

*Come Holy Spirit  
Use me to Your glory*

*Precious Pilgrim,*

*All present and accounted for - the patient, the father, the girlfriend and the godmother. We were all crowded into a tiny little cubicle. In fact, we took all the available seating space so that when the doctor arrived, he had to stand during the whole inquisition. And it truly was The Inquisition, for we drilled the physician with every conceivable question concerning chemotherapy and its known side effects.*

*We were all united in purpose, which was to go through this entire ordeal with Carl as much as was humanly possible. I would like to emphasize the "humanly possible" aspect of this walking side-by-side with a friend who's going through a life trauma. This united intent has never been more beautifully expressed than by Ruth to Naomi, "Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee; for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the Lord do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me." Ruth 1:16-17.*

*As I said, we wanted to be present with Carl as much as was humanly possible - but the reality was that "present" for us meant whenever it was convenient or whenever our own daily agendas allowed.*

*I don't mean to be cynical, for we were and are totally sincere in our commitment to this brother in Christ - again, it's just that we're human and thus limited in our capacity to be present with one another.*

*But the good news - the unbelievable good news - is that we have a God who is omnipresent -- present everywhere at once. And thank the Dear Lord, all week long I've been reminded and comforted by this reality.*

*First, at the Women's Prayer Retreat last Saturday, we ended our day with organized worship. It was "organized" in that in preparation, we were divided into groups and each assigned an aspect of God's character to represent. We were to find three scriptures to read and a hymn to sing during the service, which declared that characteristic. My group was assigned "Omnipresence." The scriptures we selected were:*

*Psalm 139: 7-12*

*7 Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? Or whither shall I flee from thy presence?*

*8 If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, behold thou art there.*

*9 If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea;*

*10 Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.*

*11 If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me, even the night shall be light about me;*

12 *Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day; the darkness and the light are both alike to thee.*

*and*

*Romans 8:38-39*

38 *For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,*

39 *Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

*And best of all, Jesus' last words in the Gospel of Matthew 28:20:*

*"Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."*

*Just reading them always allows me to breathe a sigh of relief! "Yes, Lord. It's OK, Lord. I can breathe again, Lord!" Especially this week, I often unexpectedly found myself shallow breathing. I found myself becoming stifled by chemo and car pools and commitments. I would be panting because I was trying to be present more than was humanly possible. Then I'd recall the Saturday Worship Service of praise and acknowledging our God's omnipotence, His all powerful, our God's omniscience, our God's all knowing, and our God's omnipresence, all present, allowing me to breathe deeply again.*

*And thank the Dear Lord, I received a mid-week refresher course at our 5:30 Informal Worship Service. Our preacher prayed:*

*"Father, come into our limited minds, fill us with Your omnipresence.*

*Come into our weak hearts and fill us with Your omnipotence.*

*Come into our lack of faith and fill us with Your omniscience as to all the wonderful things You can do.*

*To those and through those we call upon the name of Your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.*

*In Your Holy Spirit be with us and speak to us now.*

*Amen."*

*Because of these constant reminders I was made more keenly aware of my Lord God's omnipresence all week long. I know that it was because of this awareness that instead of being rushed out of breath, I experienced the most profound peace that I've ever experienced in my whole life. Of course, I've had moments before, but never days.*

*This week should have been unbearable and would have been unbearable if I'd tried to do it alone - a new class starting, plus two flower arranging classes to teach, plus walking with a friend through treatment, plus the usual - but His calm peace prevailed. That's one of the grand by-products of acknowledging His Presence - peace - profound peace.*

*And I can leave you with a birthday party report. Friday was my dear friend Madeleine's birthday. It also was the anniversary date of my father's death. I see our friendship, Mad's and mine, as an unexpected gift from the Lord. We became friends while working on our church's bazaar. When I found out her birthday date, I experienced an inward smile. This "hole" day - a day which had been a "loss" day, because of missing my daddy, had become a "whole" day again by being my friend's birthday.*

*Well, anyway, to celebrate this awesome occasion, we had a "spend-the-night-party" at the lake - me, Mad, and Carol (another God-gift). We had cheese whiz and daiquiris and frozen entrees for our celebration. I know it doesn't sound too appetizing or dietetic, but it was easy on preparation and clean-up time and that was of the utmost importance! We wanted to relish this rare time together and relinquish all KP duty to Daisy the dog, who can lick any aluminum container spotless!*

*The next day the big surprise arrived - Mary Barwick with slides. She read to us her latest unpublished book. We learned what the "Alabama Angels" were currently up to. I won't spoil the surprise for you. I will, however, tell you that those angels will mightily remind you of the Lord God's omnipresence and the by-product of His peace will be so strong that you'll have to take the day off, as we did.*

*For after the story with slides, all we could do was just walk together on the beach, sit in the sun together, and eat lunch together. We were like slugs - no, snails - no, saints. We were like saints, I think, for this wonderful togetherness we have with our Lord God, or omnipresent Lord God.*

*Peace - profound peace - Holy peace - rolled in on us that birthday and it still lingers on.*

*Oh, I almost forgot -- the hymn we chose for the Saturday service was - "Surely the Presence of the Lord is in this place. I can feel His mighty power and His grace..."*

*Peace - Friends! Peace. We're saints because of our togetherness with Him!*

*I am your sister in Christ,  
Lucy*