

December 2023

MERRY CHRISTMAS

A young Black woman with long, dark braids is smiling and sitting in front of a Christmas tree. She is wearing a sleeveless, floral-patterned dress with a white lace collar and a colorful beaded necklace. The background features a white, snow-covered Christmas tree and a white curtain.

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FEDERAL ADOPTION

Ephesians 3:20

Now to Him who can do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us.

It is with a heart filled with joy and gratitude that on Wednesday 15th November - 5 days before her 8th birthday - I received a phone call just as I walked out the door for my lunch break at school.

It was my immigration lawyer - "hello" - with fear and trepidation - "do I want to hear what you have to say?"

Lawyer: "Oh yes you do - the judge gave the court orders and you now have an Australian federal adoption of Izabayo Flora. She is now the first Rwandan adopted federally. He also approved her name change - she is now officially Flora Izabayo Black - it's time to celebrate!"

So after seven years of starting on an adoption journey and while everything legally looked impossible for so many reasons we finally got there - we finally have a federal adoption and I am legally under Australian law her parent.

God is good and His timing is always perfect - there were many many times with many many moments of this is not going to work, they won't do this, can't we think of the child not the law moments. Many of my loyal supporters like yourself stood by me and stood in my corner alongside me - to which I say thank you.

I had absolutely no idea eight years ago that I would come home from Rwanda as a parent - even though I did have a dream I shared at work in 2008 and when Flora came into my life I was reminded of that dream.

I also had no idea that God would use me and my story in so many powerful ways.

I kept asking the questions and I didn't stop until I got a 'no' - and I never got the 'no'. Not even when I emailed the Australian Prime Minister in 2019 and he actually became an integral part of our story.

I never ever knew that I would pave the way for others to adopt children from countries that are not under the Australian context and make it possible for other families to become parents.

I never thought that by going through an immigration lawyer I would impact her law firm to expand and start some family law through international adoptions.

Little old me who just wanted to train teachers in Africa to give their children a better future and here I am raising one myself to hopefully grow up and know she has been given a future of hope.

What we can do next is to apply for Australian Citizenship and then Australian passport. My lawyer has told me I can apply for both those things online and with the court orders they should be a breeze! I just have to wait 6 weeks after the date of the court orders. Mind you the last Rwandan lawyer said the same thing about getting a Rwandan passport in 2016!

Watch this space and you can read it all over again once I get the chance to write my book!



SOME OTHER NEWS..

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HOW CAN SHE BE EIGHT

Baby Flora turned 8 on November 20th - she had an archery party with ten special friends from school. We had to cancel the first party due to rain but we got there in the end and she had a ball!

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ITS BEEN EIGHT YEARS

It will be eight years tomorrow, December 10th since Flora's birth mother died - that's eight birthdays she hasn't shared with her daughter and eight Christmas's she hasn't seen the joy on her little face.

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EIGHT WEEKS OF HOLIDAYS

I have started holidays and will be on holidays for eight weeks or so. Flora still has one more week of school. We are not planning on going anywhere other than to playgrounds and beaches.

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\$8,000 LAST LEGAL FEE

Our last legal fee comes to \$8,000. Before Flora came to live with me I felt God say I will provide and we continue to believe that He will and my final payment will be made.

A QUICK UPDATE

Flora has all the excitement of an 8 year old girl waiting for Christmas. While she does not have a long list of gift ideas, she is so precious as she says to me, "Mum I'll just be happy with whatever I get!"

Seeing the Christmas lights as we drive home and waking up to hunt for the elf and eating the lollies from the advent calendar for breakfast are all on the agenda most days during this season.

Christmas carols on the lawn and birthday parties are what have filled up our weekends recently and she is just loving her life and her friends at the moment.

I finished work last Wednesday and was asked to give a dear friends eulogy today, so feel like I have been focussed on that and am now ready to relax a little.

PRAISE / PRAYER POINTS

- ◆ Flora is bringing home gold nuggets from Sunday School, learning about the Holy Spirit and teaspoon prayers, T is for thanks, S is for sorry and P is for please.
- ◆ Our legal journey is complete (although we still need to apply for citizenship and passport)
- ◆ Flora has had a happy fourth term at school and made some nice friends. We are both very ready for her to go into grade 3 next year.
- ◆ God will sustain us during the holidays and our legal fees will be met.
- ◆ Michele will find more regular work.
- ◆ Meaningful relationships during catch up with friends will happen.

