

*Come Holy Spirit
Use me to Your glory*

Precious Pilgrim,

"Beautiful" just woke me up. It's four o'clock in the morning and I'm so very tired, for we had a late night of it. It first started with fixing supper, then serving supper, then cleaning up after supper (good girl Lucy, you should do that more often!) - then the night continued with television viewing, homework supervising, book reading, and then finally bed, at least for the first time.

Then the alarm went off, the visual alarm that I have been trained to perceive over the years - it's the green telephone light, which indicates a conversation is in progress. I don't know why it is, but I can be sound asleep with a pillow over my head and then "bing" - the silent alarm goes off in my brain. A chain reaction instantly occurs. I look to the right, see the light, pop out of bed to go chop off a head! I know it doesn't sound very compassionate and it isn't - it's just become an inbred reaction from raising four teenagers.

When they were little, I had that same reaction of popping out of bed when I'd hear just one faint "Mom." It always amazed me that the decibel frequency of that one word could only be heard by a mother. Have you also noticed that at your house? You have this big, beautiful hunk of a husband sleeping next to you who becomes deaf in the dark and dumb when he dreams, but regresses to a boy who remembers that

moms do the midnight watch. I'll bet those big old husbands wait up in bed with their eyes shut to be sure that moms still come when called. And I did, frequently and with compassion. But somewhere down the time-line, the children grew up and the night calls changed into the night callers, and my compassion went when the green light of the phone came on. Consoling Mom changed into the Phone Crone. My soothing night voice changed into one of a shrilling shrew. "It's past your bedtime. Get off that phone," would be my battle cry.

And that's what I was aiming to say to Alysoun, my goddaughter, who's 14 and living with us right now while her father is going through chemotherapy. As I took the steps two at a time last night at 10:30, I had only one mission to accomplish, which was to extinguish the green light - whatever the cost. I burst into that room, ready to attack the excuses. I was prepared for any and all of them. I knew my years of active duty would serve me well. My speech was prepared: "Young lady, don't you know what time it is?"

But instead of being met with excuses, I was met with a crying child - one crying her heart out and the Mom compassion of old had to kick in to the godmother. I had to relinquish my Enforcer of the Night role and opt for someone else to take control. I left her on the phone, alone, with a friend. I sat in the hall and prayed and allowed her to continue the conversation for 30 more minutes. I guess I'm an old softy, but I was so glad that that precious child was getting

all this junk out. She'd complained earlier of having a headache and now I knew what was the cause -- holding all these "yuckys" in. And I was glad she was having an explosion instead of an implosion, and allowing all those feelings out.

My prayer in the hall was for the friend on the phone to be a compassionate counselor and consoler - one who would and could listen and allow her to lean on her for the moment, while she unloaded her pain and worries and insecurities. And I think the friend was, for I could mainly hear (not eavesdropping, but sound surveillance) - I could hear her sobbing and talking with little time for the friend to respond and that was perfect.

I knew, for I'd received the same treatment earlier that day. I had silently sobbed in sentences, not tears, to a friend. She listened and counseled and served coffee. Thank you, Lord, for compassionate Christian friends - there's nothing like them!

Sometimes I try to close my eyes and envision my Lord Jesus' face, but I can't. I sometimes can visualize His pierced feet and sometimes I can even imagine kissing them and anointing them with oil. Sometimes I can envision His arms giving me a hug. But where I've really felt like I've seen Him, or such a strong resemblance that I know I will be able to recognize Him when we meet Face to face, is in the eyes of a compassionate friend. Those accepting eyes have enveloped my soul and His calm peace has rolled in like a gentle mist,

bathing and refreshing my spirit - like a whiff of "Beautiful" - Beautiful cologne.

It was this Estée Lauder smell which woke me up this morning and it's a pleasant way to arise. I must have turned over and smelled my hand, which had earlier hugged Alysoun. She's wearing "Beautiful," which is a perfect scent for her. And, voila! Her perfume brought me out of unconsciousness into the consciousness that "everything is going to be all right" - for we have a Friend, a Compassionate Friend.

I looked up the word "compassionate" in Webster's and it said, "sympathetic consciousness of others' distress together with a desire to alleviate it."

And then I looked up the word "compassion" in the Bible as it referred to our Lord. And here are just a few of the passages:

Matthew 9:36: "He was moved with compassion..."

Matthew 15:32: "I have compassion on the multitude..."

Matthew 20:34: "So Jesus had compassion on them..."

Mark 1:41: "And Jesus, moved with compassion..."

Mark 5:19: (The Lord) "...hath had compassion on thee."

Luke 7:13: "When the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her..."

Luke 10:33: "He had compassion on him..."

There is no question in my mind that one of our Lord Jesus' attributes was and is and always will be - compassion. It

was through His working out of His compassionate nature that we have His infinite compassion expressed through His Passion.

I read or heard that the world received no bigger embrace than when Jesus' arms were stretched out on the cross and I believe in that one blessed act - the Compassionate Friend, our Lord Jesus, embraces us all.

This morning I was awakened by a whiff of "Beautiful" and yesterday I inwardly sobbed in sentences to a friend who served coffee and listened compassionately. Then we went to see brand new baby lambs at my father-in-law's, which reminded me of a verse, Matthew 9:36: "But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd." It is because of His compassionate nature that He became the Shepherd and I don't have to go around frantic like those mother ewes I saw yesterday. I don't have to go around frantic or frightened or in a frenzy ever again and neither do you, because we do have a Shepherd who is a constant, compassionate Companion.

Yesterday I was reminded of this glorious reality by getting just a little whiff of coffee and cologne. They were such a grand aromatic blend which helped me through the day and night. They were a grand pick-me-up - no caffeine, no calories, no cholesterol, just a reminder of our Companion, our Lord - you know, the constant, compassionate One. Rejoice, people! We are not alone! Alleluia and Amen!

I pray for you daily and give thanks for you. The Lord has a mighty army when His compassionate Christian friends gather in His name - may His troops continue to gather and multiply!

I am your sister in Christ,

Lucy