

*Come Holy Spirit
Use me to Your glory*

Precious Pilgrim,

"Yes, Lord. Yes, Lord.

Yes, Lord, my God."

*These are the lyrics to a song, which I recently composed.
It's called "Mary's Song" because she was my inspiration.*

*"Yes, Lord," I think were the operative words, which she
used all her life. They are the ones, which I need to readopt
right now. It's 2:00 in the morning. I just woke up with all the
known symptoms of anxiety. My stomach's in knots and my
shoulders feel like they've been toting water all night long for
Jack and Jill.*

*I know what I've been doing. While sleeping, I just have
been waging a control-fix war for my family. I can picture
each one of them individually, hold each one of them
squeezingly close in my mind, and worry for a full minute over
each person. From the state I'm in right now, I can only
surmise that I must have gone through that lineup repeatedly
in my sleep until I'd worked myself into a real state of "Wake
up, Lucy, and do something!"*

*I don't know where I first learned that part of the
mothering role consists of anxiously holding on tight. Now
that I think about it, actually it might have gotten started
when I was a child. Each Christmas during my formative
years, I was given a doll. I really wasn't a doll lover (rather a*

dress-up and dollhouse lover), but my cousin was. I'd watch her cuddle and coo each year at her annually received Christmas baby doll. I'd usually get one, too, but could have cared less, except on Christmas night. Invariably all the children would take their favorite Christmas gift to share at a family dinner --NO! -- rather to show them off. My new doll was easily portable. I'd take her only to hold her tight and say "mine."

With age, I learned a few manners and to stifle the possessiveness, but it still was there--just not vocalized. Luckily, with time my maternal instincts developed, plus, I had wonderful role models: my mama, grandmothers, aunts, great-aunts, and friends' mothers. As teenagers, my friends and I would discuss in depth and analyze all known mothers. Some were put on pedestals and some categorized as pitiful. That's what teenage girls do at spend-the-night parties, right? At least, that's what my group did; so by the time I went to college and majored in child development, I had pretty well fixed in my brain what a "good mother" was. In fact, I was so confident that I could handle this role that one week after graduating from college at the wise old age of 22, I married a widower with three children, aged 5, 3, and 1.

I'd known him all my life. His parents and my parents went on their first trip together when I was a month old. We had houses near each other at the lake. He and my brother were good friends and roomed together in college. At 19 my

brother died in a motorcycle accident, six years to the day later his first wife died in a car accident. Both deaths were tragedies.

On our first anniversary, I had 6-year, 4-year, 2-year, and one-week old children and a husband who worked most of the time. Is there any wonder? Each day was an adventure. Each year was an adventure. We went from Montgomery to Miami to Lakeland, Florida, and then back to Montgomery and to Wilmington, Delaware, and back to Montgomery again in ten years' time. As to my mothering skills, I'm afraid an inappropriate parental practice would occasionally resurface, that one I'd learned as a child with my doll-hug, hold on, and inwardly shout, "Mine!" How stifling. "Mine." How debilitating. How can anyone dream his dream or dance his dance or sing his song if he has a possessive mother clinging to him?

But tonight, at this very 2:00 a.m. moment, I want to take away their pain. I want to take away their hurt. I want to take away their problems. That's why I'm awake. I want to hold each and every one of them close and protect them from life, but then how could they live? It helps me loosen my hold by focusing on Jesus' mother, Mary. From the Annunciation on, she had the perfect relationship with her Son. There never was any possessiveness, never any clinging, never any holding on tight. She knew from that initial angelic visitation that Jesus was a gift. He was God's gift to her and to all mankind.

He was not meant to be possessed, but nurtured and shared and then released.

I need visual images to capture ideas, for my mind is such that it won't retain names or numbers or Bible verses. There are two pictures of Mary that materialize when I contemplate her and her Son's relationship.

I can see her holding Jesus as a baby and showing Him first to the shepherds and then to the magi. It's interesting to me that throughout the ages, in almost all of the artistic representations, you find Mary is holding the Baby out, away from her, as if making a presentation of Him to the world.

The same is true at our Lord Jesus Christ's death. The heart-ripping idea of a mother holding her dead son is not depicted as one would think. Mary doesn't hold Him in tight desperation as if trying to squeeze life back into Our Lord or in defiant denial saying, "No, God. You can't have Him." Instead her head is bent as if in prayer and there is a sense of humility, and peace, and grace, in the awefulness of the moment. Her hands are outreached as if in presentation and surrender. It is this powerful embodiment of "Yes, Lord" that makes her "Magnificat" song even more glorious and meaningful.

I know my children are gifts from the Lord. It is a privilege and an honor to have been allowed to adopt my three oldest. That act powerfully portrays for me the choice of parenthood responsibility. It was and is a blessed gift from the Lord that I was allowed to experience carrying and birthing

and nursing my youngest son. In those acts, I was given a deeper, more complete understanding of the whole miracle of motherhood. I thank the Lord for that.

But today as a mother of four adults I am even more thankful for the example that Mary gives us of how to release loved ones. We're not just letting go and throwing them to the wolves. We are rather allowing them to stand and become-- become what they were brought into this world to be, children of God, not children of a possessive Mama. The Lord Jesus Christ wants to be in a personal relationship with each one of us and doesn't want the added baggage of a mother hanging on!

Many of the early church fathers used the Greek term "Theotokos" which refers to Mary. Translated, it means "God bearer." I believe that this actual title doesn't refer only to Mary's pregnancy, but just as importantly to how she continually carried Him, carried Him correctly, during His life and during His death. She treated Him always as He was, a gift, and so also should I carry my children.

Precious Pilgrim, might you be needing to do a little letting go exercise, like myself? It's about trust -- trusting in our Lord -- who is infinitely, eternally trustworthy. Peace.

Your sister in Christ,

Lucy