

*Come Holy Spirit
Use me to Your glory*

Precious Pilgrim,

I love babies. They are the ultimate surprise package. Last week I had the joy of experiencing two blessed baby happenings. The first was at the hospital, waiting for my new nephew to be born. It was so much fun! I haven't done that in a long time and I had forgotten that unique pleasure, the sheer delight!

Besides our party of five, there were twenty others. Previously strangers, we became bonded by birthings. We had four babies born during our four-hour wait. It was thrilling! The father would come in and tell the family the good news. We all would rejoice. Everyone told old birthing stories, which in my mind are a lot more interesting than old football ones! We giggled and laughed and congratulated one another.

When there was a lull in the activity, we'd all walk down to the nursery and look at the new arrivals. What a view! Twenty babies, eighteen boys and two girls, all lined up, all wrapped in blue and pink swaddling clothes. They were gorgeous! "Stunning!" For to look upon that many miracles at one time did leave you "stunned!" The party atmosphere of the waiting room would give way to a reverent quiet. I wished I had brought a little gold, frankincense, and myrrh to pass out - for holiness was there. God's presence seemed very close.

In Genesis, I love how each Creation Day ended with the declaration - "And it was good." That same creative goodness permeated the Nursery. Of course, the real world would soon come crashing in - sin would soon invade those precious babies' world, because of their humanity. But at that moment, that brief moment - their God origin seemed to be still clinging to them. "Stunning!"

The other blessed baby moment was at church. We had a baptism and I love baptisms! They are always festive, with the whole congregation getting into the act. In our church, it is the custom for the baby to be brought forth and presented by his parents and godparents. Vows are taken by all present to nurture this new baby Christian.

Then a wonderful recessional to the font, at the back of the church, takes place. It resembles more a festival parade rather than a stately march. Behind the baptismal party, fall in all the children of the church. There is a "Pied Piper" type atmosphere - some run, some walk, others are coaxed, until all gather at the Baptismal Font. The baby is baptized by the minister and then the "Parade" begins again. We then "welcome the newly baptized into the household of faith." It is a wonderful sacrament and celebration.

Naturally, the center of attraction is the baby. Being in the choir, I have the benefit of seeing everything up close. Usually the sopranos, like fairy godmothers, look down and quietly "ooh and aaah" over the preciousness of the baby, but

Sunday was different. For me, the mother outshone her child. Now I don't mean to downplay the baby, he was beautiful - but the mother shined - for she cried.

In all my years of baptismal experiences, this was a first and it touched me deeply. It reminded me of all the mothers in the Old Testament who would bring their first-born sons to the Temple to be declared, dedicated to their Lord God. Although this became a ceremonial gift, the symbolism spoke loudly. They acknowledged to all the sacred gift of a child given to them by their Creator God. It is an awesome responsibility!

This young mother, with tears flowing, seemed to comprehend that timeless responsibility and the Godliness of the gift. Our silence in the Nursery also acknowledged the holy mystery. Our creator God was at work once more, "And it was good!" The age-old "Creation Proclamation" seems to continue to reverberate across the ages, continues to be stated - by mothers - by fathers - by families - by congregations - "And It Was Good!" - "And It Was Good!" - "And It Was Good!" - Amen.

Your sister in Christ,

Lucy