



*Cheryl Chan Jia-En*

*25 October 1993 - 30 May 2003*

*In Loving Memory of*



*To us*

*Cheryl has been :*

***C***ourageous in difficult times

***H***onouring God with her tenacious faith

***E***arnest in her love for Jesus

***R***adiant like the morning sun

***Y***oung but mature beyond her age

***L***oving and leaving us a legacy of love.

## **CHERYL – A PRECIOUS GIFT FROM GOD**

“You do not realize what I am doing, but later you will understand.”  
(John 13 : 7)

Truly I do not comprehend the plan and purpose of God in Cheryl's life, why she was afflicted with such a deadly, resistant tumour at such a young age, suffered so much pain and anguish that only Jesus can understand and then was taken from us so suddenly when we were still clinging on to His promise --- “I am the Lord who heals you.” It was painful and agonizing to see her go but even more so to see her suffer pain daily when she was with us. I may never understand on this side of eternity but I choose to trust in God, in His love and faithfulness for us and especially for Cheryl.

Cheryl was born miraculously at a time when it was impossible for me to conceive due to my medical condition (confirmed by my gynaecologist, a neurosurgeon and an endocrinologist). I nearly lost her when she was eight weeks in my womb but God preserved her. On several subsequent occasions, I could see His Hand of protection on her life, keeping her safe from serious injuries.

As a bright-eyed, bubbly and adorable girl, Cheryl brought a lot of joy to our family. She was nicknamed “Big Eyes”, “Sweetie Ling”, “Darling Girl”... At the tender age of five, she was so convicted of her sins that she asked me how she could be saved. I immediately led her to receive Christ as her Saviour and Lord. Later, when she heard about the Baptism in the Holy Spirit, she prayed earnestly to be filled. What a joy she experienced when she was filled in the Holy Spirit some months later!

Cheryl had always loved the Lord and longed to see Him face to face. In fact, she used to feel very “torn apart” --- part of her wanted to go to heaven to be with Jesus but another part of her wanted to stay because she loved us so much.

When Cheryl was first diagnosed with neuroblastoma (terminal cancer affecting the secondary nervous system) with a large tumour in her abdomen, it was like a death sentence passed on her! I was completely devastated! I kept asking God, “Why? Why must this happen to a cheerful, lovable girl like her?” As I sought the Lord and asked Him for a word of comfort, this verse came to mind --- “Do not be afraid or discouraged because of this vast army. For the battle is not yours but God's.” It was a vast army indeed! When the tumour was taken out after ten cycles of chemotherapy, it weighed more than 800g! The Lord was with us throughout the operation. After the operation, even as the metal clips were removed from the 33 stitches, the Lord was there to encourage her, “You can do it! You can do it!” She remembered Philippians 4 : 13 --- “I can do everything through Him who gives me strength.”

After the operation in Jan 2001, life seemed to return to normal for Cheryl when she went back to school albeit for half the day and she did very well in Pr 2 despite having missed much of her Pr 1 school year.

Things suddenly turned for the worse in Dec 2001 when we discovered that the cancer had gone to her hip. She had to resume her chemo treatment that left her completely bald and weak, easily susceptible to infection. In spite of all these, she never missed church (except when warded for chemo). Seeing the Good News Kids in church, singing worship songs and playing all the fun games ... were what she had always looked forward to each Sunday. Her relapse really shook our faith and shattered our hopes of her recovery. When she lost her hair again, I had to assure her that her beauty was not of outward appearance but came from within and if she had the love of Jesus in her heart, she would always be beautiful.

These months of suffering and pain had indeed brought about a spiritual maturity in Cheryl that was beyond her age. She had learnt to love and express it so unconditionally that sometimes I cringed and felt uneasy when she expressed "I love you" openly to people she just met briefly. Not only did she pray for herself, but she also prayed for God's grace and strength to be on me as I took care of her. She interceded for other cancer patients and even brought their siblings before the Lord as she seemed to understand their need for love and attention too.

Of course there were instances when she felt frustrated and discouraged, as the healing that she had prayed for seemed elusive. Bad news came one after another in August 2002 when the cancer spread to the whole spine and even invaded parts of her skull, rendering her painful and weak, causing her to lose the use of her legs and leaving her wheelchair bound! Worse still, she lost the sight of her right eye and her left one was slowly pushed out of its socket by a tumour that was just behind it. Imagine the misery and agony she went through daily --- A fun-loving, active and lively girl who has always enjoyed singing, swimming, roller-blading and line-dancing, had to grapple with the reality of being wheelchair-bound! Daily activities such as getting out of bed, bathing, going to the toilet... something we all take for granted, became a chore and a source of excruciating pain for her bones and nerves.

