

*Come Holy Spirit
Use me to Your glory*

Precious Pilgrim,

It's 1 AM. I thought it was about to be daybreak. What threw me off was that I was awakened by a bird's singing. I thought it was a new day dawning, but no, it's deep dark night. My husband is sound asleep so I sneaked out to write you.

It's been Maundy Thursday all day, now it is the first hour into Good Friday, but we'll get back to that day later. This past day started with decorating the Church Fellowship Hall for the Seder Dinner which is the name given to the reenactment of the Lord's Passover Supper. Then it was off to Birmingham, which is a two-hour drive. I had a huge long must-do list. Then it was back to Montgomery in time for the 5:30 Seder Dinner and then the 7:30 Maundy Thursday Service.

Under normal circumstances, when faced with such a packed day, I would have worn tension in my shoulders to complete my ensemble. Do you wear such apparel occasionally? Instead of this day being heavy however, it was a blessed, calm day, which operated like clockwork. What made all the difference in the world, I think, was starting the day off in prayer, which set the pace and the priorities. Plus, I had Mike Kimbrough, our yardman, to drive me. This is the ultimate luxury, which I don't give myself often.

But you see, right now Mike's whole world is up in the air, like mine and my family's, in that our yard, the one that he's been so faithfully tending for almost seventeen years, is a total mess after the house fire. There is nothing much for him to do, which is fortunate really, for this year he's had to spend a lot of time caring for his wife and mother who have been sick.

I knew I couldn't do this day alone without a lot of wear and tear. His driving was perfect. In the tricky Birmingham parts, I drove, for being a native I know them, but for the straight highway haul, he took over and I wrote Easter letters to a few loved ones.

It's been the most lovely spring that I can recollect. Mike and I were both "oozing" and "aahing," for around every turn there would be another springtime surprise. It was wonderful. It was a good trip for both of us. I needed the help, and I think it was good for both of us to get away into this full-blown beauty.

Part of today's Maundy Thursday experience is to revisit the Last Supper of our Lord. This year's immersion into the experience was even more poignant. Maybe the decorating of the tables for the reenactment of the Passover meal was the reason; maybe having my family to share in the meal was the reason. Maybe having driven for hours in the springtime beauty of Birmingham was the reason. I don't know, but all I do know is it was good and exquisitely powerful.

In our tradition, the Maundy Thursday service is one of the most solemn. The music was beautiful. The sermon was good. The Lord's Supper was meaningful, as I said. The service always ends with the choir silently recessing and the ministers totally strip the altar.

Now we are ready, that is almost ready, for the darkness of tomorrow's Good Friday experience. There is one more preparation however. In the adjacent chapel of our church, the lights remain on and they will be on all night. It has been decorated with a profusion of flowers in commemoration of the Garden of Gethsemane. Throughout the night, until the 7:15 AM service, there will be parishioners coming and going. Different ones signed up for an hourly shift to come pray and watch and wait. It helps us remember our Lord's asking His disciples to watch and to pray with Him. They all fell asleep. We modern day disciples will have gotten some sleep tonight too, but at least we'll try to watch and pray for an hour.

One thing that has really stayed with me from the experiences of this day was a question asked by the minister during the sermon. He retold and brought to life the Upper Room experience. When he got to the part about our Lord's washing the disciples' feet, he asked in which position would we feel most comfortable, the one who washed or the one who was receiving the washing? I knew the answer for me instantly. Give me a bucket and a towel anytime, but don't look for me to let you wash my dirty old feet. No way, Jose! "It's better to give

than to receive.” Boy, I’ve got that down pat! Put up your bucket. Move over. Let me at those feet. This is my job.

Yes, it is better to give than to receive, but sometimes the gift needs to be the “receiving.” It allows others to minister and to grow in their own ministries.

I’m trying to relinquish the front-and-center stage position and move to the back row and allow others to come forth. It’s now time in life to learn to become more of an encourager to others than a prima donna, to allow others to wash my feet. It’s a two-way gift.

In Miami, at the spa with my daughter, I had a pedicure. Never do I have such. I don’t like my feet. I have bunions and they’re flat. This dear, sweet, young lady took my feet in her hands and ministered to them. It was extremely humbling. When I told her I had never had such a treatment and why, she said, “Ah, but you have good feet. I’ve seen much worse.”

Then she asked what color polish I wanted my toes to be painted. I said I didn’t care, just clear would be fine, for I didn’t want to bring attention to them. She said, why didn’t we make them “happy feet” and she painted those toe nails bright hot pink!

It’s been over a month now since they turned bright and happy. The polish is about worn off, but there are still a few traces which I refuse to take off. They still make me smile and I still do have “happy feet.” It’s not so much about the color, but

it has a lot to do with my allowing another to do the foot washing, and not me.

My precious Pilgrim, how are you on the receiving end? It's OK to hold on tight to that bucket and towel and walk around on your knees, but occasionally, do try to reverse position. In a lot of ways, it's the more humbling, giving one.

Thank you, Mike, for driving me today to Birmingham. I enjoyed the trip. In a little while, I will go sit in an interior chapel garden. I will try to stay awake and watch and pray. It's going to be another busy day but, sometime today, I'm going to try and wedge in a trip to the drugstore for a bottle of hot pink polish. I think this new state of happiness for the feet needs to continue. Hopefully, every time I see a pink toe peeping out, I'll smile and remember to put my bucket down and my towel down and allow others a chance to come forth and minister.

Precious Pilgrim, might you be needing to purchase a bottle too? Just a reminder.

I am your sister in Christ,

Lucy

I'd like to end by reading John 13:12-15.

And so when He had washed their feet, and taken His garments, and reclined at the table again, He said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am. If I then, the Lord

and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you. We must sometimes, Precious Pilgrim, receive. God bless.