

*Come Holy Spirit
Use me to Your glory*

Precious Pilgrim,

In our last program you learned of my recent marriage to Dr. Paul McCain - alias "Doc." At least, that's what his five grandsons call him. As you might recall, I'm "Goo-goo" to my eight grandchildren - so together we have 13 grans! And children - hear of our bounty once more. Paul has three, 2 boys and a girl, each happily married. And I have four, 3 boys and a girl, each happily married. And then I also have an English stepson and stepdaughter, who are my late husband's children. Did you get that all, Pilgrim? That makes a grand total of 29 - 13 children and 16 young adults in whose lives we are very much involved, well, we're trying not to be too much involved - but just the right amount. You know - that balancing act? We love each and daily lift up each, but we are trying, by God's grace, to allow them to live his or her own life, the one the Lord is leading.

Can you imagine the bounty? The good fortune? I can't and neither can Paul. We just smile a lot and say, "Thank You, Lord." We just laugh a lot and say, "Thank You, Lord." We just hug a lot and say, "Thank You, Lord." We just hold hands a lot and say, "Thank You, Lord." We just dance a lot and say, "Thank You, Lord."

Pilgrim, I could go on, but I'll quit - but you get this happy, blessed, bountiful picture - but it has not always been this way for either one of us.

Psalm 34:18 says, "The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and will save those whose spirits are crushed."

Psalm 68:5 says our Lord is "Father of orphans, defender of widows."

Psalm 68:6 says, "God gives the solitary a home and brings forth prisoners into freedom."

These are just three verses of good news, "joy jewels," that jumped out at me today as I read the Bible. Goodness, Pilgrim, it's packed with healing, holy words that just can minister to your spirit. You can claim them - hold on to them - on challenging days. We all have them. They are part of our broken human condition - but our Lord Jesus does sustain.

Strange, when I think about it - the hardest time in my life wasn't after my brother died at age 19 - no, that wasn't the hardest, but it was hard - and our Lord did sustain!

And it wasn't after my Daddy died at age 59 - no, that wasn't the hardest, but it was hard - and our Lord did sustain!

And it wasn't after a house fire - no, that wasn't the hardest, but it was hard - and our Lord did sustain!

And it wasn't after a divorce after 29 years of marriage - no, that wasn't the hardest, but it was excruciatingly hard - and our Lord did sustain!

No, the hardest time in my life, I'd have to say, is the year of widowhood after being married to Duncan John MacLeod for only 623 days. Duncan took a very wounded woman and loved me back into wholeness. He fleshed out the love of Jesus for me - the most excitingly alive person I've ever known - and then he died of a massive heart attack.

Yes, that was the hardest time of my life, the year after Duncan died. I'd have to say it was exquisitely hard. The aloneness was exquisitely hard. I had a double whammy of no Duncan and a new city - although I had some family and friends, I hadn't been back in Birmingham but just for a few months before his death.

I'd been alone before, after my divorce, but this was so different. I'd experienced love, holy Christ-like love - oh and it was so sweet and good and wonderful - paradise on earth - a glimpse of God's glory. And then gone - but not really - I knew, know - not really - oh, but was there ever a heartache - a true heartache!

But our Lord did sustain. And He does sustain, Pilgrim. I had to totally depend upon Him, which is the way it should be anyway. Right? My little church, St. Andrews, became the center of my world where I could best experience the love of Jesus. Singing in the choir, going to a mid-week service and breakfast all helped heal; going to a Bible study, participating in a prayer group all helped heal. A monthly luncheon with my high school friends. Attending the symphony with my

Mama. Talks and hugs from children and grans. All helped heal.

Yes, Pilgrim, our Lord does sustain, and does even more, even more than we could come up with in our wildest imagination - for you see, for me - it was Dr. Paul Pressly McCain. Our love story will have to be told on another day - ah, and it is a gloriously, wonderful grace-filled one - but today, I'd like to leave you, Pilgrim, with once more declaring these truths.

Psalm 34:18 says, "The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and will save those whose spirits are crushed." I know. I've experienced this grace gift.

Psalm 68:5 says our Lord is "Father of orphans, defender of widows." I know. I've experienced this grace gift.

Psalm 68:6 says: "God gives the solitary a home and brings forth prisoners into freedom." I know. I've experienced this grace gift.

If you find yourself in none of these hard situations, rejoice and be glad. But if you do, take heart - our Lord does reign. Our Lord does sustain. Or, Pilgrim, if you know of another right now who is experiencing one of these hard situations, lift them up in prayer and be there for them, just as a quiet, solid reminder - that our Lord does reign. Our Lord does sustain in all situations and in all circumstances.

Pilgrim, I'd like to leave you today with this truth scene. May it be imprinted indelibly on your heart and mind so that

it can minister to your spirit on hard days. It is found in Luke 4:16-21.

And He (our Lord Jesus) came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up and, as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up for to read. And there was delivered unto Him the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; He hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." And He closed the book, and He gave it again to the attendant, and sat down. And the eyes of all of them that were in the synagogue were fastened to Him. And He began to say unto them, "This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears."

"This day, Pilgrim - this very day, Pilgrim - this scripture - this very scripture - continues to be fulfilled - because of Jesus - Who does reign - Who does sustain in all situations and in all circumstances. I know there is Victory in Jesus. And thank You, dear Lord.

I am your sister in Christ,

Lucy