

*Come Holy Spirit
Use me to Your glory*

Precious Pilgrim,

I can't believe it! It's freezing cold and the girls are at it again. They're jumping on their trampoline. That is, the next door neighbor young ladies - ages eight and six. One of the many great delights in this new world of being Mrs. Paul Pressly McCain is that for the very first time I actually have a desk specifically designated for writing to you, Pilgrim. It is perfect! It's located on the second floor in our newly converted attic to playroom space.

Together Paul and I have a combined grand total of 13 grandchildren. With such an abundance, it made perfect sense to us to make this upstairs conversion, even though it was done during our first year of marriage. Paul often commented, because of the builders, we were seldom home alone during this honeymoon season. The good news is now they are gone and the honeymoon continues and now we have this brand new grand playroom.

It's decorated in bright primary colors. And when you enter this happy space, there is no doubt whatsoever what the assigned activity should be - PLAY. And it looks like the biggest playground area is my desk.

It has snowmobiles, windmills, pens, and paper and best of all, an I LOVE YOU sign made by my granddaughter Frances.

The desk is strategically placed in an alcove facing a large window. And when not writing, I love to gaze out and see Paul's

vegetable garden below and the clouds and birds above - truly a mesmerizing visual place. On special days these visions are accompanied by the sweet sounds of the sisters as they play on their trampoline.

From my treetop vantage point, I cannot see them, for there is a huge magnolia tree that blocks my view. Ah, but I can hear them - not their words, which aren't so clear, but their giggles and laughter. They seem to float joy up to the heavens. I smile and give thanks to the Lord for such sweet sounds.

You know, sometimes when you can't see, by God's grace, your imagination can take off and your mind can expand to an even wider vision. Such has taken place this day.

I remembered my own trampoline jumping days over 45 years ago. In those ancient of days a trampoline was rather a rarity and when our neighbors, the Welch's, acquired one, they instantly became the most popular.

The only previous training I'd had was jumping on the beds at my cousin's house. Oh, but the difference - the unexpected height you could reach with each bounce was thrilling.

Then my mind skipped to John the Baptist - beats me why, except that a recently read verse has stuck to me and it keeps floating back into my memory. It says in Matthew 11:2-3, "When John heard in prison about the deeds of Christ, he sent word by his disciples and said to him, "Are you he who is to come or shall we look for another?"

This is the very same man who only eight short chapters before had made the proclamation about Jesus, "I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry; he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire." That's Matthew 3:11.

This is the very same John the Baptist who baptized our Lord and Savior after acknowledging Him. This is the very same John the Baptist, who as a pre-born baby, leaped in his mother's womb when she, Elizabeth, greeted her kinsman Mary, who was pregnant with our Lord. (That's found in Luke 1:41.) I mean, John the Baptist acknowledged, recognized, I would even go so far as to say, John worshipped with his envitro leap our living Lord Jesus as King of Kings and Lord of Lords, even before our Lord was born!

And now, here we find John the Baptist almost at the end of his life, for we know his fate. Soon he will be beheaded by King Herod.

He is in prison.

His world is dark.

His sight - physically, mentally, emotionally, spiritually - seems to be growing dim.

I sense a claustrophobic narrowing. This man - who has done exactly what he was sent to do by our Father God -

This man - who has prepared the way for Jesus.

This man - who has proclaimed Jesus as Lord now asks the question from this deep, dark, dank dungeon of a place -

"Are you He who is to come or shall we look for another?"

Ah Pilgrim, this question - doesn't it seem to carry a depth of despair? Don't you think? I mean, it's being asked by a man who has devoted his entire life to this mission of preparing the Way for the Lord. Why, John seems to be questioning the very meaning of his whole existence. We're familiar with the apostle - "doubting Thomas" - but what about this "Doubting Baptizer?"

Oh, I do thank the dear Lord for allowing this question to be recorded in His Holy Word by Matthew. Such a question might be asked by many, I'd dare say, most, I'd dare say "all" during their life's journey - and it's OK. That is part of the good news. It is OK.

And I am just as thankful, perhaps even more so, of being told our Lord Jesus' response - loving response.

It says in Matthew 11:4-5 - And Jesus answered and said to them, "Go and report to John what you hear and see: the blind receive sight and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached to them."

Thank you Lord Jesus for these "action words," telling of Your deeds.

I believe they ministered to the Baptist.

I believe he was strengthened for the rest of his earthly journey. He once again knew who You were and who he was in You.

Pilgrim, I believe we, as believers, are also called to proclaim Jesus' "action words," His deeds, to each other.

I believe they do minister.

I believe they do strengthen.

I believe they do remind us who Jesus is and who we are in Him.

That has been my own personal experience. I miss terribly the Wednesday night service at my old church. There was wonderful praise music sung - wonderful Holy Communion offered - and wonderful "action words" spoken. "Action words" in that a testimony was given of how our living Lord Jesus was working in a Pilgrim's life. Powerful! They can keep on giving!

They minister.

They strengthen.

They remind me who Jesus is and who I am in Him - especially on those John the Baptist-like deep, dark, dank dungeon days. We all have them in one form or another. On such, we need a little help from our Friend - our Lord and Savior Jesus the Christ and His Helper. The Holy Spirit can empower a person to witness and help turn the lights back on for another.

I believe those action words of Jesus' did that for the Baptist. I know such have done it for me and can for you, Pilgrim.

Back to those precious sisters next door. They're still bouncing on the trampoline! It reminds me of how we - as the church - the body of Christ - knit together in love - by the Holy Spirit - can hold each other up. In Him - we are strong and in Him, we are resilient. We can join their joyful play for we are each loved by LOVE - do you sense the lightness, Pilgrim - the bounce in that reality? If not, that's OK, but give yourself a gift, find another who's proclaiming God's "action words." They'll help give you a bounce back.

They'll minister.

They'll strengthen.

They'll remind you who Jesus is and who you are in Him.

I am your bouncy, bouncy sister in Christ,

Lucy

God bless.