

Precious Pilgrim,

Kanuga is one of my favorite places in the whole wide world. It is a church camp near Hendersonville, North Carolina. Three of my dearest friends and I left Montgomery this morning at 9:00 and drove eight hours to this conference. The bishop of Alabama is our main speaker and the title for the meeting is "Deep in the Heart's Core."

We arrived for social hour and then supper, followed by Bishop Parsley's first presentation. We ended the day with an evening service in the Chapel of Transfiguration. My cabin mates are asleep and soon I will join them.

One of the highlights of the day was riding in the car together. We giggled and laughed and shared and enjoyed each other's company. The time went by fast. The day was a beautiful one and perfect for riding up in the mountains.

It was nice driving through the gates of Kanuga. I wanted to let out a big sigh -- "we're back" -- as we drove by the lake and up to "our" cabin. Although we've only stayed here one other time, a year ago, still cabin number six has already become ours.

We registered, unpacked, and settled in. I don't know what it is about this place that makes it so special. There's the natural beauty, but there are other places with just as much that don't have the same effect on me.

I love that the chapel is called Transfiguration, for maybe that is what this place is about. It is a changing,

rearranging-type place where one can get realigned with our Lord. I don't know whether prayers make a place holy, for many are said here daily. I don't know whether it's the intentional getting away, carving out time specifically to be with God that makes this place holy. I don't know whether it's all the worries and responsibilities and cares can be left behind that makes this place holy. All I know is that when I come to Kanuga, I "expect a miracle," and I never have been disappointed. And, I dare say, few have.

The sky is clearer. The stars are brighter. The air is crisper. Everything seems suspended in time. As we walked into the chapel tonight it was dimly lit, only by candles. The smell, ah, the smell of this wooden structure is like entering a forest right after a gentle rain. It just enfolds, engulfs you with warmth. Tonight's service was made even more inviting by a harpist playing. It was lovely.

Before I go to sleep, I'd like to mentally revisit with you the original Mount of Transfiguration. I'd stood on that holy mountain where now stands the most beautiful of churches. My trip was a few years ago. I'm trying to retrieve that dusty file from my memory bank. I can't remember everything, but I can remember hordes of people in the gift shop. It was truly a cross-section of humanity. For me, I'm afraid it had a feeling of Macy's bargain basement with an international flavor. No one seemed to speak English. There was an almost frantic frenzied feel. I guess because the various buses were about to

pull out and leave and no one wanted to get left on this isolated mountain. I'd come with a group of friends who were patiently waiting outside for me, but were also ready to leave. I was bound and determined to buy some picture postcards of the mosaics of angels that surround the altar in the church. They were so incredibly lovely. Eventually, I was successful and I treasure those cards even today. That was my Mount Tibor experience. But let's go back to Peter, James and John as they saw our Lord transfigured -- transformed. That's Matthew 17, verses 1 through 8. And six days later, Jesus took with Him Peter, James and John, his brother, and brought them up to a high mountain by themselves and He was transfigured before them. And his face shone like the sun and his garments became as white as light. And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him. And Peter answered and said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here. If you wish, I will make three tabernacles here -- one for you, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah." While he was still speaking, behold a bright cloud overshadowed them, and behold, a voice out of a cloud saying, "This is my beloved Son with whom I am well pleased. Listen to Him." And when the disciples heard this, they fell on their faces and were much afraid. And Jesus came to them and touched them and said, "Arise, do not be afraid." And lifting up their eyes, they saw no one except Jesus Himself alone.

So often, when we look at that scripture, our focus is on

Christ and His shining glory, as it so rightly should be. I always get a kick out of Peter's seemingly A-type "do something" response. I know, let's go build three tabernacles. My response was, "Let's go buy post cards." I mean, we're standing on holy ground. I've got to have a piece of the rock -- a souvenir to commemorate this visit.

But tonight, as I prepare to go to sleep, as I am surrounded by three of my dearest friends, who are already asleep in their rooms, as I look out my window and see the lit cross shining on the steeple of the Chapel of Transfiguration, my eyes and heart rest longingly on the last two verses of that scripture. And Jesus came to them and touched them and said, "Arise and do not be afraid." And lifting up their eyes, they saw no one except Jesus Himself alone. This is right after they heard God say, "This is my beloved Son with whom I am well pleased. Listen to Him." Their appropriate response was to immediately fall to the ground and be afraid. But Jesus said, as we often hear in the Bible, when man encounters the awesomeness of God, "Don't be afraid." And they lifted up their eyes and saw no one, no one but Jesus Himself alone. Ah, now that is paradise to me.

We are each daily called to not be afraid. That's about trust. We are each daily called to lift up our eyes and only see Jesus Himself alone. I think that's about discipline and availability. Thank the dear Lord, I don't think we are in charge of this transforming relationship. The Holy Spirit is.

But we are called to surrender our all to the lordship of Jesus. May I read some from Titus, Paul's letter to Titus, chapter 3, verse 4 through 6. But when the kindness of God, our Savior, and His love for mankind appeared, He saved us, not on the basis of deeds, which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ, our Savior. By the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit. Ah, my precious pilgrim, I want to be washed. Do you? I want to be renewed. Do you? I want to become more like Jesus. Do you? That is my heart's yearning desire. Psalm 37:4 says: He will give us our heart's desire. That sounds like a promise to me. A transformed promise. My cabin mates are asleep and so must I. Good night and Peace.

*I am your sister in Christ,
Lucy*

Expect a miracle. I do!