

*Come Holy Spirit
Use me to Your glory*

Precious Pilgrim,

*"She's written two books and she's very religious," I
overheard the lady say.*

*I attended a lovely luncheon yesterday given by "Mimí,
the Perfect Grandmother." This title is given in the spirit of
affectionate admiration, but I must admit also with a little bit
of healthy rivalry. For you see, I'm the other grandmother.*

*Three years ago I gave my oldest son to Diana. By the
way, why doesn't the mother of the groom get to give her son
away like the father of the bride? Hmm...just a thought. I've
got two more sons to go; maybe I'll add that to the "issues to
consider" list. For you see, my husband loves to ask nowadays,
"Lucy, what do you plan to do when I become governor?"
"What will be your focal point?" "Where do you want to make a
difference?" What will be the issues you want to address?"*

*"Uh, Uh --," is my usual answer, for I always seem to be at
a frazzled stage when this quizzing starts. When the sun goes
down, I shut down, whereas my husband gets more fired up.*

*Now where was I? Oh yes, the luncheon yesterday. My
brain's been skipping because of jet lag since we got back from
our trip to Israel. (I hope it's jet lag and not a permanent
situation.) Mimí gave this grand luncheon in honor of my
mama, who had given a flower arranging demonstration that
morning. The guests included the honoree, my sister, myself*

and eight delightful friends of Mimi's. I'd driven from Montgomery to Atlanta to Birmingham where I spent the night, then loaded up Mama, my sister, the flowers and containers and driven to Tuscaloosa for the demonstration. I'm still on Israeli time, so needless to say, I wasn't the keenest conversationalist at lunch. I am proud to say that I didn't fall asleep or take off my shoe and beat it on the table à la Khrushchev, at the United Nations. The latter was a real possibility however when I heard, "She's written two books and she's very religious."

Well, I looked around and realized that they were talking about me. Heavy. I mean heavy is the way that sentence settled in my psyche. I wanted to protest, to negate both statements. I don't see myself as a writer, but rather a "gift handler," a gift from the Lord. I don't see myself as very religious, but rather very sheep-like. I yearn to be a Lord-lover and a flock encourager, but goodness gracious, "religious" I'm not.

Yes, I do wear a cross around my neck. Yes, I do go to Morning Prayer each weekday. Yes, I do go to the Wednesday night church service. Yes, I am on the Alter Guild. Yes, I am in the choir. Yes, I do help teach Kindergarten Sunday School. But "very religious," I'm not. I'm not practicing piety, but rather seeking parameters. I need the boundaries set, the doors shut, the walls built daily to remind me of Who's in

charge, and even with all these ground rules in place, I'm often just a loose goose.

I know it's theologically incorrect, but I have a wonderful image of our Lord God sometimes looking like a much-loved minister of old who put his forehead in his hand and nod his head back and forth when things didn't go quite right. And then the Lord God says with unconditional love "Oh no, Lucy, not again." I seem to be much like my 17-month-old granddaughter Beverley, who's now walking as fast as lightning, seemingly always knowing where she's going - but still occasionally falling down. "Get up, Bev, you're OK," is my standard statement. I no longer rush over and pick her up, for she can get up herself, but I do encourage her and set safe boundaries for her. And that's what my Lord God does for me. Someday I can hear Bev say, "Have you met my 17-month-old-like grandmother Lulu?" for I seem to be a very slow developer.

Mother Teresa's "very religious." The three ladies I had the privilege of praying with at the Tomb of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem were "very religious." There's a difference, a big difference. There's a calm, a peace, a holy glow about such people. They're usually not the busiest bees in a congregation, but rather the solid foundations. They are often the "be-ers" instead of the "do-ers." They're so totally immersed in their love affair with their living Lord that each moment is treasured and sacredly savored because they are totally aware

of His presence at all times. Ah, to be so blessed - but 'tis also a blessing to be occasionally in their midst.

As I said, I experienced such a moment at the Holy Sepulchur in Jerusalem. Patiently, I stood in line with my tour group for about ten minutes, waiting for my turn to enter the small outer chamber. A Greek Orthodox priest presided over this tiny inner room and authorized the comings and goings of the pilgrims, allowing four at a time into the actual tomb room. I was reverently ushered in, only to realize that there were already three ladies devoutly kneeling and praying. I quietly joined them on one bended knee. They had a demeanor about them as ancient as time. They were dressed in black like the widows of old Greece? Eastern European? I didn't know. All I did know was that they were totally worshipping their Lord with every ounce of their being.

All I gave to the scene was a one-knee observant kneel! I was more aware of them than of the cracked tomb. Lord, forgive. The awesomeness of their reverence was incredible. The idea that pilgrims had been coming to this very spot for almost 2,000 years to say, "Thank You, Lord God, for the gift of Your crucified, resurrected Son," was too much to handle, was too much to absorb. The layers upon layers of meaning will continue to seep into my soul for the rest of my life. It was there that the walls seemed to silently reverberate with the Agnus Dei:

*O Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world,
have mercy upon us.*

*O Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world,
have mercy upon us.*

*O Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world,
grant us thy peace.*

*There was peace in that place. There was reverence. There was
the "very religious." I was just an observer on one bended knee.
Lord, have mercy upon us. He did and He does. Thank You,
Lord. (And, hey, ladies, I want you to know I'm not very
religious. I'm just a little lamb who's trying.)*

God Bless. . .

Lucy