

*Come Holy Spirit
Use me to Your glory*

Precious, precious Pilgrim,

Ahh! Life doesn't get much better than this. I am sitting outside around a pool with my husband relaxing. We're in Miami. There's a gentle breeze. I'm under an umbrella so as to not get too much sun. This hotel spot is on the second floor. The view to the street is more interesting than usual. It's teeming with people, for it's Coconut Grove's annual art show. We've already walked up and down the streets looking in each one of the little white-tented booths. The quality of the art is incredibly good: paintings, jewelry, pottery, furniture, clothing, woodcarving, glass. What struck me strongly is the creativity. That always is what strikes me at such a market, whether it be books or boat stuff such as we saw yesterday in the Miami Boat Show. The creativity of humankind is one of the most fantastically wonderful gifts which we have.

So, what can I share with you today? I guess I'd like to tell you a little bit more about yesterday's activity. My husband and I were together all day. The activities might not have been totally to my choosing, and that's OK. In fact, it's good. He stretches me and, I think, I stretch him. Plus he gave me a dozen roses so I didn't mind him being in charge of our itinerary. As I mentioned, we went to the boat show and then to a busy, loud, boisterous Italian restaurant. I would have chosen an intimate little candle-lit bistro where we could have sat at a tiny table for two with quietly playing classical music. Instead, we had a crowd who started chanting for

the disco music to start. When it did, we had people dancing wherever there was a space between tables, and if none was available, they were dancing in the chairs and waving their dinner napkins. It was wild. It was alive. It was wonderful! Instead of a table for two, we had dinner, which was delicious, standing at the bar. It was either that or wait for two hours. I couldn't handle this atmosphere all the time, or even often. But it was fun!

Where's Christ in such a place? I have to ask. Would He, could He have been there, not just tolerating the environment as I did until I got into the mood, but rather, enjoying it fully? I think so and I'm so glad. I'm so glad that His first miracle was performed at a wedding and it dealt with helping a host with hospitality. John 2:1-11 says: On the third day a wedding took place at Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. When the wine was gone, Jesus' mother said to him, "They have no more wine." He said, "Dear woman, why do you involve me? My time has not yet come." His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever He tells you." Nearby stood six stone water jars, the kind used by the Jews for ceremonial washing, each holding from 20 to 30 gallons. Jesus said to the servants, "Fill the jars with water." So they filled them to the brim. Then He told them, "Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet." They did so and the master of the banquet tasted the water that had been turned into wine. He did not realize where it had come from though the servants who had drawn the water knew. And he called the bridegroom aside and said, "Everyone brings out the choice

wine first and then the cheaper wine after the servants have had too much to drink. But you have saved the best till now." This is the first of his miraculous signs Jesus performed at Cana in Galilee. The father of the bride would have been embarrassed to tears if he'd run out of wine for his friends. It's such a little thing if you're looking at the big picture of our list of human needs that would benefit from a miracle. Our Lord could have started His ministry with a bigger bang, perhaps by feeding the 5,000 or raising Lazarus. Either one would have brought the crowds coming. But no, He began with the everydayness of meeting guests' needs.

I know our Lord loved and loves all people. He would have enjoyed last night's crowd at the restaurant and had a good time. I think He had a deep, barreling, contagious baritone of a laugh. He would have joined in with the toasts, which were being given at one of the tables. He wouldn't have been just a bystander as I so often find myself, but rather a total participator. He loved life. He knew how to live it fully like no one else. I sometimes forget that. Yes, He was a Man of Sorrows. It must have grieved Him deeply to see those who were living life poorly, not relishing every moment, not realizing what a gift, a miracle it was and is. It must have grieved Him then. It must grieve Him now.

"Come to the party. Come to the celebration. Come to the celebration, now," our Lord seems to be saying to each one of us. But, Lord, I've got work to do. I've nothing to wear. My house, my office, my world is a mess. Anyway, are you sure I'm invited? I don't remember getting an invitation.

Jesus said, "Come unto Me all ye that are troubled and heavy laden and I will refresh you." That's Matthew 11:28. That sounds like an invitation to me. Doesn't it to you? Jesus said in Luke 14, verses 12 - 14: When you give a luncheon or dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or relatives or your rich neighbors. If you do, they might invite you back so you will be repaid. But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind and you will be blessed. Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous. Poor? Crippled? Lame? Blind? I fit into some of those categories, do you? I can't ever repay my Lord for his invitation, but I can come to the banquet. Lord, I accept with pleasure your kind invitation. Precious Pilgrim, I hope you're coming too, for it wouldn't be a party without you. Our Host, the Master, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, is calling each one of us to the dance. He's playing our tune. Ready or not, let's go, for we are to come just as we are.

I am your invited guest and you are too.

With love,

Lucy

John 17 -- Jesus prays, "My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in Me through their message that all of them may be one, Father, just as You are in Me and I am in You. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent Me. I have given them the glory that You gave Me that they may be one as we are one, I in them and You in Me. May they be brought

to complete unity to let the world know that You sent Me and have loved them even as You have loved Me. Father, I want those you have given Me to be with Me where I am and to see My glory, the glory You have given Me because You loved Me before the creation of the world." That's an invitation. Amen.