

*Come Lord Jesus
Use me to Your glory*

Precious Pilgrim,

"I think I can - I think I can - I think I can" - quoting the famous Little Engine That Could. It's 7 AM and I'm sitting outside the Washington National Cathedral. I've known for about a month that this next letter would be written here. I didn't know when, but I knew where.

And sure enough, here I am. My husband had a meeting scheduled in Washington for over a year and guess where our hotel just happens to be? In walking distance to you-know-where - walking distance! Can you believe it? I've stayed in this city over 50 times, but never this near to the cathedral. Maybe I should start writing in iambic pentameter, for the "Ah Ha" surprises keep pouring in.

Yesterday I called the cathedral and asked what time they opened. I was informed there was a 7:30 Holy Communion held in the Bethlehem Chapel. "Yes! I've got to be there!" I thought I was to write this letter in the Resurrection Chapel, but no, we're starting at the beginning with the Nativity.

*"Come long expected Jesus, born to set Thy people free."
His birth - the God-infused event that revolutionized the world
- that brought us back into the reality of our original
possibilities - the sinless possibilities, meant for us to experience
- the relationship meant for us to experience - a personal
relationship with our Almighty God. Because of this birthing,*

this grace-filled gift of Almighty God, we can be in fellowship with our Lord once more.

Now I'm sitting in this lovely chapel. It is all white marble. It's cool and pristine and quiet. Even in this chapel, I see our Lord's future being depicted over the altar. There is a breathtaking depiction of Mary and Baby Jesus, surrounded by angels. And then over the altar in this picture possibly used only for structural support are iron crosses. Calvary is there and is here right now from the very beginning. And the artisan didn't stop with the usual crossbar support system, but added a fleur-de-lis at the top. The cross top splinters into a fleur-de-lis. The cross blooms into the Holy Trinity. Wow!

Are you thinking, "Lucy, you must be seeing things! You'll soon be turning nuts and bolts into icons." And you might be right, but so what! One of the most fun by-products of these letter writings to you is each day I've been waking up with anticipation. I've been praying, "Lord, thank you for this day. May I be aware of what you would have me see." I mean I've been present - daily present - expectantly present - waiting for the joy to appear, so that I could share it with you.

Now let's go visit the next chapel. It's just down the hall. As I approach the St. Joseph of Arimathea Chapel, I hear a loud roar from this tomb-like room. It is a foundational one for its four columns, each 27 feet in diameter, support the bell tower, with its 900 tons of masonry and 120 tons of bells. It is located right below the cathedral's crossing and is at the deepest

elevation. There are no windows, only a gold, red, black and white painting behind the altar, which depicts Christ's burial. It's a heavy subject matter, but one lightened by the gold paint shot throughout the picture, plus the light giggles and laughs of the Beauvoir School's first graders. Their sounds made the "tomb room" into a "joy box." These precious children were the cause of the earlier roar I'd heard. They were putting on an "Earth Day Pageant" for their parents, with singing and reciting and praying. "Earth Day" in the "Tomb Room," next to the ashes columbarium where Helen Keller and her teacher, Ann Sullivan, are interred along with about 200 others. Isn't that grand? How very appropriate! There's no gloom in this room, only 100 six-year-olds, celebrating the earth, God's earth, in a room which commemorates the gift of some earth given 2000 years ago for a tomb.

I am going now across the hall and entering the Resurrection Chapel. I settle down and I'm writing to you on my knees, not out of piety, but out of sheer awe. I am surrounded by the most unbelievable gold mosaics, each depicting one of the various appearances of our resurrected Lord before His Ascension. When you look at them, they almost hurt your eyes for the colors are so vivid.

Can you imagine the reality of these events? Can you imagine the first sighting made of our Resurrected Christ and then trying to transfer and translate that experience to others? "My Lord Has Risen!" Words can't capture the moments -

neither can mosaics, but they come mighty close, a noble effort has been made.

This was the same response - "My Lord Has Risen!" - that I felt two days ago at the "Easter" funeral of Dexter. He was a precious young man. His funeral was the most glorious celebration of a life that I have experienced. The hymns were Easter hymns. The flowers were Easter flowers, with more color. The congregation was united in one feeling - the acknowledgement that this was a godly young man. It was so strong that you could feel the walls of the church and the walls of time, giving way to a God Expanse. You knew, beyond a doubt, that our Lord God is Risen, just as these mosaics depict, and you knew and know that Dexter is now a part of that reality - totally a part of that reality.

The older I get, the smaller I seem to be. The walls of this time seem to be coming down and the view of the big picture, God's big picture on which we are only a tiny spot in time, seems to be coming more in focus. Dexter has made the time change from this tiny present reality to the Godly infinite reality. Again, you can't capture the truth in words or mosaics or Easter hymns or Easter flowers - you just know. By God's grace, you just know.

The scripture that Dexter claimed as his own was Philippians 4:13, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." "I can" - "I can" - "I can" - not I think I can, I think I can, I think I can, but "I can" - "I can" "I can do all

things through Christ Who strengthens me!" May this also be our battle cry - until we join the expanse - the Total Expanse of our Risen Lord. He reigns! Precious Pilgrim, He reigns!

Now love and till we meet again.

I am your sister in Christ,

Lucy

P.S. I hope you will no go write a letter to a precious pilgrim. It is fun and they're not graded for grammar, just treasured with love. Also, if you get a chance and are ever in the Washington area, please drop by the National Cathedral and visit the Bethlehem Chapel, the Joseph of Arimathea Chapel, and the Resurrection Chapel. I promise it will be a rare treat.