



SHINE

The Many Adventures of Melissa in Magyarország

January 2012



The Lutheran Church—
Missouri Synod

Melissa Karges is serving as an EFL teacher at *Berzsenyi Dániel Lutheran High School* in Sopron, Hungary

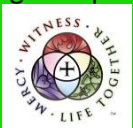
Fireside Chats with God....

Requests For:

- 1) The building of Christ-centered friendships
- 2) Deepening relationships with those God has put on my heart
- 3) The continued preparation/start of a Bible study with some students
- 4) So many who have lost loved ones recently and this month....
- 5) My friend whose mother underwent an operation for a brain tumor

Thanksgiving For:

- 1) The opportunity to start playing volleyball and meeting new people



The Latest and Greatest

Starting the Year Out Right

The beginning of this month started with the continuation of Christmas break. I had the delight of spending New Year's Day with a Hungarian family, whom I very much enjoy. This meant lots of food (we had a traditional dish of pork for lunch because Hungarians believe that pigs bring good luck, along with some other delicious sides, and ended with some cute cakes decorated like pigs), talking, playing games, and just joking around. The break was short-lived; however, because after two days, it was back to the old grind. With the start of school also came the time to finalize grades for the first semester, (something I don't particularly enjoy), but along with the serious came some rather enjoyable events to help keep things lively.

Salagavató

Every week this month there was a special kind of ceremony for each of the four 12th grade classes: "Salagavató". The best translation for this is "ribbon-pinning ceremony". It is a time for the 12th graders and their teachers to come together and celebrate their achievements with a bit of fun. This typically includes the performance of a skit parodying a number of teachers, a compilation of pictures from their years at the school, a speech by their homeroom teacher, and a pinning of ribbons on each person marking their years of attendance at the school. Of course, it wouldn't be Hungarian without food and drink, so there is a reception to follow, after which the students leave and go out as a class somewhere. I was privileged enough to be invited to go out with them afterwards. This was a wonderful open door for spending quality time with individuals, getting to know them better, and them getting to know me, too.

Making Tacos

Another fun event this month was making tacos in my apartment with one of my 9th grade classes. They had been asking all year for the chance to eat Mexican food, and their wish was finally granted. With a little bit of help from some people around the world, we had the supplies provided to spend an afternoon learning and cooking together. I'd say it was a mutually satisfying experience. They got to learn a lot of new, practical words in English, learn a bit about American food culture, and go home with full stomachs, and I got to share one of my favorite things, see them enjoying themselves, and thinking about things in a new way. If you're interested in seeing more, check out the video highlighting the day's events on Youtube:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cS8ZD8avTDI&feature=share>

At a glance:

- ❖ *New Year's Day with a family here*
- ❖ *Went to 4 Salagavató celebrations*
- ❖ *Made tacos with some 9th graders*
- ❖ *Started playing volleyball with a group at school*
- ❖ *Having many discussions in different classes about what it means to be a Christian*

Salagavató in Photographs



Teachers receiving roses from students upon entry



Impersonating teachers



Two of my girls showing off their newly acquired ribbons

Magical Moments of the Month

One morning in one of my 12th grade classes (pictured below), we were going to be talking about useful phrases for being candid. This class has a very good grasp on the English language, and the trick now is getting them to understand the situations in which it is appropriate to say certain types of phrases. Language is something which is affected by culture and vice versa. This also tied together with the way we think—it is a product of our culture and yet our culture is a product of the way we think.

As an intro to their task for the day, we spent some time talking about the differences between Hungarian and American mindsets. This meant that I was the “odd-man out” as I was the only non-Hungarian, and therefore, I was raised to think differently than everyone else in the room. That being the case, we started with some Q&A about the inner workings of the American mind. I explained that Americans are raised to be very independent at a young age. We also have this idea about “pursuing happiness”—it doesn’t matter what you do as long as it makes you happy; if it’s what you want, and it’s good for you then you should do it.

As I was talking about this—lo and behold—one girl raised her hand and asked, “Then how can you be a Christian in America?” What a question! Admittedly, it’s a bit humbling to have someone immediately notice an inconsistency between the common mentality of your culture and Christianity. But even in American Christianity, however, there is this idea that “God wants me to be happy.” Nowhere is this uttered in God’s word. Nor does it say, “Follow your dreams” or “do what makes you happy”. It does tell us that a life following Christ means one of sacrifice and hardship! Yet God doesn’t simply abandon us on our own; He promises to be with us on that journey, a journey that’s only the beginning of life!

I went on to explain that, no matter what culture you’re in, Christianity means living counter-culturally. Yes, I was raised to think like an American, even an American-Christian, but more than that, I believe in Christ as my Savior, and hopefully, the things I say and do (or don’t do) are affected by that.

At an after-party: this is Áron and that’s a miniature sombrero....



Words to Live by:

“Anyone who loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves his son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and anyone who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.”

-Jesus, {Matthew 10:37-39}



Me with part of the 12A class

THANK YOU!

To everyone who supported me and helped get me here for my 2011-2012 term!!

I am currently in the process of extending my work here into the 2012-2013 school year. If you’re interested in getting involved, now’s the time to start!

Become my Supporter in ministry

- 1) Go to: lcms.org/karges and click the “give now” button
- 2) Send a check to: LCMS World Mission P.O. Box 790089 St. Louis, MO 63179 (Write “Karges Support” in the

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Email: melkarges@gmail.com

Address: All you have to do is ask. ☺

Blog: www.magvarmoments.blogspot.com

Read about the stuff you can't here!

Read more about ministry in my region at:

<http://eurasiablog.lcms.org>



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