

*Come Holy Spirit  
Use me to Your glory*

*Precious Pilgrim,*

*I'm still on silent retreat at St. Mary's Convent in Freeland, England. I have extensive homework assignments each day given to me by Sister Michaela. She's the Anglican Franciscan sister who is my retreat director.*

*What does one do on a guided silent retreat? Well, it depends. The first year I was so excited to be here those four days, I wanted to experience every single aspect that was allowed. As a result, I was almost exhausted by the time I left. I went daily to the five services we're allowed to attend, plus did all my homework, which is usually made up of three Bible meditations a day.*

*Last year, I was here for seven days. I took the pace slower. A week of silence is an awesome experience on its own. All meals were taken on a tray and eaten in solitude. I only attended one service a day, Holy Communion, and spoke one hour a day to Sister Michaela. We'd discuss the assigned scripture readings. It was an incredible gift of a week. This year, having only three days, the work is more intense and on various themes. Today I've written twenty pages and I'm only two-thirds of the way through my assignments. The good news is that this is not a graded performance test, but rather a stretch, a focus. It's taking little jewels of scripture that are related in theme and taking each one out and gazing at it,*

*seeing if there are any new facets, any meaning that you haven't grasped before. The Holy Spirit is the teacher. My prayer is that I grasp the lessons He desires.*

*Here's an example of taking a scripture and personalizing it. I copied it down word for word, which helped internalize it, and then I wrote a response to the beloved disciple John. Of course, this is in letter form. This is on 1 John, chapter 3.*

*Precious Pilgrim,*

*How great is the love that the Father has shown to us. Can you believe it? We were called God's children and, sure enough, we are. And the reason why the godless world doesn't recognize us is that they don't know Him, our Lord. Here and now, dear friend, you are God's child. What you will be has not yet been disclosed, but I do know that when it is disclosed, you shall be like our Lord Jesus Christ because you will see Him as He truly is. Having this hope, you should purify yourself like Christ is pure. Pilgrim, to commit sin is to break God's law. Sin, in fact, is lawlessness. Christ appeared, as you know, to do away with sins and there is no sin in Him. You, Pilgrim, who dwell in Him cannot be a sinner. Do you understand that? For a sinner has not seen Him and does not know Him.*

*My precious child, do not be misled, it is the person who does right who is righteous as God is righteous. The person who sins is a child of the devil for the devil has been a sinner from*

*the first, and the Son of God, our Lord Jesus, appeared to the very purpose of undoing the devil's work. As a child of God, and you are one, Pilgrim, do not commit sin because the divine seed remains in you. You cannot be a sinner because you are God's child. This is the distinction between the children of God and the children of the devil. No one who does not do right is God's child; nor is anyone who does not love his brother or his sister. For the message you have heard from its beginning is this: that you should - must -- love one another. Unlike Cain, who was a child of the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own actions were wrong and his brother's were right.*

*My precious pilgrim, do not be surprised that the world hates you. We, for our part, have crossed over from death to life. This we know because we love our brothers and sisters. The person who does not love is still in the realm of death for everyone who hates his brother is a murderer and no murderer, as you know, has eternal life dwelling within him. It is by this that we know what love is - that Christ laid down His life for us and we, in our turn, are bound to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters. But if you, Pilgrim, have enough to live on and yet when you see your sister or brother in need, shut up your heart against him or her, how can it be said that the divine love dwells in you?*

*My precious one, love must not be a matter of words or talk. It must be genuine and show itself in action. This is how*

*you may know that you belong to the realm of truth and convince yourself in His sight that even if your conscience condemns you, God is greater than your conscience and He knows all.*

*Dear precious pilgrim, if your conscience does not condemn you, then you can approach God with confidence and obtain from Him whatever you ask because you are keeping His commands and doing what He approves. This is His command - to give your total complete alliance to our Father, God's Son, Jesus Christ, and love one another as He commanded. When you, precious one, keep His commands, you dwell in Him and He dwells in you. And this is how you can know He dwells within you, you know it from the spirit He has given you. Persevere. Be authentic to your own call.*

*I am your brother in Christ,*

*John*

*Now, back to your letter. One more note. I turned the light off and it was so bright outside. I had to tiptoe to the window and see if the stars and moon were out. Yes! They are! Hooray!*

*I tiptoed, because at a guesthouse you become aware of not disturbing the other occupants. This building is an old, converted, turn-of-the-century parsonage and it squeaks and groans, as it should. There are communal bathrooms down the hall, and the floors and walls make you aware of the other*

*guests. There are no curtains on my window, so that's how I became a stargazer. Oh, and it was so good to see. It has been an absolutely miserable day, weather wise - blustering winds, cold driving rains, but a perfect day to be inwardly focusing. Maybe tomorrow will be lighter. I hope so, but as I said, I'm not in charge.*

*I am your retreated sister in Christ,  
Lucy*

*P.S. Now I hope you'll take my recommendation. Go get a pen and paper. Take one of your favorite scriptures, personalize it into a letter just for you, and then write a love letter back to Luke or John or Paul or Peter or Matthew or Mark, whomever. It's your choice. The Holy Spirit guided them in their writings. He also can guide you. He's a grand teacher. In fact, He's the very best. Peace.*