

Blessing Relatives at a Family Celebration

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By Renee Corley



On May 19, my husband and I held a family celebration in the United States at which we gave the Blessing to several relatives and friends. We had the tremendous good fortune to be able to rent the Main House at Belvedere, True Parents' first U.S. home, for this purpose.

We had made plans to visit the United States for the graduation of our son and only child, Nikolai, from the University of Bridgeport on May 18. He suggested that we might have a graduation party, and we realized that if we invited relatives to celebrate, this would be a good opportunity to bless them.



Nikolai after graduation and his father speaking about his life

My husband has a sister, two brothers and several cousins living in New York City and its suburbs. One of his brothers is my husband's spiritual father and has been the pastor of our community on Long Island for many years. However, the other relatives have always resisted attempts to witness to them, although they are very friendly in other ways.

I investigated several restaurants in which to hold our celebration, but in the end we felt that no restaurant on earth could have the same spiritual atmosphere or the same personal significance as Belvedere.

In addition to inviting my husband's relatives, we invited Nikolai's former Boy Scout leader and his wife, as well as a childhood friend of mine.

Finally we invited a number of our blessed First Generation members who have been close friends over the years and some of Nikolai's Second Generation friends.

We made spiritual conditions for 40 days up to the event. A few nights before the event, my husband had a dream about our relatives and friends at Belvedere, with everyone feeling relaxed and happy.

On the day of the event, Heavenly Parent gave us perfect weather and Belvedere was beautiful.

After our guests had finished a delicious Korean lunch, my husband stood near a large flat-screen TV and surprised the guests by starting a video call to Japan with Nikolai's bride, Norie, and her mother. (Nikolai and Norie were blessed by True Parents in Korea in August 2018.) Unfortunately Norie could not return to the U.S. in time for Nikolai's graduation because of waiting for her U.S. visa. However, she greeted all our guests and warmly told Nikolai, "I love you, and I am proud of you."

Then my husband began a presentation using PowerPoint. Showing photos of our son, from his birth in Moscow until his graduation just one day earlier, he gave a brief summary of Nikolai's life and the reasons for our many years in Russia before introducing the concept of the Blessing.

"I want to give you a Blessing!" my husband said, and then he and I demonstrated how a couple should drink the Holy Juice. He asked everyone to stand, and Holy Juice was distributed to every person. Unfortunately, we don't have photographs of the Blessing, because the photographer put down his camera to also take the Holy Juice!

Altogether 10 previously unblessed persons received the Holy Wine (Juice), including three married couples.

After the Blessing, everyone moved to the garden just outside the dining room for a group photograph. Then my husband's brother led a tour around the Belvedere grounds.

As the guests left, we were thanked many times not only for the lunch but also for the Blessing. Also our longtime friends in the church were very grateful to be part of such a special event.

Our family then had the great privilege of visiting East Garden, True Parents' U.S. home for many years, where we were given a tour by one of True Parents' security guards. It was an awe-inspiring tour, in which we could remember True Parents and their children in the years when America was graced by their presence.