

*Precious Pilgrim,*

*We have a new kitchen. I've never had a new kitchen before. Everything is shining and slick and clean. I mean it's gorgeous! I mean nothing squeaks or is stopped up or scratched or stained. In fact, it really doesn't look like I belong in it and I'm going to try to keep it this way as long as I can. I've only started one kitchen fire in four months, so there is just one stove eyeliner that is black. For this, I am truly thankful and proud!*

*Why, you could take a picture of this kitchen and put it in any fancy magazine, except, I think, they would insist on one change - "the red plastic solo cup, containing one red silk rose will have to go!" But I would protest, "You want a picture, then the tacky arrangement stays!"*

*"We thought you were a renowned English flower arranger! This does not live up to your tasteful standards!"*

*"Sorry - you'll have to find yourself another 'gorgeous gourmet galley.' This rose grows in my kitchen!"*

*Now that they're gone, I can give you the inside scoop on the rose. During the halftime at my youngest son's high school Homecoming football game, each senior's mother was presented one silk rose. This is a big deal! I knew that because I had already been cherishing an identical rose that my second son had handed me on the football field three years earlier. So I knew how to treat that flower, or at least I thought I did.*

*But my husband had a better plan. The morning after the game - in the kitchen, there stood my silk rose in a red plastic "Solo" cup full of water. My husband had lovingly placed it there the night before. At breakfast he walked over to this cup, leaned over, smelled the rose and said, "Gosh, it's lasting well!"*

*And it continues to flourish. The metal stem is starting to rust, but the bloom is still just a bud ready to pop. What's that statement about "beauty is in the eye of the beholder?" That rose a la solo cup is beautiful! It's brought me more joy than dozens of real roses. That precious man took something of value and made it even more valuable by caring for it. I would probably have added the rose to the drawer of hidden treasures, never to have been noticed again - but not now - now it's flourishing.*

*I thank the dear Lord that He looks on us as my husband did that rose. We might see "tacky" but God sees terrific and it's because of His perspective that we can flourish. Because of His gift - our Lord - we can thrive. Grow in His grace!*

*Your sister in Christ,*

*Lucy*