

IT'S COATS FOR KIDS TIME AGAIN!!!!

I sat down to write a letter about this year's coat and sock drive and instead found an old letter retelling stories of Coats for Kids and I decided to recycle it. Why? Because I love these stories and revisiting them bring tears of joy to my eyes. The following is a countdown of my top three favorite Coats for Kids memories:

3. In late 2009, Naziye's aunt lay dying on a mat next to the wood stove. She had been a member of the Novi Pazar church for many years, and was the sweetest, most precious woman. No matter how warm they kept the room, she remained




cold. I had been giving coats and socks to the kids and then went in to see her. She was small, so I found a teenaged size coat and a pair of socks for her. She had no strength and asked me to put the socks on for her. I did. And quite carefully since her skin was paper thin. Such a fragile state. She reached up one trembling hand and touched my cheek. She pulled me to her face and kissed

the other cheek. It was then that I knew I couldn't possibly limit the coat and sock distribution to only children.

2. Eforie 2015. Entering the Container Village in Romania was always emotional for me. Driving through the city dump, down a deeply rutted dirt/mud path was bad enough, but when a row of small dwellings came into view in the midst of trash heaps... I always found my heart in my throat. Yet the children there were always so happy. So sweet. So loving. This particular day was no exception. I was inside one of the container houses organizing the coats into piles by gender and age. Outside a line was forming at the door. One-by-one the children entered and were fitted with a coat and a pair of socks. One little girl was antsy for her turn and as soon as she was given the nod she ran and jumped on my lap. We talked a bit and she told me her name. She hugged me over and over. And even again before we left. Her joy both blessed and convicted me. She was the epitome of thankfulness.





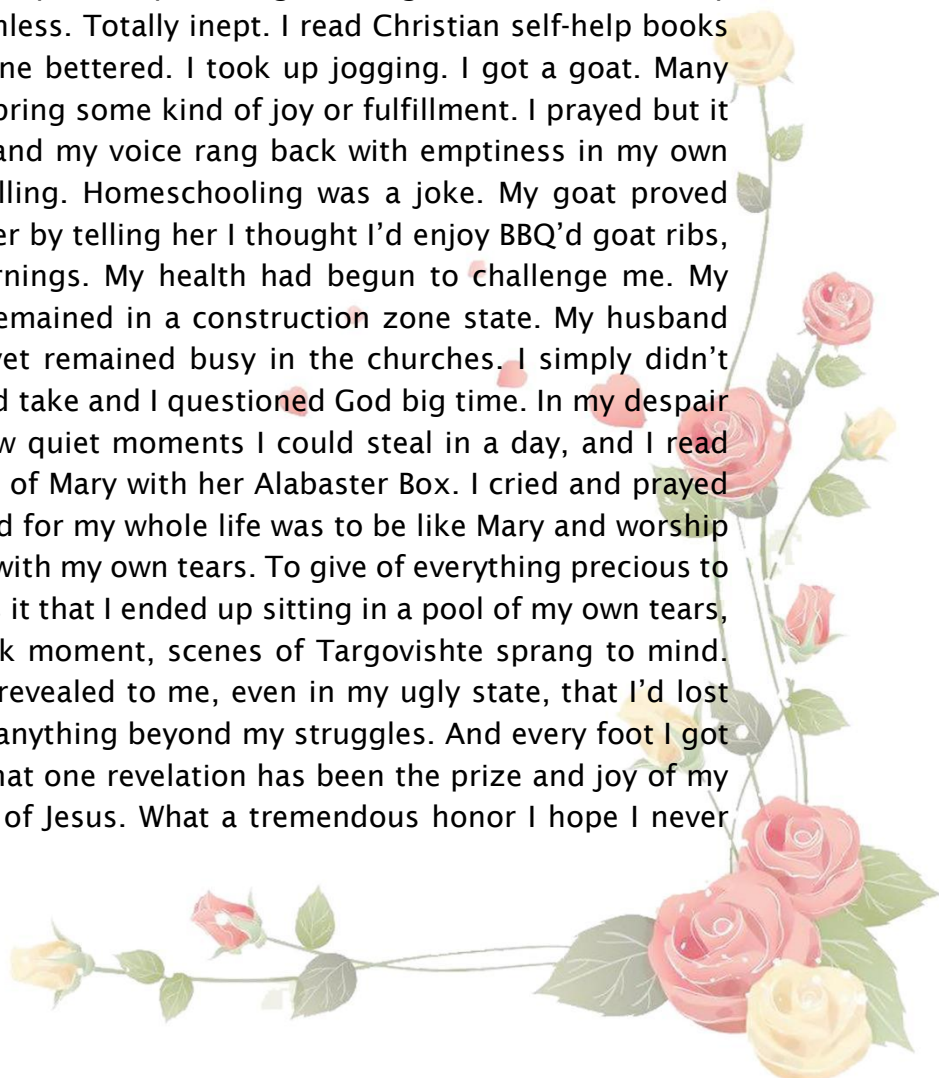
1. Targovishte 2010. Targovishte is a good size city, but the section in which Pastor Nasuf lives and pastors is basically a landfill with a few nice houses, a lot of seriously run down houses, and several cardboard and plastic tarp shacks. On that particular day it was sunny and ice had thawed just a bit to make mud everywhere. Sunny, but cold and muddy. And kids were running barefoot in the streets and in fields full of garbage. Once we got everything set up and sorted at




