

News From the Homefront

This past month was a month of water woes. Our apartment building has a solar water heater on the roof and there was a leak in it. When the water pressure built up at night, it would start pouring out making a mini waterfall that roared. Frank called the owner to fix the problem and one guy showed up, but he was in a hurry and just put some tape over the hole. It wasn't even as good of a remedy as the little boy who put his finger in the dike to keep the town from flooding. As you can imagine, the tape lasted about ten minutes after the water pressure built up that night and we had our waterfall again. The problem eventually did get fixed, which was a blessing. The next thing that happened is we have a storage room underneath our apartment, which is one story up. There is a little bathroom in the storage room. When they built the building, the plumber must not have tightened the valve on the pipe to the sink real well and one night when the water pressure built up, it burst open and flooded all of our stored things. We had a couple of plastic bins on the floor and our books and other things were stacked on top of those, so it was a blessing that not much got ruined. A few days after that, a water pipe that goes under the ground and comes out at the road also burst open and flooded the street. While the city fixed it, we were without water. They definitely need to put a water pressure regulator on the main line.

When it's rainy and cloudy, the solar water panel doesn't get very hot and therefore there isn't hot water. Usually there is a booster element that you can push inside of your apartment to heat the water by electricity. But at this apartment complex, the solar panels supply hot water for three apartments each, so our booster element is disabled. Otherwise whoever pressed their booster element would be paying for all three apartment's hot water. So this time back, we have had to heat water on the stove for our baths quite a bit. On sunny days when there is hot water, it's gotten kind of funny because it's almost like a race to hurry and get our baths before everyone else takes theirs and there's not any hot water left. At 6:00 p.m., Frank starts reminding me to go take my bath. ☺

The last water problem occurred when Frank got the hose to wash off our balcony. All of a sudden, the fire alarm inside of our little apartment started blaring. (The alarm looks and sounds just like a school bell.) At that time, we didn't have a phone to call the owner of the building, so Frank ran down to talk to the security guard to see if he had a way to get in touch with him. He said he lived just up the hill and would go tell him. It took almost an hour before the owner arrived and unlocked the fire security box to stop the ringing. In the meantime, we learned that wrapping towels around the bell does not really lessen the noise. ☺ This problem happened because there is a defect in the way they built the balconies, and water leaked down inside the building and shorted out the fire alarm making it go off. It happened one more time when another person moved in and washed their balcony. The alarm goes off in all of our apartments in these instances. At least we all know the problem now and are careful how we clean our balconies.

At the start of the literacy classes, Frank told the children a few rules of obedience. Then he left to go do his work. As the teacher, I wanted to give them a couple of classroom rules too. I said the most important thing to me is for them to try and I don't want to hear, "I can't do it." Then I held up my finger and said, "All right, my first rule is what?" They all yelled out, "ONE," like I held up my finger so we could count. Something definitely got lost in translation, but at least they tried. ☺

At lunchtime, Frank came in and told me I looked wilted. I'm not sure if it was the soaked clothes or that my hair was stuck to my head that made him think that. He felt sorry for me and went and bought a portable fan to use until the ceiling fans get put in. A couple of the little boys came up to the fan and started squealing with delight. I realized they had never seen a fan like that before and were excited how it blew air on their faces. It was cute to see, but reminded me of how much I take for granted.

A friend in Christ, Cyd James