

*Come Holy Spirit
Use me to Your glory*

Precious Pilgrim,

“Emergency! Charles is locked in the bathroom. He can’t get out!” Spontaneous laughter bubbles up from the group on the bus. It feels so good, for it relieves some of my pent-up pain. I’ve felt like I had a stake slowly hammered into my heart, for yesterday I partook of the Oberammergau Passion Play...

But first, as you know, I like to put words together. My husband usually says, “There’s no such thing!” And he’s right, but they do paint pictures, don’t you think? Two words that have been growing together in my mind over the last few months are “womb room.” That’s right - “womb room.” We all started together. Our God created existence in such a space. As mothers, we have the privilege of being allowed the baby blues after our “womb room” has been vacated. And then we try to recreate and reflect this space in our homes, where our families are nurtured.

And alas, as mothers, we have the privilege of being allowed to have the empty nest syndrome and that’s where I am right now. After twenty years, my expanded “womb room” is empty, for my four children have moved out and off. Their rooms stay clean. There are no smelly shoes and socks in the living room. There are no circle designs being made on the furniture by half-filled cans, bottles, and glasses. I have uninterrupted nights of sleep. The windows aren’t rattling

from musical blasts. Doors aren't slammed. Bathroom time isn't invaded. I mean, my world is different!

Daisy the dog captures my mood perfectly. She has become a slug and it's not because of her continual weight problem, but from her lack of stimuli by the group. No balls thrown, no sock tug-of-war, no chase inside the house to see how many rugs can become magical carpets and move. Her world has drastically changed, too. I'm allowing her this slug time and, thank goodness, my husband is allowing me mine. I know he misses them too for football with Lucy isn't the same as football with the group. And I do know that there is light at the end of the tunnel, just like the ones I've been experiencing all day long.

The tunnels are numerous here on this trip. And isn't life like that? There are times when you don't know exactly where you're going or what's next. Your peripheral vision has been limited by the dark tunnel experience. You know you must go forward and even at a snail's pace. And you know you can't go backwards. You don't know what's next - what exactly will be the next program or plan or event in your life. But you do know that forward you must go in order to leave space for the next. But there's a small voice inside saying, "No, I don't want to go forward. I know my old world. I know this 'womb room.' It's comfortable and secure and predictable, in kind of an unpredictable way." No, you must go and move on. You must

let go of the predictable so that we can expand forward toward God's profound.

Now back to the Passion Play - yes - today I went single file through a five-and-a-half-hour tunnel - the Passion Play in Oberammergau. I believe that this experience will be non-transferable, but I'm going to try. What comes to mind again, is a stake slowly being hammered into my heart. For five and a half hours over 1,000 Oberammergau residents reenacted the redemptive life of our Savior. This small community of 5,500 has been faithfully recreating this play every ten years since 1633. In that year, a vow was made to God that if the community was spared from the ravages of the Black Plague, the residents, in thanksgiving, would perform the Passion Play.

And so it continues. Each enactment consists of 14 acts and each act utilizes three different modes of action for the storyline. It is sung by a 50-member chorus or told through "frozen stills," where the villagers recreate a Biblical scene in total frozenness, or the third mode, a typical stage drama. It's all in German. So you follow along in a 200-page translation. Grand opera, which I love, becomes like a Saturday morning cartoon show when compared to the Passion Play.

Often I wanted to scream. I did not think I could take much more. For me, the stills were the most powerful. To see examples of some of man's evil frozen still was personally condemning, almost crucifying.

To personally have to say each English word in your mind in order to understand the play - again made it more personally piercing. To have to hear the hammer hammering, to have to see the blood flowing from each wound, the spear piercing the side, an actual limp body being lowered from the cross and then being cradled in the mother's arms; -- "God" - "I can't take any more!" - "Forgive me!" - was the screaming in my heart - "Forgive me!" - "I crucify you daily."

Thank the dear Lord, in the last scene all join forces and the resurrected Christ stands in glory - and slowly, for the first time, the villagers walk into the still - all of them. They join their Messiah. The still becomes an alive reality, our alive reality. The audience started clapping and then some stood, and then more, and then I stood, and I wished that I could walk into that "Redemptive Still," too. But we are, aren't we really? Daily we walk in it, towards it.

I mean, these tunnels, these passages we are in are really marches forward to the ultimate womb room - the Redemptive Reality of our Christ. Don't you think?

"Emergency! Charles is locked in the bathroom! He can't get out!" Spontaneous laughter bubbles up.

"Emergency! Lucy is stuck in a tunnel! She can't get out!" Spontaneous laughter bubbles up. "Oh yes I can! My womb room is a lot bigger than I realized and it's not a still-life - a frozen scene - but rather a 'Resurrection adventure.'"

“Lord, I am grieved by your crucifixion. Yesterday my heart was pierced deeper into the reality of my own personal responsibility. This is not a frozen reality, but a redemptive reality. I’m ready to go forward now with your cross as my guide.”

“But before we take off, would you mind if I throw Daisy a ball? You see, she’s been a little sluggish lately, for she’s been missing...”

“Oh, I forgot - You, Lord, also have missed, and do miss, and will continue to miss... You understand.”

“My Lord, let’s get going and we can speed up a little, if you’d like. Will you hold my hand? I don’t know the way, but then - You do! - Alleluia!”

Now, Precious Pilgrim, grab His hand today and He’ll help you through those tunnels.

*I am your Precious Pilgrim,
Your sister in Christ,
Lucy*

P.S. My bible reading today was in Exodus 15:13 and it seems to continue to pierce my heart. It says, “In your unfailing love you will lead the people you have redeemed. In your strength you will guide them to your holy dwelling.” It talks of God’s unfailing love, His unconditional love. It is our Lord God’s love that pierces the darkness of our tunnel experiences, don’t you think? We just have to allow His love to come in and rule

*and take over our hearts and our lives. Come, Lord Jesus,
come. Amen.*