

*Come Holy Spirit  
Use me to Your glory*

*Precious Pilgrim,*

*Good morning. This is my daughter's and my last day at our weeklong visit to a spa. It has been a grand and glorious girl time. She's still asleep for it's early. I want to tiptoe out of our room and go sit one more time in my favorite spot before we leave. I guess I'm a nester by disposition. For one of the first things I always do on a trip is to claim a sitting place.*

*Usually, it's just a comfortable chair in our bedroom, which I turn towards the window. I find the nearest little table, if there is one, and pull it alongside to hold my traveling morning reading books and a cup of coffee and a Bible. Once this is accomplished, I can unpack and settle in and enjoy.*

*The ultimate find is a room with a balcony. I must have had some treehouse dwellers in my ancestry, for even I realize my enthusiasm for such places is a little bit unusual. But here at the spa, I've settled for a traveling reading show depending on the weather and the scheduled activities. As a result of this nomadic moving around, I came upon the perfect place - one that felt just right - like Goldilocks and the Three Bears would say - just right. And with use, it has become holy ground. It's on a sofa located on the back patio. It faces out towards lush scenery made up of palm trees, bougainvillea, fountains, a pool and a golf course. This spot was under an overhang created by pillared arches.*

*I cannot tell you the beauty of this Garden of Eden-like place. It's like salve to my soul. I'm sure I'm more appreciative to such exquisite beauty since our house fire. In spa terms, it's like I've had my senses exfoliated. They have become more receptive, perceptive, fine-tuned, and I'm bowled over when exposed to beauty - both natural and now, even more than ever before - man-made beauty. Bricks, mortar, drywall, even terrazzo - all building supplies along with architectural designs have taken on new meaning and value since the fire. I hope I don't lose that. Of course, man's creativity can't compete with our Lord's, but some designs do seem to reflect His image when they are beautiful.*

*I must admit that what first snagged me to this particular sofa was the view, but that's not what made me keep coming here day after day. I don't even know if I noticed them at first. It's like over time, the view became refined and the gardens seemed to fade into the background and what became prominent were two palm trees. They seemed to have been perfectly placed. They were strategically centered so that from my seated position, the pillared arch became, resembled, took on the appearance of a grand cathedral window with these two stately palms standing side by side, almost identical, both leaning a little bit to the left at the top. They seem to both be in a permanently bowed state.*

*Well, you might as well know it right up front, before we go any farther, I am an image-seeing fool. The Lord made me*

*like that. I see images everywhere in everything. I like the idea of icons rather than images, because my thoughts don't stop with the image. The visual image acts more like an icon in that it draws me deeper. If that's not enough to ponder, you ought to know also that if you give me five random notes played at any rhythm on any instrument, if the melody doesn't have lyrics, I'll fill in the blank with "I praise you, Lord." I praise you, Lord. I praise you, Lord. I praise you, Lord. I praise you, Lord. I could go on for hours. That's probably not a gift, but rather a compensation for the fact that I've never been able to remember lyrics (even in high school where it was important and cool to sing with the correct words every single song that came on the car radio.) Often I was kidded for being a creative lyricist. I've found this spa is a fill-in-the-blank paradise, for every room is piped with what Stuart my daughter says is New Age music. Whatever - all I know is, it is a grand environment for me. If I am standing, sitting, or lying down and not talking, my little fill-in-the-blank internal lyrics are having a grand old time. "I praise you, Lord. I praise you, Lord. I praise you, Lord. I praise you, Lord."*

*Sorry for the detour. Back to the palm trees. Now, as you can imagine, after this explanation on my psyche, they had and have become more important to me than just trees. They strongly remind me of an ancient fresco which I saw in Assisi, Italy. It was of our Lord Jesus carrying His cross, and*

*following right behind Him in His footsteps was Francis of Assisi. As a Christian, it acted as a powerful image. In my concordance it listed 18 times our Lord said, rather commanded, "Follow me." We are to try to live our lives trying to follow, trying to follow, trying to follow. In my own blind, crippled, broken, disabled, sinful state, I fall constantly. I thank the dear Lord that on the way to Calvary, tradition tells us that our Lord did fall, our Savior, Redeemer, Prince of Peace, King of Kings - fell. Thank You, Lord. You didn't have to. It wasn't necessary. You Lord could have gotten to that awful skull-shaped Golgotha without even a scratch, if you'd chosen. But you fell. You got up. You continued your walk. There can be, of course, no comparison between You Lord - the sinless - and me - the sinful; ah, but it does give me such a tender touch of encouragement. It makes the road of following so much easier to know that the journey does and always will include falls, and that's OK. We are just to be sure and get up and continue.*

*Time to close for the day. As I'm ending your letter, I've moved locations. I'm no longer located at the spa, but have moved over to a hotel. Our daughter Stuart's gone home to her boys and my husband has arrived. We will be together here in Miami for four days. I'll write to you tomorrow.*

*Today, may we try, by the grace of God, to follow a little bit more closely in our Lord's footsteps. We'll fall, of course, for that's part of our human condition, but we can get up and*

*continue, for don't forget, we have a Christ who loved and loves us so much that He allowed Himself to fall for our encouragement.*

*I am your fallen but rising sister in Christ,*

*Lucy*