In one of her journal entries, she wrote about what she learnt in a Bible lesson entitled "Stormy Weather" --- "...no matter what difficult trial we go through, God will shield us with His wings. He is the Best kind of Refuge to protect us...The Lord cares for us even in tough times..." In answer to the question "Is life stormy for you?" she penned these words --- "Yes, because I have to go through a lot of pain while waiting for God to heal me. I have faith in Him but it is sometimes discouraging to wait so long for healing." It was amazing how she yielded to the Lord and cried out to Him in moments like this. Sometimes she would sing and worship, "There's none like You, no one else can touch my heart like You do...", "You are the Lord in whom I can trust, You are the Rock I can stand upon..." At other times, she would remind me of the one pair of footprints she 'saw' on the sand because she knew God was carrying her.

In the weeks before she left us, she suffered much backache and headache. With tears in her eyes, she prayed, "Lord, it hurts you to see little children suffer. Help me! Take away my pain, Lord! Hold me close so that I may feel Your Love. No matter how

much pain I feel, I will still love You.” Such was her deep love for the Lord. In fact she broke down on a few occasions as she recalled the song “Paid the Price” sung by Cathie Clancy at the Arise Concert for children. She felt so touched and kept saying, “I didn’t know God loves me so much...”

As her Mum and primary caregiver, I feel so privileged that the Lord has given me such a precious gift of love, even though it was only for a brief nine years. I love and miss her dearly and just wish she is still around...I enjoy her hearty laughter, her jokes and stories, her hugs and kisses...

Her parting words to Paul and me on the night before she went home to be with the Lord, “Mum and Dad, even when I pass away, I will still love you very much...” will always remain etched in our hearts....

Yes, we love you too, Sweetie. Till we meet again....

## **PRECIOUS THOUGHTS FOR A SPECIAL GIRL**

“...all the doctors and nurses and CCF social workers commented on her cheerfulness... which she maintained till the end. This is the Lord’s light shining on her, even as she was going through the valley of the shadow of death... She is now in the arms of the One who’s been with her throughout her life’s journey...”

*Prof Quah Thuan Chong  
Senior Consultant  
Paediatric Haematology/Oncology NUH*

“My most vivid recollection of her was one of the many times we sang ‘Jesus loves me, this I know’ during painful procedures...She made us see how our faith can be stronger...Her life, short as it may be, was meaningful. She touched our lives by her courage, her unshakeable faith, her love and joy she gave all of us. She taught us about God, life and loving. ***Cancer may have ravaged her body, but it never destroyed her spirit***...and she will live on in us and all the people whose lives she has touched.”

*Dr Mae Dolendo  
Fellow Paediatric Haematology/Oncology  
(from Philippines)*

“Dear Cheryl,

You are the thousand winds that blow  
You are the diamond glints on snow.  
You are the sunlight on ripened grain  
You are the gentle autumn rain.  
As I rejoice in the morning's hush,  
You are the swift uplifting rush,  
Of quiet birds in circled flight.  
You are the soft stars that shine at night.  
Even though you've left us, I do not cry,  
For you're with our Lord, you did not die.  
Someday we'll meet again.

It has been a pleasure and privilege to call you my friend.”  
( Modified from a poem by anonymous)

*Love  
Dr Grace Pang  
Formerly from Assisi Home & Hospice*

“Her sharing of life and the word of God lives on forever in me. Truly in knowing Cheryl, she has taught me Jesus loves me...”

*Sister Laura Tan  
Nursing Officer, (PICC) NUH*

“I’ll always remember Cheryl for her spontaneity and strength but more importantly she has taught me valuable meanings of hope and faith...”

*Koay Lou San  
Ex Staff Nurse, (PICC ) NUH*

“She has taught me in many ways to live a life full of courage, faith, joy and love. Her energy and zest is truly inspiring and contagious. Cheryl is indeed a very special and wonderful girl.”

*Grace Tay  
Ex Social Worker from  
Children’s Cancer Foundation*

“I cannot forget what a joy it was to teach her. Her excellent attitude in class was a source of encouragement to me and what a privilege it was to have been a part of her life...”

