

*Come Holy Spirit
Use me to Your glory*

Precious Pilgrim,

*“Look upon him and be radiant, and let not your faces be
ashamed.” Psalm 34:5*

*I did not know who this man was. I really did not want
to be there. I don't like funerals, especially ones held at
funeral homes. They always remind me of my uncle's. His
name was continually mispronounced. The family sat behind
one curtain while the casket was behind another. At the time
deemed appropriate, both curtains were drawn for a viewing.
It was awful - impersonal, a real sideshow atmosphere. This
was what I was expecting today. This was not what occurred.*

*I had come an hour earlier to hug my friend whose 80-
year-old father had died. She and I were inseparable twenty-
three years ago. She and her husband were our first married
couple friends while we lived in Miami. We have been apart for
twenty years because of our changing locations. The distance
of time and locale, however, was instantly alleviated with just
one hug. The pallor of the “parlor” took on an unexpected
warmth.*

*From there I went and drove around the cemetery for
thirty minutes, waiting for the service to begin. It was a quiet
time, a reflective time. It is a stately old cemetery with some
grand monuments, but even more impressive are the names
which they carry. I recognized many of them as belonging to*

the leaders of our community. The cumulative tears shed on that acreage you would think might somehow have made it melancholy, especially in the older section where there are numerous children's graves. That's not the case, however. It is beautiful land with grand old trees and glorious green grass. There was a peace, which seemed to permeate the land and penetrate me.

It was in this mood that I entered the chapel. It was almost completely filled, so I sat on a back row. I noticed that everyone's hair was grey or white or silver. There was a gentle murmur caused by friends consoling friends and then silence, for the most glorious music began. Violin and organ blended perfectly. Old familiar hymns rang out, grand old classics, some I had not heard for years.

The funeral began. There were three men officiating. I recognized one; another was unmistakably a Catholic priest; but the third, as I stated at the beginning of your letter, I did not know.

It is to him that I would like to turn your and my attention. Oh, the other two were impressive. They read the Lord's Word beautifully and prayed the prayers movingly. It's just . . . it's just . . . this other man glowed. He was old. I probably would not recognize him now if I saw him. He was of average stature. When he came forward to give the eulogy and pray, I thought, "Oh, he must be a friend or a relative."

Then he started speaking. Then I started listening. It was the most comforting talk I've ever heard. In ten years' time, probably 95% of that congregation would be dead. He knocked down fears. He knocked down regrets. It was not a pie-in-the-sky talk, but rather a shoot-from-the-hip talk. He was talking with the full strength of the Holy Spirit. He glowed. You could sense this man knew his Savior; loved his Savior; spent hours daily with his Lord; was on a first-name basis with Him.

When he started praying, there was such an intimacy that I had to open my eyes to be sure that Jesus wasn't standing right there next to him. Now, as I reflect, I believe our Lord was. The psalmist said, "Look upon him and be radiant, and let not your faces be ashamed." This holy man did radiate, and I think it was from his exposure to the Son.

But what about the rest of the verse? Well, all I know is that his enlightened eulogy and prayer allowed a lot of us listeners to look up unashamedly to our Lord. We can't glow unless we have the exposure to the Son, our Lord, Jesus. This man had it. I want it. Do you have it, Precious Pilgrim?

I am your sister in Christ,

Lucy

P. S. I just found out afterwards that he is a retired bishop. Yes, a perfect match. Read I Timothy 3: 1-7 and see if you don't agree. Peace, pilgrim.

