

*Come Holy Spirit  
Use me to Your glory*

*Precious Pilgrim,*

*Help! My head hurts! I feel like this household is back to high school. I won't survive. No one will be able to revive me this time.*

*It's 6:00 a.m. That's nothing new and different for me; that's the time my automatic waker goes off. It's genetically built in. I inherited this early morning time clock from my father and I've passed it on to our youngest son. He hates it. I understand. I've lived with this mechanism all my life, but it's really irritating when you're in your early twenties and finally you have no parental curfew being enforced. You feel as if it's almost obligatory to stay out late - 1:00, even an occasional 2:00 a. m. If you slept until 11:00 or 12:00 the next day, that works out just fine, that is, for night dwellers, but awful for morning people.*

*Our interior siren can't be shut off, so we're up and at 'em at the usual 6:00 a.m., no matter what time we retire. We then have an exhausted day to look forward to.*

*Such is the shape I find myself in this morning. Everything was going along fine last night. We had a gourmet meal prepared by our daughter. After dinner, everyone scattered to his or her own interests. My husband went to an office meeting. My daughter watched a mini-series. One of my sons went to see his brother. I read. Everything was pretty calm*

*until about 9:00 p.m. when I was starting to settle down for a long summer's night - then the phone started ringing.*

*My husband arrived home and I went to watch TV - and the phone started ringing. One son came home and the phone kept ringing. The second line was already occupied by our daughter who has always been the best answerer, because the calls are usually for her. The phone rang, and it rang, and it rang. No one would pick it up. I refused to, for I would have had to get up. My husband and son were in two different rooms sitting by phones. Apparently they were suffering from TV deafness. Does anyone in your family have this dreaded disease?*

*It continued to ring until finally our daughter put her caller on hold and answered the other line. If that line wasn't also for her, as it usually was, then she'd yell out to the appropriate person and then miraculously he could hear again and would pick up the phone.*

*Last night the process went on for hours. After 10:00, I'm tired and like to go to sleep. Some of our group would say after 8:00. Anyway, I was in bed, the lights were off. The TV was blaring in the next room. The family and dogs continued to use our bedroom as the central corridor. Even in this zoo of an environment, I was able to drift off to sleep - and then the phone would ring again. My heart would jump. I'd be wide awake. I couldn't help it. It's an old hangover from my children's adolescent days. When I am awakened by a ringing*

*phone, my heart jumps in panic. It's like getting a shot of straight adrenaline with each ring.*

*"Is everything and everyone OK? Are my babies alive, well, and kicking?" Again, I can't help it. I wish I could. It is a built-in Pavlovian type reflex, and you can't teach this old dog (me) new tricks. Sleep-ring-panic. Sleep-ring-panic. Sleep-ring-panic.*

*By the time my husband came to bed, I was mentally bouncing off the bed, whereas he instantly fell asleep. I wanted to take my pillow and hit him as he gently purred next to me. How dare you sleep? How insensitive! Didn't he realize that I felt like I had been waging a "home-phone" battle all alone? I was wide awake. He was sleeping. Our 26- and 24-year-old children had retired to their rooms upstairs. All was well in their world - "Good night, John-Boy." "Good night, Daddy," as the Walton family would have said at the end of each TV episode. That would have worked for everyone in this household except this Mama, who was wide awake and wired for action.*

*I lay back down and stared at the ceiling. The doorbell rang. It was now 11:30. A cousin who has been staying with us for a month was locked out. I stormed to the back door in my husband's shirt over my nightgown. By this time, I could have eaten nails. I yanked that door open. He sheepishly said he was sorry. I said it was OK and did he have a good weekend? He'd been playing soccer in Florida. He said they've been*

*beaten repeatedly. I said that his mother and father had called and wanted him to phone them. He was sincere in his communications, whereas I was barely civil. He went upstairs. I went, seething, back to bed, only to remove myself to the den sofa. My husband's cat sounds had now gone into a chainsaw medley.*

*A metamorphosis had been taking place. I was getting meaner and madder as each moment ticked away. At 1:30 a.m. the phone rang - wrong number. My response was more like a growling "grrr." The den was becoming more like the dwelling of a she-wolf. I was bugged.*

*"Good night, Daddy."*

*"Good night, John-Boy."*

*"Good night, Mama."*

*"Grrr."*

*"Mama? Mama?"*

*"Oh, she must already be asleep."*

*"Good night."*

*"Grrr."*

*Grouchily I'm yours,*

*Lucy*

*Lucy, dear,*

*This is your Aunt Fannée writing to you.*

*I'm sorry to hear about your little insomnia episode.*

*Might some, or actually all, of the responsibility be yours? As I*

*recall, you were the last one who used the back door key and did not put it back in its place. That is why that young man was locked out.*

*Was not that 1:30 wrong number a friend of yours and exceedingly sorry for her mis-dial? Also, might you not need to have a family conference and explain your sleep needs to them? That might be more productive than your growling, dear.*

*Have you thought about exercising more or eating less so that you might sleep more deeply? Does not your phone have a cutoff button, so it will not ring in your bedroom?*

*Might you get a noise machine to camouflage some of the sounds?*

*Might you want to tackle problems as an adult or would you rather continue with those animal sounds, dear, which I do not see as a very productive mode of communication?*

*Goodness, your glowing Christian countenance seems to be on a timer, and is an exceedingly shallow one, dear.*

*Need I say more? It is not teenage-like children who have returned home. Those young adults of yours would make any parent proud. The problem, dear, is your maturity level, not theirs.*

*Respectfully writing, I am*

*Your Aunt Fannèe*