

# His Legacy!

Category: Regrets/No Regrets

written by Esther Joseph Pottoore | July 2, 2024

As a twenty-two-year-old working in Saudi Arabia as a public health nurse, I was excited to be going back on vacation to India. As I landed in Bombay (now Mumbai), I got stopped by a corrupt customs officer who demanded money. He refused to let me leave and told me that I had to pay 5000 rupees. I was scared and angry but did not speak. He went to talk with his supervisor, who I assumed would be in cahoots with him. Standing there, I prayed to the blessed mother (Mary) and asked for her help.

After a half hour the customs officer returned, looking very angry. He told me to leave with my bags! As I walked away, puzzled, I heard him talking with his fellow officers.

" I don't know what happened but Sharma Sir ( I assume his supervisor) told me not to take anything from that girl and to let her leave!"

I left grinning inwardly as I knew that that Mother Mary had helped me, just like my parents helped countless others in the past! I wheeled my cart out to freedom into the sunlit afternoon.

Two years later, I packed all my belongings and shipped them back from Saudi to my home in Cochin, India. I took a flight home. When I went to the Cochin shipyard to pick up my box, the customs officer demanded 10,000 rupees to release my belongings. I refused, and he went to his boss. His boss came to see this young twenty-four- year-old who was standing her ground. The ensuing conversation went like this:

"What is your name, girl?"

"Esther Joseph Pottoore".

"Did you just say Joseph Pottoore?!"

"Yes, I did!"

"Are you related to Commissioner Joseph Pottoore from Income Tax (IRS)?"

"Yes! He was my dad!"

The supervisor's jaw dropped, and then he started to laugh!

He turned to his officer and said, "Let her go! Don't charge her any money!"

"Why not sir?!"

"Son, this is the daughter of the most honest man I have ever known! He could have been a millionaire if he took bribes, but he never did! I have the deepest respect for him! Let her go!"

My heart swelled with pride. My father died in 1979 ,and here we were in 1993, and people still remembered him and his honesty!

I grew up with my parents and my ten brothers and sisters in a rented house, wearing hand-me-down clothes. I have no regrets of not been able to afford things that others had. The riches I received were honesty, sound morals and a strength of character, and they have served me well!

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