the church, a couple of rough little characters ran in. Disheveled hair. Muddy feet. Snotty noses. Mischievous eyes. I loved them! I fit them with coats and then went to help one put his socks on. Only, his filthy feet were freezing. I wiped away the mud and then held his small feet between my hands until they were warmed. Then I put socks

on him. He giggled the entire time and then hugged me and wiped his nose on me before he took off running toward his next adventure. While the moment itself was precious and unforgettable, it was some time later when the fullness of my experience was revealed to me...

You see, I eventually reached a place in parenting, marriage, home, and ministry where I felt completely worthless. Totally inept. I read Christian self-help books and devotionals and was none bettered. I took up jogging. I got a goat. Many things to better my life and bring some kind of joy or fulfillment. I prayed but it felt as if Heaven was brass and my voice rang back with emptiness in my own ears. My teenager was rebelling. Homeschooling was a joke. My goat proved stubborn and I threatened her by telling her I thought I'd enjoy BBQ'd goat ribs, but she didn't heed my warnings. My health had begun to challenge me. My house was unfinished and remained in a construction zone state. My husband was beyond overwhelmed, yet remained busy in the churches. I simply didn't know how much more I could take and I questioned God big time. In my despair I sat with my Bible in the few quiet moments I could steal in a day, and I read again and again the passage of Mary with her Alabaster Box. I cried and prayed and told God that all I wanted for my whole life was to be like Mary and worship at His feet. To wash His feet with my own tears. To give of everything precious to me, just for Him, so how was it that I ended up sitting in a pool of my own tears, alone and bitter. In that dark moment, scenes of Targovishte sprang to mind. Little muddy feet. The Lord revealed to me, even in my ugly state, that I'd lost perspective. I wasn't seeing anything beyond my struggles. And every foot I got to clean or warm was His. That one revelation has been the prize and joy of my life. I have touched the feet of Jesus. What a tremendous honor I hope I never again take for granted!





It's not yet cold enough for coats, but it takes quite a bit of time to raise money from America, get it sent here, and begin purchasing. That's why I write this early. Please pray with us for this year's coat and sock distribution, and if you can give anything to help with the need, it will be appreciated more than you'll ever know. To give toward this ministry, please make checks payable to Charity Baptist Mission with "Coats for Kids" in the memo.

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Keep us in your prayers; we need it!

Love to All,
Carrie M. Leach

