

*Come Holy Spirit
Use me to Your glory*

Precious Pilgrim,

Last Saturday I had the rare luxury of spending the whole day with my sister. We leisurely woke up, breakfasted, dressed, and then were off for our planned activity. We were going to Bangor Farm. I was so excited. I had heard about this place for years, but I'd never gotten to go there. I'd collected little descriptive gems over time. I knew the land had been my brother-in-law's grandfather's. I knew that there was a log cabin he had fixed up and that there was a creek. I'd yearned for years to go visit. My sister would always say it wasn't very fancy, but to me the farm sounded like heaven. And it was!

It was made up of glorious land, a mixture of thick woods and pastures on hilly terrain. We piled into a four-wheel drive pickup truck and Jamie drove us around. It was wonderful! There's nothing like seeing virgin land, going through thickets, bumping over crop rows, and splashing through creeks. I was envious of the way the two dogs that accompanied us on paws got to act. They rolled in the mud puddles, ran through the underbrush, jumped into the creek, went forward, went backwards, and circled the truck.

We all had a grand old time. But best of all was the two-room log cabin. Ralph Lauren, eat your heart out! It was decorated with a wonderful collection of mismatched male

treasures - clean, practical. Boots lined up in order in the bathroom. Pots hung up in order. A wolf skin lay in front of the fireplace, and a large photo of Jamie's daddy with his prize bull was hanging over the mantel. Somehow, everything worked perfectly together. I recognized 30-year-old bedspreads and 15-year-old curtains. I remembered the tacky crewel-bordered mirror, which I had made and given my sister over twenty years ago. Now it hung happily in the bathroom and looked very much at home. And best, best of all was the porch, which stretched all along the back. It overlooked the creek. I could have looked at that view for days on end, almost hypnotized. Why, with a moment's notice, I could have moved into that cabin and nested.

But instead we went back to Birmingham to get ready for our Saturday night activity. We were going to the black tie opening of the Decorator's Showhouse. Mary and I were as excited as children because this symphony fund-raiser was being held at the home that our grandfather had built, where we had grown up. I hadn't been back to revisit all the rooms since 1977 except for a brief peek a few years ago when I was allowed by the gracious owner to see the downstairs; even I didn't have the nerve to ask if I could have the run of the place.

This night would be different - there were no rooms out of bounds. We could have free rein to roam wherever we chose. This Mary and I did. We went gleefully from room to room, not

holding hands like two younger sisters, but even more closely connected in our hearts. We had shared memories in this place like nobody else. We could name which room belonged to whom. We could remember weddings and receptions and parties and dances and spend-the-night parties. We could remember laughter, and we could remember tears. At one time, four generations of the same family lived under this old slate roof. We could feel some wonderful family vibes. It's not haunted, not the least bit. It's not hallowed, not the least bit. It's just a grand old home that my grandfather built, and it felt good to see the old girl dressed up to the nines. Even though she was a little too bedazzling for some people's taste, it was fun to see her sparkle and shine.

It was a wonderfully healing and whole time for me. I was 28 when that door had last slammed shut. It was a traumatic closing, for it occurred just a few months after my daddy had died at age 59 of a heart attack.

This time the send-off was gentler. My grandmother's room, where I used to love to hang out, was decorated subtly with angels. No one else probably noticed, but I did and it was nice. They were on a pillow, a desk, and a painting. She would have liked it. My old room had an angel print over the bed and sunflower pillows on the adjoining porch. That little makeup closet I wrote about, the one I wallpapered as a teenager, was now totally mirrored. I liked it. The living room was lovely. The dining room was lovely. The basement,

which used to be the darkest, scariest place with its coal bin and furnace, was now a playroom, all white and bright. And best of all was the side garden where I was married. It was tented with clear plastic and little white lights. It created a charming, dreamlike atmosphere, one which I'll be able to close my eyes and remember for a very long time.

A log cabin and a colonial brick house, both visited on the same day, both built by grandfathers. Although dissimilar in architecture, they both spoke loudly to the builders' grandchildren. Jamie showing me his grandfather's property was powerful. My revisiting my grandfather's property was powerful. Both visits occurring unexpectedly on the same day made the experiences seem even more significant.

For days, I couldn't get either house out of my mind. When that happens, I like to see if there is something else to be gleaned from the experience. I got out my Bible to see if there was any passage that seemed to pertain to ancestral homes. I thumbed through the concordance and looked up various passages, trying to find the one that spoke to me most. Grandfathers leaving property to their heirs - what was special about that? Why did these houses gnaw at me so?

Then I came across the scene in Acts 7 where Stephen, the first Christian martyr, gave his incredibly stirring last sermon. In it he summarized the whole history of his people and their relationship with their Father God. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Joshua, David, and all of their incredible

adventures are masterfully summarized. You can just imagine how Stephen had the crowd eating out of his hands in total accord. He was telling their beloved history, the one which each and every one of them had known inside and out since childhood. "Amen, brother!" would have been an appropriate modern-day response.

And then. . . and then, right in midstream, he jumped from the far-off accomplishments of his ancestors to their present day. He used Solomon's temple as his pivot point to bounce right slap dab into their own here and now world. Those words as they came crashing down must have cracked like thunder and pierced like lightning. Atoms split. Pride popped. Lies splintered. Mirrors shattered. The truth convicted. The stoning began.

It's a powerful, powerful scene. It's an "Et tu, Brutus?" type moment. And the sentence that sticks in my craw today, that catches me up short and makes me put my rock collection down and fall on my knees is Stephen's quoting from Isaiah the prophet.

*Heaven is my throne, and Earth is the footstool of my feet;
What kind of a house will you build for me? Says the Lord;
Or what place is there for my repose?
Was it not my hand which made all these things?*

Acts 7:49-50 NAS

The most heart-grabbing, soul-squeezing part for me is, "What kind of a house will you build for me? Says the Lord."

Sticks? Stones? Logs? Bricks? I don't think so.

"And he huffed and he puffed and he blew the house down."

Stephen knew on what to build a fortress, and thank the dear Lord, both Jamie's and my grandfather did, too. The only structure that will eternally stand is one built on the love, the love of the Lord Jesus Christ. It was nice getting to visit these two homes, but only the legacy of the Lord will everlastingly survive. The grandfathers knew that, and gratefully, so do their grandchildren, and I bet you do, too, Pilgrim. Isn't that good news? It's the Good News! Now that's an inheritance worthy of passing on, don't you think?

With love,

Your homeward bound,

kingdom bound sister in Christ,

Lucy

God bless.