

*Precious Pilgrim,*

*The flight from Montgomery to Atlanta was the roughest flight that I've ever been on. When we landed, the stewardess went to check on each passenger, asked if we were all right and gathered up the little white bags on her mission of mercy. I made the flight with a cross in one hand and "the bag" in the other.*

*I knew that I was supposed to be on that flight. It had a 5:45 AM departure time. My alarm clock didn't go off, but the Lord woke me up just in time to make it. I didn't know why, but as we were wildly gyrating - I knew God wanted me right there. All I could say is "O.K. Lord, I'm here. I don't want to be here. Please calm my stomach, my mind and this sky!" What made me laugh was four days previously, I swore that I would never get on this particular airline again and here I was, strapped in once more.*

*My trust level was total, for I had no other choice. That total surrender to the situation - to God - was humbling. I had no control. It was God and the pilot. That was a good exercise for me - a total letting go. I bet my daily "flights" would go a lot smoother if I had that same mind-set - that same letting go - that same "Pilot." (We did make it. I found out later the reason it was so rough was that there were tornadoes all around. Great!)*

*On the next leg of the flight it was smooth sailing. As I was having my daily quiet time and Bible reading, my*

*seatmate, who was a very distinguished sixty-five-year-old Swiss banker, mentioned that he was fluent in seven languages, one of which was Aramaic. "Excuse me? There were three hundred people on this airplane and the one I have the privilege of sitting next to writes and speaks in Aramaic? O.K., everyone who speaks Aramaic, raise your hand?" (my interior conversation) - exterior, I laughed and almost attacked him. I felt there were not going to be a lot of opportunities to hear Jesus' native language, so I had him to say and write, "Lo, I am with you always." Matthew 28:20. I chose that scripture because that's what I want to always know. When the Alzheimer's hits or right before I cross over the bar, the last earthly thought I want is, "Lo, I am with you always."*

*This verse has always been a great comfort to my mother. She had a difficult delivery of my brother, a sixty-hour labor and a breech birth. As they wheeled her into the delivery room, over the door was written, "Lo, I am with you always." Nineteen years later that son was killed in a motorcycle accident and a chapel was given in his memory. On the altar kneeler, in needlepoint, reads, "Lo, I am with you always."*

*The man said and wrote that verse. He then said, "Here, let me write 'The Lord is risen from the dead.'" "Yes, that would be nice," I replied. He asked my name and wrote "ee ell" = Lucy. We then were quiet. He slept - I floated. I also kept asking the Lord, what should I write to you, precious Pilgrim? My "white bag" experience hadn't brought any scripture to*

*mind. The only scene, which kept surfacing all week, was John 8:3-11 -- Jesus - drawing in the dirt while the crowd, with clinched rocks, taunted the adulteress. But I wasn't sure. My seatmate awoke and out of the blue asked, "Where is that scripture about Mary Magdalene being stoned located in the Bible?" I almost dropped The Book! O.K. Lord - we'll look. Let's consider today John 8:6. This scene came to my mind earlier this week while participating in my first "march." I didn't feel the march was something that I wanted to share with you, for I felt that it was too political - too controversial - might alienate you instead of encouraging you. As you can tell by my letters, I am a peacemaker, by gift and nature.*

*There are some observations I can share with you though - and here goes. Thirty-five thousand people walking together in purpose. There was a calm - a joy - a feeling that this was good and right. Smiles - singing - downright fun - children everywhere - walking with a best friend and a godson - I met fellow Christians and preachers and pastors - it was grand! The only other march I had been close to was in 1970 at the University of Alabama. Then I observed from a rooftop an angry mob protesting the Vietnam War. The feeling was entirely different. Back to this week's march: we arrived at the Capitol. Being short and in the back of the crowd, I couldn't see the speakers. While listening, I looked down and there were children playing in the dirt -- on hands and knees, building gorgeous dirt mounds and finger roads. Once again, I*

*thought about Jesus drawing with His finger on the ground in John 8:6. He was surrounded by an angry crowd.*

*This march versus the Vietnam march..*

*The children drawing in the dirt versus Jesus drawing in the dirt..*

*The crowds were different; the circumstances were different..*

*For me, the difference was Christ. Two thousand years ago an angry crowd wanted to stone a woman. Christ wrote in the dirt. They hurled insults - He looked up and offered love and forgiveness. The anger dissolved and the crowd dispersed.*

*1970 - an angry crowd gathered, marched and I felt fear.*

*1990 - a crowd gathered, marched and the children drew in the dirt.*

*I wonder - who taught them that this was what one does when a crowd gathers? I wonder - who brought this feeling of joy and calm and play? I wonder -*

*Jeremiah 31:3 says, "The Lord appeared to him from afar saying, I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore, I have drawn you with loving-kindness."*

*Jesus stooped down and wrote on the ground - the children continue the drawing - I wonder.*

*Your sister in Christ,*

*Lucy*