

Precious Pilgrim,

I'm in my granddaughter Beverley's room. She's asleep. Her sister, Frances, is asleep down the hall. My husband and I are babysitting the girls for the night.

There is nothing, absolutely nothing more special than grandchildren. To walk into a room and hear "Googoo," that's my name, and to be met with a flying leap of hugs and to be allowed to just do "fun" things together is grand. We do try and keep most of the parental rules intact, but all parties know there might be a few allowances made and those rules are a little more flexible in a grandmother's hand.

I want to tell you two incidents that occurred today. They weren't the highlights, but rather just happenings. I guess why these incidents stick is that they both took place in the same day.

I spent the morning with our daughter and her precious, almost one-year-old son. The plan was to go shopping for his church outfit. We made it to the first store and all was well. We did just fine, but had no luck finding the outfit. Montgomery has a tradition that all young children wear fancy handmade clothes to church. Unfortunately, neither this grandmother nor his mother sews, so we had to shop.

I had the quilts for a little while over the years, I even went to a sewing class to learn. The teacher, who's a dear friend, finally had the grace to tell me that she didn't think this would be my cup of tea. And she was right. I love to create

with my hands, but it needs to be with something larger than teeny-weenie lace and teeny-weenie thread. Why, I couldn't even see what I was supposed to be doing. Unfortunately, knitted outfits aren't in vogue, for I would have been willing to try and knit an item.

Back to the shopping. On we went to the next store. The first one didn't even have one suit to fit him. Not to worry, there were two other places we could check. My job was to hold him while she looked. Midway through the rack, he coughed twice and threw up all over himself and me. Thank the dear Lord, we both had on absorbent cotton, so I just calmly held him close and let the liquid soak in as much as possible as my daughter ran to the bathroom to get power towels.

Luckily, the owner is an understanding friend, and I had been holding him closely, so we didn't leave any signs of the accident anywhere except on us. We quickly said our good-byes and left. He wasn't sick, but full. He had just finished his juice, coughed, and that caused the eruption.

All was well. All was calm. Our party of three had been cut short, because two of us were a little damp and smelly, but smiling. As we turned into the driveway at home, we noticed my husband was right behind us. My daughter and I did a dastardly deed. I must admit we both came up with idea simultaneously. We'd let my husband get his grandson out of the car seat. I know that wasn't nice and Stuart and I didn't give each other eye contact, for we would have burst out

laughing. She and I both are married to a protected, dying breed of males, who don't do well with anything that is damp or smelly. I know we women are to blame for their shortcomings. We were just trying to give my spouse a little growing opportunity by letting him pick up his grandson. It was funny and fun and the good news is that neither male started crying on contact.

Then this afternoon, when we arrived to baby-sit the girls, the exciting news of the day was that Frances had on big-girl underpants and had used the potty four times. This is headline news. She's right on schedule - two years, three months - and ready to learn. A new baby brother or sister is arriving in May. This family wants to be a "one-in-diapers" one, as opposed to a "two-in-diapers" one, so this was big-time news.

We all congratulated her and made a big deal of it. The babysitter said she'd tried to put her diapers on and Frances would have none of it, so off we went to dinner with big-girl panties.

On arrival at the restaurant, Frances and I went to the restroom with no luck, but we tried. I told her to let me know when she needed to go. All was well. After dinner, we went to the video store to pick out a movie. We went to the restroom again, still no luck, even though her big sister had been successful.

At this point, I should have gone and gotten a diaper just in case, but we were going straight home and all was still well. My eldest granddaughter and my husband were picking out movies and Frances was playing with the little plastic chairs they had for the children to sit in. All of a sudden, she started crying. I knew instantly what must be happening. Quickly, I ran and picked her up and held her closely. Luckily, once again, we were dealing with absorbent cotton. I told her it was OK as I held her and could feel the dampness continuing to spread. Fortunately, I was holding her sweater and coat which could hide my wet blue jeans. We went to the car. There we dried and diapered and all was well by the time the other two arrived with the movies. There was little discussion about what happened. It was no big deal. We reminded the five-year-old big sister that we all did the same thing and the good news was that the youngest had worn her big-girl pants today and had mainly been successful. "Accentuate the positive, eliminate the negative." How does that song go? Anyway, the good news is her success and we had not left our mark at the store, just like we hadn't with Hall earlier in the day.

How in the world can these episodes be brought together in an inspirational letter? What can be their redeeming grace? "Dampness happens." "Always wear absorbent cotton." "If you might have a problem, find someone to hold you close." "Unpleasant smells can be shared with a smile."

I'll have to think on this for a while. All I know is my husband and I had a wonderful day - with each other, a daughter, and three grandchildren. It was a little damper than I had anticipated. Fortunately, I wore cotton instead of plastic. An absorbent fabric works better than a repellent one when dealing with unexpected accidents.

I guess that's true with people too. There are certain ones who can come along beside us when we're hurting or have an accident or experience a trauma and can act just like that absorbent cotton. Now I'd like to read Matthew 25:31-40. "But when the Son of Man comes in His glory and all the angels with him, then He will sit on His glorious throne and all the nations will be gathered before Him and He will separate them from one another as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. And He will put the sheep on His right and the goats on His left. Then the king will say to those on his right, "Come, you who are blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat. I was thirsty and you gave me drink. I was a stranger and you invited me in, naked and you clothed me. I was sick and you visited me. I was in prison and you came to me. Then the righteous will answer him saying, "Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you or thirsty and give you drink? And when did we see you a stranger and invite you in or naked and clothe you? And when did we see you sick or in prison and come to you? And the King will

answer and say to them, "Truly, I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of mine, even the least of them, you did it to me.

I yearn to die to self and to become more like absorbent cotton - not only to grandchildren, but also to others. I'm afraid I'm still a little repellent, more like oilcloth. Lord, melt my heart. Transform me more into your design. Precious Pilgrim, what cloth are you wearing?

*I am your sister in Christ,
Lucy*