

*Come Holy Spirit  
Use me to Your glory*

*Precious Pilgrim,*

*"This is the terminating point of this flight," the steward announced right after we landed. Thank the dear Lord he didn't make that announcement while we were still in flight. If he had, there would have been mass hysteria. It was a rough ride -- one of those white-knuckled, up and down and around rides where everyone does his or her best not to make eye contact. Fear could be felt even though we weren't willing to look it in the eye.*

*Midway through this two-hour flight, I'm positive that if the Captain had come on the speaker and offered parachutes, there would have been many a taker. Better yet, if he'd asked everyone who was ready to land to please raise their hands, we could have started the Wave, like at a sports game. I think there would have been almost 100% participation to encourage a put-down, except for one little blue-eyed, blond boy sitting in the very back row with his parents. He must have been about eight, and he was giggling up a storm, having the time of his life.*

*The boy did provide a very much-needed lighter interpretation of the situation. Finally, we landed and even that was awful. There was a jar to the left and a strong pull to the right, indicating a strong crosswind. The plane took almost the entire runway to stop. As we rolled to the gate, I*

*blew the little boy a kiss and I said I was glad he giggled. The parents laughed. We all laughed.*

*We then rushed and sat and waited to get on our next plane. Ugh! It was a smaller version. Surprisingly, the last leg of the trip home wasn't as bad as anticipated. It was a little choppy, that's all. Plus we saw a rainbow between the cloud layers and that was wonderful - and then we were home.*

*But why the previous anxiety? I can't answer for the other passengers; all I can do is to look at my own reaction. I don't know why, but I am more aware of my own mortality in that closed-in packaged place than in most. I am more aware of my actual, invariable, lack of control. The safety of the trip is totally dependent on the pilot, the weather and the equipment.*

*My fear never came close to a panic attack. It was more of a prayerful checklist. "OK, Lucy, what if this plane does go down? What if this day is your last on this earth? How are you with that possibility? Do you really believe what you say you do? Is Jesus Christ truly your Lord and Savior? Are you willing to totally trust Him?"*

*I did ask for angels to surround the plane and to hold her up. I did pray for the pilots. I did gaze around at the people near me - the children, the families, and prayed that all would be well. And it was.*

*I guess I was more aware of the weather and our Lord's command over it today than usual. It began with my 7:30*

walk from the hotel to the nearest church. I passed through an alley of swaying pine trees. On the way there were wild green parrots squawking and flying around. It made for a grand fanfare of an entrance into this extraordinarily beautiful Gothic church. I had a little bit of time before the service began, so I did my usual tour of windows. They hit me harder than most, for many dealt with the theme of Jesus' interactions with water. This was totally appropriate and fitting, for this particular church was Bethesda by the Sea. The stained glass window that hit me the hardest was the one that depicted the story in Matthew that tells of Jesus walking on the water. Of course, the Word, His Word, is more powerful than a paraphrase, so I will turn to the passage.

It says, "During the fourth watch of the night Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. When the disciples saw Him walking on the lake, they were terrified. 'It's a ghost,' they said and cried out in fear.

But Jesus immediately said to them: 'Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid.'

'Lord, if it's you,' Peter replied, 'tell me to come to you on the water.'

'Come,' He said.

Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and began to sink, cried out, 'Lord, save me!'

*Immediately, Jesus reached out His hand and caught him. 'You of little faith,' He said. 'Why did you doubt?'*

*And when they climbed into the boat, the wind died down. Then those who were in the boat worshipped Him saying, 'Truly You are the Son of God.'"* That's Matthew 14:25-33.

*It's the handclasp and wind transformation that always gets me. The calm, His calm, is always available just for the asking. It is the truth. It is His truth. I know. I have experienced it. I might, as Peter did, occasionally take my eyes off the Lord and start a "sink down!" But by His grace, I regain buoyancy and float back up to the top once I realign my eyes on Him.*

*This day, I think on my own choosing, I wanted to sink a little. The feeling should not have been fear, but rather sadness, regret, a sense of loss. You see, thirty-four years ago my brother, Bill, at age nineteen, died in a tragic motorcycle accident. I don't dwell on it. With time, the pain, the sense of loss and regret has been woven into the very fabric which makes up my life. It's part of the whole and it is one of the holes where total dependency on the Lord and His grace is the only thing that got me through and gets me through such tragedies. Our Lord alone turns them from black hole experiences into ones where you can see His Light shining through. Tragedy is part of the human condition. It is part of the deepening, depending process that we all go through. Our*

*Lord doesn't cause black hole experiences, but I do believe He and He alone can infuse them with grace.*

*Today has been a rich day, as all days are if we are in tune with the Lord. There have been green parrots squawking, wonderful windows shining. There's been turbulent winds tossing. There's been an eight-year-old boy giggling, and a rainbow reminding, "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid."*

*"Yes, Lord." The calm remains as long as we abide, abide in Him. Peace.*

*I am your sister in Christ,  
Lucy*