

*Come Holy Spirit
Use me to Your glory*

Precious Pilgrim,

Peace. I'm at Lake Martin. It's 6:00 in the morning and I'm sitting outside on the balcony. It's located at the top of the house, treetop level and adjacent to the "Fill My Cup Chaplet." The chaplet is a diminutive chapel. Don't you just love that name - "Fill My Cup?"

It was christened thus two weeks ago. While driving home from Lake Burton, Georgia, after attending a Women's Retreat, my friend Baba and I happened upon this bizarre-looking store. It was aptly named "Up the Creek." We instantly knew that it was our kind of place, because on the porch was a purple rocking chair. You see, designer clothes have never made us covet, but purple paint, however, is an entirely different story. We wanted to meet the person who woke up one morning and said, "Yes, I know what I can do with Great Aunt Sally's ugly chair. Paint it purple."

The whole store was filled with such jewels. Soda cans had been turned into airplanes and flatware had become eyeglasses. To top it off, the owner said that all of her artists were local Christians. She said that she demanded that they be drug-free and she only kept 10% commission. "Oh, how noble," we thought and we purchased with pleasure, knowing that we were helping all those Georgian saints survive.

Finally we made it back to the car loaded down with our goods. One of our many purchases was this bird feeder made in the shape of a church. It was covered in buttons and broken glass and had a china tea set glued to its roof. Voila - the "Fill My Cup Bird House."

It was love at first sight. I knew this item not only belonged in the chaplet but the chaplet needs to be its namesake. You see, "Fill my cup, Lord," was often the prayer prayed and answered in this room at the top.

Now, back to the Georgia journey. After we'd gotten about a mile down the road, we started giggling. We realized that we had probably been sold a bill of goods at the "Up the Creek" store. We wondered if the saleslady had seen the crosses around our necks and decided to use the old poor, pitiful Christian artist routine.

We then started hysterically laughing and proceeded to produce appropriate sales-pitch scripts for Buddhists, Moslems, and Jews. We figured that she possibly had rolled-up prayer rugs and incense burners and stars of David in a closet and would choose the proper prop for each customer. It was fun to pretend and fun to giggle, of course all in jest. It lightened the oppression that had unknowingly seeped into our souls. For the past three days, nine of us had shared our life stories and some of them had been weighty and burdensome, like the heavy cloud cover that has silently rolled in while I've been writing you.

It's been a gray sky month and it matches perfectly the roller-coaster emotions I've been experiencing - up, down, all around. And do you know what has been getting me through this loop-the-loop of emotions? Laughter and sidesplitting giggles.

I had never realized before how closely kin tears and laughter are. I think they're two sides of the same coin. It wasn't that I was hysterical all month long, but when the Chicken Little Sky Falling syndrome would kick in, it was laughter that would lighten the load. That uncontrollable giggle-type laughter would change my mental state of zero visibility into one where the sky was the limit.

One of the gloom and doom scenes of the month was having to say good-bye to a best friend who's moving. All month long we've been slowly saying good-bye. It's been kind of a spiraling down, a slow heart-tear and not a clean rip at all. Last Wednesday was especially painful. It's our church's informal worship and praise service. There's always joy in the worship, humility in the prayers and truthfulness in the testimonies. There are no masks worn on Wednesday nights. With this in mind, the reality was we were down. Judy, Carol and I were in a grieving mode at supper - that was, until uncontrollable laughter broke out. It resulted from the retelling of a hilarious incident. The laughter was wonderful - refreshing - a real gift of grace. The heaviness lifted.

And then on my birthday, I attended a funeral of a dear friend's mother. Four friends drove to Anniston in a Noah-type deluge. It took two hours up and two hours back and it rained the entire time. We got soaked to the bone walking to the church. We got soaked to the bone walking to the cemetery. We got soaked to the bone walking to lunch. Thank goodness I had on drip-dry.

Once again, it was laughter that lifted our spirits. Judy and I got the giggles during the service. We had both unconsciously been accompanying the organist by humming the hymns. In fact, at one time we got so carried away that we started humming in harmony. I leaned over and whispered, "They will think Montgomery brought a kazoo choir." Well, the giggles started and the silent shaking of shoulders followed. I'm sure most people thought we were uncontrollably crying and had no idea that we were dealing with a giggle gusher.

There was no disrespect intended or, I believe, incurred. Our response actually went well with our surroundings. The name of the church was Grace Church. The window over the altar was of Jesus pointing to a field of lilies. It was so realistic that you could shut your eyes and almost hear Him say, "Consider the lilies of the field..." And when He spoke those words initially, I bet grace flowed and giggles gurgled just as Judy and I experienced. He probably was surrounded by a horde of people who felt that his or her individual world was uniquely oppressive. And then the Lord said, "Consider the

lilies of the field....” What an energizing breath of fresh air must have been taken place. The cloud covers in their minds started lifting and then I bet contagious, joyful laughter started reverberating throughout the crowd, just as Judy and I experienced.

Grace: How does one respond to this wonderful gift? With humility and thanksgiving and praise - and occasionally an appropriate laugh.

Now may I send you peace from the top of the “Fill My Cup Chaplet” at Lake Martin, Alabama. And if by chance you start feeling a giggle attack coming on - on a cloudy day, be sure and relax and enjoy it for it can be a strong indication of our Lord’s presence and His grace.

*I am your grace-filled, giggling on gray days,
Lucy*

P.S. I’d like to leave you with Luke 12:27-34. |

Consider how the lilies grow. They do not labor or spin; yet I tell you not even Solomon in all of his splendor was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, how much more will He clothe you? O you of little faith. And do not set your hearts on what you will eat or drink. Do not worry about it for the pagan world runs after all such things and your Father knows that you need them. But seek His kingdom and these things will be given to you as well. Do not be afraid,

little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom. Sell your possessions and give to the poor, provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will not be exhausted, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there your heart will also be. Amen.