

JOURNALS POSTED ON FEBRUARY 11, 2016

Practical Differences



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HUNGARY

There are times when you wonder...."Did they say what I think they did?" Really, everyone goes through that at one time or another, right? Have you ever been embarrassed by what you THOUGHT you heard and what was actually said? I certainly have! Both of us have!

Yesterday here is what is called, "Torkos Csütörtök" (I know, easy for you to say!) but it is a 'holiday' of sorts when restaurants who participate offer a great deal on their cuisine, so many people summon up the courage and try something different. One lady I spoke with

yesterday who goes to the Patchwork Klub was going to try Mexican food (maybe for the first time ever). Kurt and I went out – a rare occasion!

This morning, after helping some friends with a car problem, he learned that the basis of this ‘holiday’ with the restaurants was because it was right before Lent started, and the restaurants needed to use up the food and supplies that may not be used until after Lent. Very practical, these Hungarians!

So, if you know us, you are aware this probably led into another conversation of silly things – for example, when I was growing up in a Presbyterian household, I had always heard about people giving things up for “Lint”. This concerned me and I would ask my mom about it & she just stared at me or poo-poo’d the idea. I remember being at the laundromat with her one time and she was going to throw the lint away... “But Mom, we need to save that!!” “Why?” she asked. “We need to save that for the springtime!” (I am sure she thought I needed to make a project out of it)... but you see, I thought the lint needed to be saved for “Lint” in the springtime!

It wasn’t until high school or so when I really found out what “Lint” was all about...

I also had a best friend next door growing up (‘till I moved across town when I was 8), whose mom was Puerto Rican. The mom’s name was Hilda (I’ll get to that in a minute), and when Hilda would go to the store, she would invite me along with her daughter. No problem. We were on a special trip called “arrinds” (and you MUST roll those r’s!!!) again, it was years later when my mom and I were headed to the store (which is what we called it) and she said something about other errands. I asked what that was – again, a look from her like I just crawled out- and she said that it was when you go other places other than the store... “Oh, ‘arrinds’! Like Hilda does!” Bing! The light came on in my mom’s head of what I had culturally grown up with and what things really were....

Then I took German in high school & was thoroughly confused. Mom was wondering what I was so confused about. “Mom, why do they have a Puerto Rican name as one of the main people in this story?” (My German teacher hadn’t understood my confusion.)

“What do you mean dear?” said my mom.

“Well, they have Hilda doing this and Hilda saying this...”.

Bing! Mom cracked up! “I was wondering when we might get to this conversation!” (Really, is it a wonder she has had white hair for so long with me around??)

SO – now we are in Hungary... and learning a new language.... LOL! I am SURE God is laughing at many things about this! “Sure, I’ll just send off these two – it will be great! You guys are gonna laugh so hard! (God is speaking to angels in heaven) ... “He is praying for healing in his left ear since he can’t hear well out of it and she has a wild imagination and sense of humor!” We will all have a great time! To top it off, it’s nearly impossible to lip read what Hungarians say!”

Now, don’t get me wrong – I don’t think God has a mean or nasty streak in Him, but I DO know He has a terrific sense of humor! He made platypus’ for heaven’s sake!! He made us!! I think He just gets a kick out of some of the stuff that happens that truly is funny.

So here in Hungary, we have the word for carpet, which is “sz?nyeg”. There is the word for mosquito which is “szúnyog”. They sound VERY similar! A couple summers ago, we were at a next door neighbor’s house for a bograc (like a grill party) and the mosquitos were

terrible because of all the rain we had had.... I remembered that I had some Cutter wipes at home, so I ran to get them. As I brought them back, I figured it would be good to show what they do (since they don't have anything like that here), so I had started wiping the insecticide onto my skin, clothing and hair. I was asked what these were and so I explained (in Hungarian) as I passed around the container offering them one, that these were wipes to put some repellent onto your body so the mosquitos don't bother you. As if orchestrated, everyone's head leaned over to the left at once and a curious look came over their faces... I thought, "Uh oh, what have I said?"

One of the younger people there said, "Carrie neni, were you trying to speak of the little insects?"

"Yes, I was - OH!!" So I replied once more in Hungarian, " Oh well, mosquitos OR carpets... either way, these will work to keep them off you!" to the laughter of them all as they grabbed the wipes.

So, as you are working/shopping/ listening today, please, for the sake of others, enunciate well:) We will try to do the same. Food for thought: (If a child looks at you strangely, perhaps you are introducing a new word into their vocabulary.)

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