

*Come Holy Spirit  
Use me to Your glory*

*Precious Pilgrim,*

*It was a grand good-bye scene, so different from the one I had experienced yesterday with baby Bev.*

*While standing in line, waiting to get on the airplane, I observed an elderly couple saying good-bye to one of their contemporaries. I saw hugs and smiles and heard:*

*“I love you!” and “We enjoyed so much your being here!”*

*It reminded me of the long ago farewells given by my grandmother, Gran, and now continued by her daughter, my mother. Gran would always stand on her front porch, wave good-bye, and say, “Thank you for coming.” The same vocal scenario would take place at the end each phone conversation: “Thank you for calling.” Such departures were never stifling, for they were neither clinging nor possessive. These were freeing exits.*

*As I said, my mother has inherited this gift of giving gracious send-offs from her mother. Last night my husband and I rushed into her home for ten minutes to change and to be off to two functions. He came from Tuscaloosa. I came from Montgomery. We ran. She calmly reigned. “Have a good time!” She was asleep when we returned. She was asleep when we departed at dawn. I drove back to Montgomery to catch a plane. My husband drove to Huntsville to make a speech. We would rendezvous the next day in Charlotte, North Carolina,*

*spend the night, attend our son's and daughter-in-law's joining of their church, and return home.*

*En route to the airport, I called Mama to say thank you for her hospitality and birthday gifts. She'd left a pretty new nightgown on my bed, plus a new tube of toothpaste. These presents brought a smile, for invariably these are the items I forget. I don't know why it is, for I am a good packer. I can organize and coordinate, hang and fold on a moment's notice to get ready for a trip. Give me an hour and I can get it all together, that is, unless I'm visiting Mama, and then I forget my nightgown and toothpaste. Maybe it's because subconsciously I know she will take care of my needs once we're together, as she always has done.*

*I called to say thank you, only to receive another gift - another encouraging, loving send-off. I don't know when we'll see each other next, neither does she. That's OK. I wager the elderly friends at the airport, whom I observed celebrating a shared departure, also did not know when or where their next encounter would take place, but, again, I observed. It was OK. Whereas when I left Beverley, my 17-month-old adorable, tow-headed granddaughter yesterday in Montgomery and she went home and I drove to Birmingham, it was not OK. She went into a possessive panic. Her mother had to pull her off of me while she screamed and cried. Do you know what that made me feel like? A real heel! There was no way I could explain to her that I would see her the very next day at her*

*home in Charlotte. At that age, there is no comprehension of time. A departure, any departure, can seem like a devastating divide, for she doesn't understand the concept of future. That's why she felt the need to hold on to her Lulu.*

*There was a part of me that selfishly loved that monkey-hold. In her short little life we have had less than a dozen shared visits. I yearn for a special relationship with this young lady like the one I shared with my own grandmother. I want her to know that a bond was made the first time I laid eyes on her in the hospital, and that it was solidified on her first Christmas Day, when she was a little over two weeks old. On that special morning we were all at the lake. I heard her and quietly tiptoed into her room, picked her up, changed her, gave her a bottle, and then carried her to our bedroom. I wanted her exhausted new mama and daddy to sleep a little longer, for they would be getting the late night and early morning shifts for years to come.*

*I'll never forget holding her next to me and feeling her heart beating next to mine. That fast little pounding was like receiving an infusion of love. It was an incredible, life-changing moment. Oh, I wish I could adequately express what took place. It was a generational type thing - a host of angels type thing, a communion of saints type thing, a permanent future type thing. At that moment, time not only stood still, but I grasped the eternal infinity of it all. I could almost sense*

*smiles from relatives on the other side affirming: yes, this is what love is all about.*

*Permanent Future. Two huge words which I pray I'll be able to help my granddaughter Beverley comprehend as she and I both mature. It's these two words that allow people to let go. It is these two words that allow us to afford celebration send-offs as opposed to clinging ones.*

*Three weeks ago, the very mountain where it was supposed to have happened, the Ascension of our Lord Jesus, was pointed out to me in the Holy Land. Luke says it happened like this:*

*"When He had led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, He lifted up his hands and blessed them. While He blessed them, He left them and was taken up into heaven. Then they worshipped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. And they stayed continually at the temple praising God." Luke 24:50-53*

*A miraculous departure. Christ ascended; those left behind rejoiced. Rejoiced! We're talking about that same shattered, scattered, motley flock from 40 days previous. This departure differed greatly from that Golgotha death scene. There was neither crying nor weeping. There was neither fear nor flight. There was no Bev-like grasping or holding on. They were now joyful, committed kingdom-dwellers. What happened? What afforded this reorganized reconstruction, even before the Pentecost?*

*I think the answer can be found in Matthew, who quotes our Lord's final earthly words: "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." Matthew 28:20*

*That was and is a permanent future promise. Such allows for "light" leavings - "letting go" leavings - like Gran gave, like Mama gives, like the airport couples gave.*

*"I love you."*

*"We enjoyed so much your being here!"*

*That's Ascension send-off talk, don't you think, which we can give each other because our living Lord Jesus is with us permanently - into the future. "Lo I am with you always." We can relax our grasp on time and on people.*

*Now, as for teaching Miss Beverley. Precious child, I don't know when or where we will see each other again, but that's OK, because there is no "if" involved. For you and your Lulu have a permanent future together because of Jesus. It's time for you to start learning your first song, "Jesus loves you, this I know."*

*Let go, Bev.*

*And, Precious One, how are all of your relationship-holds? Do any of them need a lighter touch? Are you holding on to a child or a spouse tighter than necessary? Have you become so dependent on a friend or a foe that he or she is distracting your view of Christ? Just wondering.*

*I am your "letting go"*

*Lucy*

