

*Come Holy Spirit
Use me to Your glory*

Precious Pilgrim,

"What are you going to do with all of these cakes?" the checkout lady at the grocery store asked, as I purchased 30 angel food cake mixes.

I told her they were for a Bible group. She then asked, "For what aged child?" I responded, "It's for adults." She then laughed and I did too - wholeheartedly. I simultaneously thought to myself, "Yes!" We are succeeding at one of our goals for "Summer Lolligagging." (That's the name of our Bible study group.)

Our primary goal is to grow ever closer to our Lord, and our secondary goal is to have some child-like fun. Of course we want to be more enlightened in God's Light, but at the same time, we want to learn in a little lighter environment than the rest of the year affords. For you see, in the Fall, Winter and Spring months, we offer a weekly in-depth Bible study at our church which requires hours of homework. Summer, we wanted something a little less demanding.

There are usually between 20-30 ladies of varying ages and stages, shapes and sizes from different churches and denominations. Such a mixture has been such a blessing. Each loves the Lord.

The book we are reading is Come Thirsty by Max Lucado. I must confess, that I suggested it to the powers that be,

primarily because the 17 chapters are short and each includes questions and scriptures. Previously, I'd read the book rather hurriedly and enjoyed it. Now, I'm truly reading the book at this wonderfully slower pace - 155 pages in 17 weeks is perfect! I'm allowing myself the luxury of reading each chapter 2 or 3 times - to think and ponder and pray and write. It's a truly "lollygagging" along pace which is so gloriously rich and rewarding (that's real R&R, rest and relaxation, don't you think, Pilgrim?) - to savor ideas - to let them percolate and some penetrate. Some thoughts are actually sinking in. For me, it's just been a sheer delight of study.

My only responsibility is to have the house ready and provide an "arts & crafts" take home project. I've been trying to have each relevant to the week's chapter, just to help to solidify the theme. For example, the angel food cake was for the chapter about angels. The boxes have been changed and renamed "Angel Food for Thought" and on the back was written some of the Biblical facts about angels. Their assignment was to make the cake and as it was baking, to ponder some of these angelic attributes.

Goodness, Pilgrim, as I write to you, I am reminded of some of our other "playtime" activities. If that precious "checkout" lady thought the cake purchase unusual, I wonder how she would have handled the bubbles and balloons, or better yet, the bottles of water, which we transformed into representing the "Prodigal Son." I hope she would have

laughed with glee, as we have. We've been gluing and pasting and stickering and cutting out - just for the sheer fun of it.

At the same time, Max Lucado has been taking us deeper and deeper. I'd previously thought - short chapters means light chapters - wrong! We have been dealing with big time huge Christian themes. Yes, the chapters are short, but the subjects are deep.

This week we're on chapter 13, which is entitled "With God as Your Guardian." We've spent some quality time looking at Psalm 91. Then we've gotten to rest and remain (R&R -- remember) for a little while on James 1:2-4. I especially like the translation he quoted:

"Consider it sheer gift, friends, when tests and challenges come at you from all sides. You know that under pressure, your faith-life is forced into the open and shows its true colors. So don't try to get out of anything prematurely. Let it do its work so you become mature and well-developed, not deficient in any way."

Then he (Max) gives the analogy of a silversmith and how "the craftsman heats and hammers, heats and hammers until he gets the object just as he wants. Then he buffets, taps, rubs, decorates until he can see his own reflection."

Oh, Pilgrim, don't you yearn to reflect Christ? I do.

It was another strong, good, short chapter. What for the "arts & crafts" take home activity? All that came to mind was "Silly Putty." Do you remember, Pilgrim, playing with "Silly

Putty” as a child? You could stretch it and mold it and bounce it and break it apart. Why, you could even flatten it out and press it against a newspaper color cartoon and it would copy the image.

Perfect! I thought - then began the search for 30 “Silly Putty Eggs.” Where? Where I usually start with my limited budget and large quantity needs, “the Dollar Store.” And sure enough, God is so good! There just happened to be 30 “genuine Silly Putty Eggs,” which I instantly bought. I was hoping they’d be available in assorted colors, but beggars can’t be choosers! All they had was red and that would have to do.

As I was driving home, I just had to allow myself the pleasure of previewing the purchase. With fingers and hands and nails and teeth, I pried the egg out of the plastic wrapper and then pried open the egg - to find a little flesh-colored ball of “Silly Putty.” Yea! I began stretching and pulling and flattening and balling and squeezing and twisting and twirling and breaking and bending. - Do you get the picture, Pilgrim? I was enjoying myself immensely and fortunately wasn’t too distracted in my play, for I did arrive home safely.

Then, what to do with these things? I wanted to personalize them for the ladies. I’m not an artist, as you can gather - just a “gluer-paster-craft maker.” With limited ability and time, I decided to draw a cross in the middle of each egg with my black marker.

I began. And as I drew, it was as if a veil fell from my eyes. I remembered. I remembered other red eggs with crosses drawn on them. It was Easter 2001 with my late husband. We were on the Isle of Crete. It was one of those rare Easters in that the Western and Eastern churches celebrated the same date for their holiday.

We attended a three-hour Easter vigil at a Greek Orthodox Church. All was mysteriously glorious - a night I will never forget. The service ended with a darkened church. The Priest lit the Pascal Candle and then each person's candle was lit, until the whole church was aglow. Then the door of the church was opened and the priest declared in Greek, "Christ is Risen" and all responded, "Truly He is risen" and the streets were full of people holding unlit candles. And we watched and heard the declaration being repeated, "Christ is Risen," "Truly He is Risen," the light spread as if by wildfire, along with the repeated chant. "Christ is Risen," "Truly He is Risen." Wave-like we all processed as pilgrims down to the lake where a boat was set ablaze and fireworks began.

Later - in reverent silence - my husband and I walked to our hotel for the traditional Easter Midnight Feast. And at each place setting, there was an egg painted red with a cross. We learned that we were to take our egg and hit it against another's, again repeating the Good News, "Christ is Risen," "Truly He is Risen." And as the eggs cracked we were to be reminded of Christ's resurrection and our new life in Him.

Wow! "Silly Putty" - yes - I think "Silly Putty" will do quite nicely for this week's take home play assignment. It is good that the plastic egg shaped containers came only in red and now have the added decoration of a cross. It is good that the "Silly Putty" is flesh colored. May it remind each us of our human-ness. And may we each be pliable to the Lord's will.

*I am your sister in Christ,
Lucy*

God bless. Crack! Christ is risen. Yes, truly He is risen.