

*Come Holy Spirit  
Use me to Your glory*

*Precious Pilgrim,*

*Right now I'm on a sofa sabbatical. I'm sitting Indian-style on my favorite couch at Lake Martin, Alabama. It's my favorite because it's made just right for me, kind of like Goldilocks. It's squishy and soft. The back pillows can prop me up for writing or worship and prop me down for reading and sleeping. It's better than any recliner chair, both in looks and versatility, but best of all is the view. Its end is pushed right up against a plate-glass window that overlooks the lake, so I feel like I'm hanging over the water.*

*It's the second gray foggy day in a row and that's OK because it's really matching my mood. In all of my life, I've never felt as unsure about the coming future and what it has in store. I'm not afraid or anxious, just a little wary. You see, we have a dear friend who has a brain tumor and his fourteen-year-old daughter, my godchild, is living with us right now -- and then there's my grandmother who's ill and then there's one of my children who is having a hard time in school -- and then there's a friend with no job -- and then there's the uncertain world we live in...I could go on.*

*Do you have such a list as the above? I've decided I could either worry myself to death, dreaming up various scenarios of what might or could happen for the worst. I could worry myself sick or take a sabbatical, as my friend Jill Carr suggested.*

*The first thing I did was to look up the word in the dictionary just to be sure that I did this thing right. It said that sabbatical was a time of rest and worship. Gosh, doesn't that sound grand? Rest and worship! Then I took a recent present, a wonderful blank book from my other friend Prím, and proceeded to write at the top of each page the date and the word "Sabbatical." Right under the heading, I wrote "Morning Prayer;" in the middle of the page, I wrote "Bible-Reading Meditation;" and at the end of each page I wrote "Evening Prayer." There's plenty of space left between these dividers for my "To Do" list. Thus far, the pages look much like my usual days (half done), but interspersed are these grand rest and worship times, where I've written down passages of scripture or prayers that have helped me float through the day and have gotten me geared up and centered down and refilled. Do you know what I mean?*

*You see, recently I have talked to so many exhausted people. Our material secular world recommends R&R (rest and relaxation), and I do think it does help mental and physical exhaustion. But as Christians, I think we need to go farther and take sabbaticals, even if it's just for five minutes a day, for rest and worship! It not only restores the mental and physical sides of our nature, but more importantly, our spiritual side.*

*Our church's assistant minister once asked during a sermon if we knew which of the Ten Commandments every*

*single one of us weekly break? I pridefully thought, "None, at least, not weekly." He then said the fourth commandment, "Remember the Sabbath and keep it Holy." And he was right, for originally the Sabbath was on Saturdays, but as Christians, we worship and rest on Sundays, not Saturdays. It was kind of a trick question, but it has still stuck with me, for do we really keep a Sabbath day or any set-apart sabbatical time? It is a gift from God, you know, starting right at the beginning with His Creation and continuing not only in the Old Testament, but in the New Testament -- during Jesus' life and continuing with the apostles and continuing.*

*I'm reading right now the wonderful book, Celebration of Discipline, by Richard J. Foster. On page 27 he talks about "Otium Sanctum" -- holy leisure. He says the church fathers often spoke of "Otium Sanctum," holy leisure. It refers to a sense of balance in life, an ability to be at peace through the activities of the day, an ability to rest and take time to enjoy beauty, an ability to pace ourselves.*

*Often our Lord Jesus would go away to a lonely place and pray. I love reading about these retreats. They didn't occur on off days, when things were slowing down a little in our Lord's life, but instead, during His busiest, most demanding times -- even life and death times -- His own -- He went alone to pray.*

*If our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of our Almighty God, needed these sabbatical rest and worship times, how can we possibly think that we don't? Aren't we each trying to the best*

*of our ability and as the Holy Spirit guides us, to live more and more like our Lord? That doesn't mean busier and busier! I've tried that.*

*Again, quoting from Celebration, "In contemporary society our Adversary (the devil) majors in three things: noise, hurry and crowds. If he can keep us engaged in 'muchness' and 'manyness', he will rest satisfied." Psychiatrist Carl Jung once remarked, "Hurry is not of the Devil, it is the Devil."*

*As I said, I am a little apprehensive about the future, but to combat this apprehension, I am not going to get busier; I am going to get benched. That's right, benched. I'm going to give myself more sofa sabbaticals. The original gift of the Sabbath was given to us by our Lord God. It will be the ultimate gift that keeps on giving, for it will "restore my soul" and yours, too.*

*I am today your couch potato  
sister in Christ,  
Lucy*