

*My mom - the lady in traditional Cheung Sam taken at the Seniors Club, Calgary, Canada. The two cakes were baked by mom for the 9th Anniversary Celebration of the Club. Early Spring 2008.*



So my mom's portfolio may look like just another busy schedule for an elderly lady. But maybe I should mention earlier on that my mom has been living single since my return to teach at Holy Trinity College. She has been a resident in the Senior Folks' Home all this time since my departure from Calgary. Yet, she is far from being alone. She has almost set up her unit as base for other old folks in the Home. On one of my visits to her at the Home, I found her leaving her unit unlocked. When asked why she left her door open all day long, she explained that too many other residents in the Home would come knocking on her door paying her a visit, asking for a favor, returning old favors, and so on. So, she may as well leave the door open to save her the trouble of having to answer the door every half hour.

What has inspired me to write about my mom now, but not earlier, is probably because I myself am aging. Reaching retirement age makes me reflect on my past, look forward to an unknown future, and ponder on how to get the most of what remains in me. The thought about how my mom has made use of what she has enlightens me and steers me to see her from a different light. I begin – fortunately not too late yet – to appreciate her abilities, her generosity, and her spirit. I said to myself, one day when I reach her age, I wish I could be as happy and as fulfilled as my mom.

My mom has never been wealthy, but she is rich with life. She is not well off but she is loaded with innovative ideas. She is not a university graduate with a language degree, but she communicates well in Hakka, Shanghainese, Toishanese, Putonghua and Cantonese. What amazes me also is that she acts as English interpreter for the Chinese old folks in the Home. She is the old lady in the house who calls for ambulance service when her neighbors have any health emergencies. She is also the chauffeur for many in the Home who need a ride to China Town or the nearby swimming pool.

Of course my mom is not without fault. She has to be reminded to be less out-spoken, to have more walk, but less talk. She needs to be told to slow down and take care of herself besides others. She has to watch out for extreme flattery that may weigh her down.

Yet, with all the virtues and the vices, she remains a great person who knows the true meaning of living. And, thank God, this person is my mom.