Why am I suddenly grounded to my house, working over a hundred hours a week? Why has God just changed my entire life?" And when I came here, all the answers were instantly given to me.

Why do I keep believing in Heavenly Parents and our True Parents? Because I have witnessed it since 2002. The unanswered questions of my whole childhood, I've found answered here - in True Father and True Mother's new way of giving us an identity. Why am I living as a human being? Now I know why. I no longer have to ask why my mother is the way she is, why my father is the way he is, why I don't look like my siblings, why I don't share their characters. True Father and True Mother have given me the reason why I'm here.

I have dreams all the time. One last dream I'll share happened while we were in the hospital. All of you were here, handing me a bank account with \$430 trillion written on it. That was my dream, and it's been embedded in me. Every time I wake up, it comes back to me. Why? Because we are one family. There is so much I'm learning through this experience, and I just want to be grateful to every one of you. Thank you so much for being here, and allowing me to share.