

*Come Holy Spirit
Use me to Your glory*

Precious, Precious Pilgrim,

Right now it's 6 AM. I'm sitting on the floor in a bathroom. I'm at a spa with my daughter. This was her 30th birthday present. I'm sitting in this location because I don't want to awaken her. Besides, this is one of my favorite writing spots. I smile to myself for it was in such a "salle de bain" location that the children's book, Lucy What's Her Name, was written -- again, so as not to awaken my family's sleeping beauty, our only daughter, Stuart.

A spa? Is that one word already a turn off to you? How could a Christian write from such a place? Let me tell you, this has been a week of adjustment for me, too. Oh, don't get me wrong, I was in agreement to come from day one, for I knew it could afford good quality time for us girls, which it has. We've giggled and laughed more than I can ever remember. I've given her some good motherly advice and the good news is, she's done likewise. And she does qualify, for Stuart's now the proud mother of an eleven-month old redheaded baby boy. And that's another reason we decided "spa-ing" was OK. This is her first outing away from the baby. One of the real delights has been calling each night to see how the boys -- daddy and son -- were doing. There have been a lot of firsts this week for the two of them and some real bonding.

This has been a time of refreshment, a time of filling up, a time of receiving, not giving. Oh, and that is so hard for some of us. It's been a time of stripping down, both literally and figuratively.

Stuart and I both brought clothes for a week. We could have gotten along fine with just a change of essentials, for robe, slippers, shorts, and T-shirt were provided. Makeup and rollers are a waste, for it seems like we're wet most of the time from either water or lotion or for Stuart, perspiration. She's on the active exercising plan. I'm on the pampered inactive plan.

This is not our normal world. More than a week would be too much, but there is take-home value and it's not just recipes. There has been a lot of dying to self. I think it takes humility to receive a massage. "Excuse me?" Well, it did for me: to allow a total stranger to touch me takes a sense of trusting and letting go. It also is leveling to walk around with everyone dressed alike.

Two or three of the treatments consisted of being scrubbed hard with a loufah, lotion applied, and then being wrapped in a claustrophobic, confining blanket head-to-toe for 20 minutes. I couldn't help but think of our Lord's body being prepared for burial -- and also someday mine.

Yesterday I received a hot oil treatment on my scalp. As the oil was being poured one drop at a time, I couldn't help but think of God's anointment of kings. Even more poignant was the recollection of the lady who poured costly oil on our Lord Jesus. When asked about the waste, Christ told of the blessing it was, in that it was a preparation for His death. The smell as that warm oil was being poured was powerful. It was a precious gift for me. The dying to self, the letting go, the total surrender to Jesus. Oh, and that is so very, very hard, at least it has been for me. It's a daily discipline.

Surrender -- take up the cross. Surrender -- take up the cross.

At the spa, I've also been made more keenly aware of the universality of mankind. I've talked and listened to each lady who's given me a treatment and learned some of their stories. Many are mothers, some single and sole supporters of their families, some married and helping their husbands support their families. One lives with her mother, grandmother, and two cats. She's 31, moved here from New York City, and wants to retire to Seville, Spain, but first she wants to go into geriatric massage. She plays volleyball and her team won this week.

There was one single mother who has worked seven days a week for two years in order to buy a patio home for herself and her daughter. She did it! And her daughter is now nineteen and has a full-time job and is also putting herself through college.

Another lady's husband is in his second year of residency. When he becomes a doctor, they will either move back to Columbia or to Maryland where her father runs a clinic.

I could go on and on with more stories. The clients and technicians are usually quiet during treatments. I couldn't help but interact and say "thank you" for the wonderful gift of helping me become more aware of the preciousness of my body. Yes, even though I'm middle-aged and overweight, my body is precious and made in the image of God. I needed to be reminded to take care, to be a better steward, to be thankful for this shell which houses the holy. It's the balance I yearn for -- body, mind and spirit.

It's my prayer that today will be a time of relinquishing. May

our struggles encourage each other. I love Jesus, but even more importantly, He loves me and you. I yearn to accept, realize, perceive that truth -- the truth of His love -- even more deeply today. It's scary to let Jesus love us just as we are, to ask the Holy Spirit to dwell in us, to teach us, to heal us, to comfort us. Love. I think it's all about Love. The cross is about Love. The incarnation is about Love and we have to daily say "Yes" to it.

Dying to self -- letting go -- allowing Love to come in, totally dwell in us as Mother Mary did and be occupied by our Beloved Lord. Peace.

In my Bible reading this morning the refrain was from Psalm 80. It seems to be a good psalm to sing, a restoration song.

Restore us, O Lord God of Hosts, Show us the light of your countenance and we shall be saved.

Restore us, O Lord God of Hosts, Show us the light of your countenance and we shall be saved.

Restore us, O Lord God of Hosts, Show us the light of your countenance and we shall be saved.

*I am your loving sister in Christ,
And I think a little healthier,
Lucy*