

*Come Holy Spirit  
Use me to Your glory*

*Precious Pilgrims,*

*To sit gathered around a cozy fire at the lake with four septuagenarians was a rich experience. There was my Mama, Mother-in-law and two of their friends. By the word "rich" I mean the best kind of rich - the abundance was not in the material things, but in the fullness of life they represent.*

*These ladies have lived and loved and continue to. They've experienced the Great Depression and World War II. They danced to the big bands and were the first generation of nice girls who could smoke and drink if they chose. Careers were possible. Baby bottles a la Spock were prevalent. Clubs and organizations and charity work were mandatory. They not only knew Robert's Rules of Order, but it seemed too have spilled over into their daily lives. For these are disciplined ladies. They've had and continue to have rules in their lives. They know how to act and how to respond properly to any given situation. They have great decorum and style. There is an indomitable spirit within. There's a toughness and an incredible quality, but also a softness and a sense of humor. This is a formidable generation of ladies. I'm proud to be from this stock.*

*They get up and get dressed and get going daily, whether they feel like it or not. It's just what one does. And they do what's expected and demanded. This is not a touchy-feely*

*group, although they do touch warmly and feel deeply. It's just that that's not the overriding element from which they operate. They "do" because they're supposed to. There's a real sense of standards which does give a grand structured stability to this generation.*

*Enough said. I'm not idolizing. I'm just admiring. This admiration has grown with age. Now that I'm middle aged, I'm trying to be more objective. I'm trying to concentrate more on the positive as opposed to the negative. I've tried the reverse, as all generations must, and now I'm in a more constructive mode. Each generation, with its unique experiences, brings into focus various truths. The truths, God's truths, never change, but every generation sheds its own interpretive light on them.*

*I believe each new generation has to healthily rebel against the previous one in order for it to stand - to become - to claim its own times. The truths of God need to be incorporated in and infiltrated in and made an intrinsic part of each generation. When Paul said, "work out your own salvation" (Philippians 2:12), I believe this was just as much a corporate command as an individual one. We, the church, are to be a community of saints in each generation. We are to glean the good from the previous generation. We are to celebrate its successes and learn from its failures. Every generation has both.*

*Pilgrim, I'd like to share a familiar saying with you. It speaks truth, not only individually, but corporately. This is how I want to treat the previous generation. I want to be sure and not to miss the lessons which they have learned and the truths which they have gleaned.*

*"A friend is one  
to whom one may pour  
out all the contents  
of one's heart,  
chaff and grain together,  
knowing that the gentlest  
of hands will take and sift it,  
keep what is worth keeping  
and with the breath of kindness  
blow the rest away."*

*(Arabian Proverb)*

*It was with this in mind that I was able to listen more intently, observe more closely, and enjoy more completely last night's visit.*

*I remember having this same type of experience in my early twenties. It was a Thanksgiving at Oakland, the house in which I was raised. I remember my grandmother holding court with her three older brothers. They were seated around the grand old oval mahogany dining room table, just the four of them. This room was used only for important functions like birthdays or holidays or dinner parties. You knew something*

*important was getting ready to happen if this table was set and that held true on this particular day. There sat Uncle Cliff, Uncle John, Uncle Jimmy, and Grandma. All were in their eighties. There was a twinkle in their eyes, a joy in their conversation. They reminisced richly.*

*Each had experienced life to its fullest. Each had lived and loved and lost and learned and leaned. They had learned how to lean on each other and on others, but more importantly on their Father God. There was a calmness and a peace which seemed to be emanating from them. I became unaware of their shakiness and slowness and stiffness which I'd noticed earlier. For there they sat upright in a strength, a generational strength, a God-centered strength. They personified a powerful people.*

*For the last time in their lives on this earth, they were all together. Of course, at the time no one knew it, but perhaps all four sensed this possibility. At any rate, it was a hallmark time. It was as if they knew they were coming to the end of an adventure - their life adventure. They had each experienced ups and downs and joys and sadness. They'd fallen and gotten up and fallen and gotten up. They'd kept going. As I said, they'd lived, and here they were together, almost at graduation time. I was sure each one of them was going to receive honors, not because of what they had accomplished, which was impressive, but because they had hitched their ride on the right Star, Jesus Christ, the Righteous. They knew their*

worth, their value. Their immortality depended not on themselves, but rather on their Lord and Savior and their relationship with Him - and nothing more. They were gay, lighthearted, octogenarian children who'd almost successfully completed a game, the one called life.

"Success" - life-lived success. I want to applaud, give a hip-hip-hurray, give a standing ovation. I want to say "thank you" to those in Grandma's generation who carried the Light of God's Truth and passed it on. I want to say "thank you" to those in Mama's generation who in their turn have carried the Light of God's Truth and are now passing it on.

May I quote Paul as he wrote to his younger friend Timothy in the twilight years of his life:

"For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time has come for my departure. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now, there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day - and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing." 2 Timothy 4:6-8

I do so long. Grandma's generation did so long. Mama's generation does so long. Do you, Pilgrim? As long as each generation keeps this yearning desire alive and well and kicking, there should be no regret. We are to keep the flame

*burning. We are to pass it on from one generation to the next - until our Lord's coming again.*

*Ah, and won't that, "Well done, good and faithful servant" - wouldn't that be awesome to be our epitaph? That's Matthew 25:21.*

*Oh, Lord Jesus, I do so yearn for Your coming, but until then, please help me and my generation keep those fires of Your truth burning, as those who have gone before have done - and then, when it is time, may we pass it on brightly and lightly, as Grandma's group did and as Mama's group is doing now.*

*Peace.*

*Your sister in Christ,*

*Lucy*