*Mrs Lim Soak Wai  
Form Teacher of Pr 2B, 2001  
Henry Park Pr School*

“Cheryl :

An excellent role model,  
Always with a smile and ready to go the extra mile.  
A real treasure to every teacher,  
A rare gem.”

*Ms Tan Lian Eng  
Form Teacher of Pr 3A, 2002  
Henry Park Pr School*

“I believe Cheryl lived a full life and it is not a matter of how long she had lived but simply how she lived.”

*Edward Poon  
Cheryl’s uncle*

“Thank you for being our family’s little angel... You brought us lots of joy through your growing up...”

*Timothy Chan  
Cheryl’s elder brother*

“Cheryl has touched the lives of our church members like no other person has. She will always be remembered for the tenacity of her faith and the fervency of her love for God and people.”

*Senior Pastor Kenny Chee  
World Revival Prayer Fellowship*

“Her unwavering faith in the face of constant pain and sickness was a challenge to me... Her gentleness and child-like trust in the midst of intense suffering encouraged a fellow sojourner like me. The thought of her gave me fortitude to live with my pain and struggles.”

*Youth Pastor Mary Tham  
World Revival Prayer Fellowship*

“...I never got a chance to tell you what a wonderful girl you were and how blessed I was to know you. You were so mature...I could talk to you as if you were someone my age. I miss your sense of humour and your laughter. You taught me...how to be strong...how to trust in God...how to love...”

*Samantha Soh  
Youth (Knights For Christ)*

“Cheryl demonstrated the true love of God even when she endured the pains--- a darling and a blessing even to adults going through cancer treatment. What amazed me was when I heard that she was even doing her school work faithfully and taking notes diligently at the Good News Kids (Children’s Service) despite her condition... Indeed Cheryl has lived her life fully and fully loving others in the joy and strength of the Lord.”

*Lim Kwang Keat  
World Revival Prayer Fellowship*

“I’m a marathoner and I can see what a great runner Cheryl was! More than that she’s a great finisher. All of us have the same start line but it is how we finish that puts a smile on God’s face.”

*Abraham Sim  
World Revival Prayer Fellowship*



Your fight was brave  
Your faith awe-inspiring  
Little warrior that you are  
You united us in prayer

Now you have crossed  
To the other side  
Your name, your face, your smile  
Will be etched in our memory

We see you smiling in glory  
As you meet our Saviour  
Receive your life's reward  
The crown prepared

Join now the cloud of witnesses  
And cheer us on our journey

We would love to join you if we can  
But God's purpose for us to fulfil  
Is yet to be  
So long, our Cheryl, so long...

*Lim Swee Ewe*  
*World Revival Prayer Fellowship*

Her life though short  
Her legacy, is not  
Her optimism be told  
A beacon to behold  
Her pain inexplicable  
Her joy unfathomable  
Her stature stands tall  
Among Christ's Great Halls.

*Cedric & Christina Yeo*  
*World Revival Prayer Fellowship*

“She endured her pain in silence, but she spoke of her love for family and friends through action. We started our friendship because she made the first move.”

Remembering my best friend, Cheryl,

Love,  
*Natalie Ong, Cheryl's Best Friend*  
(Good News Kids)

“Knowing Cheryl has been one of the many blessings in my life. She has brought me many years of laughter, sunshine and numerous unforgettable memories. Watching her grow from a little toddler with one of the most beautiful eyes that I have ever seen, to the active "little mei mei" of mine, it really tore my heart to see her go through the long ordeal of cancer, just at the mere age of 6... Cheryl has taught me the true meaning of love and has truly encouraged me and been my pillar of motivation when I felt down. She was indeed the ‘Little Warrior’, never giving up and always expressing how much she loved the people around her... It was hard to let her go, but knowing that she is now in the bosom of Jesus really warms my heart. The last words she said to me will always be etched in my heart forever, “Jie Jie Charissa, I love you as much as God loves you.” I love you too, Cheryl and really look forward to the day I can see you once more and walk with you through Heaven’s door.”

*Charissa Wong  
Youth (Knights For Christ)*

“Cheryl has touched our lives in ways beyond measure...She was God’s chosen vessel for us in our darkest moment as the words spoken through her encouraged and reassured us of His faithfulness and promises... **CHERYL** to us is a **Courageous, Holy, Exemplary, Responsive and Youthful Leader...**”

*Antony & Erika Corrie-Keilig  
World Revival Prayer Fellowship*

\* The above tributes were extracted from condolence cards received from relatives and close friends in 2003