

*Precious Pilgrim,*

*In yesterday's letter, I had the fun of telling you about an ancient little nun who late each night would walk to the chapel of the monastery where she lived and spend time there alone. When asked what she did there each night, she said she would make up a story and tell it to her Lord. She said she bet He got tired of hearing all day long the problems and petitions and desperate prayers of his people so she just made up a tale and would tell it to Him and she thought He enjoyed it. I love the sweetness and the innocence of this selflessness of this little story. I'm not quite like this little nun with those attributions, but there's always hope and in God's time, who knows for He is making all things new.*

*I did share yesterday for the very first time at sunrise while watching the geese and mist both rise off the lake at this beautiful church camp. I sat on a porch swing and I told our Father God a story about creation. Oh, it wasn't as good as His original event, but just as the little nun indicated, I do think our Lord enjoyed it. And I won't relay the tale for it was made just for Him.*

*I would today, however, like to share a story - a story that is an adult fable that I wrote a few years ago when I was visiting my sister-in-law in the Cotswolds in England. Her converted barn is in a little village right outside of Burford. Each morning I'd walk one and a half miles to town to attend a 7:30 morning church service and then walk back. It was a*

*glorious way to start the day. The walk was down a little hilly lane with expansive green fields peaking through the tree lines. Sheep, cows, rabbits and a pheasant or two were always encountered. One morning I saw this one little sheep sitting - ahh, wait just a minute and I'll read you the story. It's now in book form. It's called Lamkins, J. Flock - Get Off That Heap! and it's illustrated by my dear friend, Mary Barwick.*

*On a walk in the Cotswolds, I came across this sight. "Lamkins, J. Flock, if I've told you once, I've told you a million times. Get off of that heap! What's gotten into you? Here you are surrounded by the most gorgeous grazing land in all the world and what do you do? You go and find yourself the only manure mound in the whole field and go plop yourself right down in the middle of it. Open your eyes, precious lamb. Don't you see all the beautiful grass surrounding you? Look at your fellow flock. Do you see them climbing around on a dung heap? Gross, I mean, gross! I didn't raise you to go sit in such stuff. You've forgotten who you are and from what fine stock you've come. I know the view might seem more grand from that seemingly higher vantage point but, Lamkins, really it's not higher for long. Why, it's disintegrating as you sit there. You're not on solid ground. And I know it might feel warm and soft and comfy on such a bone-chilling day as today, but these creature comforts won't last for long. You're going to get yourself good and sick. That's what's going to happen. I just know it. Those fumes couldn't be good for you. Just look at*

*yourself! You've gone and gotten your beautiful fleece all dirty. There's nothing healthy to eat up there. And you're not getting your daily exercise. Plus, how can you socialize? You know, we're a very social group with a flock mentality. No one who's anyone is going to join you up there. I've been around a lot longer than you and have stood on a few piles myself and nothing good comes from such living. Believe you me, I know what I'm talking about. Now you come on down like a good lamb. I'll help you get clean and see that you find a nice little grazing spot among friends. Let's get ready, precious Lamkins of mine. Hurry, the shepherd is coming. Now that's the way, you're almost back on solid ground, just a few more steps." The moral of this story is "Be sure you dwell on solid ground, that which does not sink. If warm and soft and comfy smells, you might need to rethink."*

*Last night a young man gave a talk about freedom and how we are new creatures in Christ and that He is making all things new. He quoted Luke 4:16-21, which says, He entered the synagogue on the Sabbath and stood up to read. And the book of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him and he opened the book and found the place where it was written, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because He anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free those who are downtrodden, to proclaim the favorable year of the Lord, and he closed the book and gave it back to the attendant and*

*sat down and the eyes of all the synagogue were fixed upon Him and He began to say to them, "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."*

*The speaker focused on the phrase, to set the captives free. That was what was happening to Lamkins. Our speaker then read the story of Lazarus. That's John 11:1-44. Lazarus being raised from the dead and that he was brought back to life, but had to have the binding grave clothes taken off of him. That's John 11:43-44. It says, Our Lord cried out with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth." He who had died came forth, bound hand and foot with wrappings, and his face was wrapped around with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go."*

*He suggested that we too had been brought back to life and are new creatures in Christ, but some of us, just like Lazarus, are not yet walking in total freedom. We still have some of those old smelly, stinky grave clothes still binding us. Wow! But Jesus came to set the captives free. That analogy hit me strongly between the eyes. It made me question, am I walking in total freedom? Where is there heaviness? What area in my life haven't I totally surrendered to the lordship of Christ? Are there any locked rooms or dusty dark corners of my life or past or present that I haven't allowed the Lord to come in with His Holy Spirit and blow His free healing breath upon? Ah, I've got some soul-searching to do - some praying to do on that. Do you?*

*Ah, yes, once again it was fun today to revisit with you Lamkins J. Flock - Get Off That Heap! Don't we all need to? You know, I think I just might have a little more in common with Lamkins than I realized. But that's OK. By God's grace and the leading of the good shepherd, I can get off of that dirty pile of refuse and take off any remaining soiled clothes and be totally set free. And we don't necessarily have to do it alone. The Holy Spirit will help and, if need be, we can ask others to help too - to pray for us, lay hands on us, to help loosen those binding rags. Lazarus, you know, had help. If need be, we can seek Christians' help too. Whatever it takes, we are to be set free so that we can walk this walk as new creatures in Christ. Whee! To be set free! This little lambie might be becoming a butterfly. At least, I know I'm being transformed and so are you. May we be more like Him, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Baaaa!*

*I am your soiled sheep, who's being transformed by God's grace into precious Lucy, the Lucy the Lord meant for me to be. Are you also becoming more to His liking, His design?*

*I am your sister in Christ,*

*Lucy*