

*Come Holy Spirit
Use me to Your glory*

Precious Pilgrim,

175th birthday! Now that's a gracious plenty. That's the number of years our denomination has been in the state of Alabama. We needed to celebrate and celebrate, we did. We gathered at our diocese's Camp McDowell and had a wonderful service under a huge tent, followed by a barbeque on the grounds.

It was a glorious fall day. I rode over with one of our church's ministers and was as excited as could be. I was so looking forward to visiting with other brothers and sisters in Christ from all over our state. I knew I'd see people whom I hadn't seen for years and couldn't wait for a visit and a hug.

Sure enough, that was the case. Many I knew, but many I didn't and that was OK. We were all united in one common goal to give our Lord God the glory, for having so richly blessed us all of these years.

I was a little surprised at my own initial reaction. As I wandered around the grounds before the service began, I sensed a seed of sadness growing within me. I realized I was missing strongly some of those grand pilgrim pillars whose lives had graced our church and now had graduated, had died and were now in our "Lord God's nearer presence." I also realized I was deeply missing some of my brothers and sisters in

Christ who were no longer members of our particular denomination.

It was with this little bit of heavy heartedness that I entered into the tent for our celebration service. I gave myself a talking to. (Hello? Lord forgive this attitude! It's not about me, nor my feelings! It's about worship and the reality that God is working His purpose out, not mine! It's His Universal Church, not mine! Why, I'm just an eensy-weeny-tiny part of His Body.) Thank the dear Lord, by His grace I became re-aligned to His Reality of His Kingship. I laid myself wrought burden down and got on to the business at hand, which as I said previously, was to worship - to praise - and to give thanks to the Lord for all He had done.

One of the most fun and unexpected parts of the service was an imaginative, imaginary greeting from the Rt. Rev. Nicholas Hamner Cobbs as portrayed by the Rev. David Meginnis. Bishop Cobbs was the first Episcopal Bishop of Alabama and my great, great grandfather.

In character, this minister gave highlights and a summary of our 175-year history as if the first bishop had been a part of it all. You know, Pilgrim, now that I think about it, I believe he was! The Apostle Paul's words found in Hebrews 12:1 come to mind and help confirm this thought for me. He says, "We are surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses." He also says in 1 Corinthians 3:10-11, "I laid a foundation and another is building upon it. But let each man be careful how he builds

upon it. For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.”

Goodness gracious alive, isn't that so wonderful! And listen to these additional words, which are found right above those that I just wrote. (Isn't it fun, Pilgrim, to let your eyes float over our Lord God's Holy Word, and phrases and sentences sometimes seem to just jump off the page to you, as if a gift from the Holy Spirit?) Paul says in 1 Corinthians 3:6-9, "I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. The man who plants and the man who waters have one purpose, and each will be rewarded according to his own labor. For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building." Wow! "God's fellow workers." I yearn to be a part of our Lord God's building team, Pilgrim, do you? I want to be used to His glory, Pilgrim, do you?

You know by now that I'm a visual person. And I've mentioned to you in some of your earlier letters that I love to walk along the sandy bike trail near our house. This wooded path follows along Flint Creek, which empties, into the Tennessee River. I especially love on sunny days how the tiny specks of mica found in the sand shine. That vision has become a prayer for me. That walk reminds me that each one of us is on a journey towards home to our Lord. Every grain of sand can represent a person who has lived, is living, will live. Those

interspersed shiny granules can represent those filled with the Holy Spirit and thus the Lord's light is shining through them. That image helps me to cry out to the Lord in prayer. Lord, please let your light shine through me and use me to Your glory. I'm tiny, my time is short, but may I be a part of Your eternal building team, one of your "fellow workers." Amen.

Pilgrim, now may we go in our minds to the "Big Tent." No, not the one that we had for the 175th anniversary - which was large, but I mean the "BIG TENT" - the eternal "BIG TENT" where all followers of Christ will be gathered and united in Him for all eternity. Won't that be wonderful? I love to think of that glory day.

*"The Gathering Place"
(A Haiku poem)*

*"The Gathering Place"
Meet in the heart of Jesus
His sanctuary.*

*Brothers and sisters,
Parents, grans, uncles and aunts,
Cousins, companions,*

*Comrades and friends,
Come together, united
In His love.*

*An eternal peace.
Incomprehensible joy.
All made right in Him.*

*No wars are allowed.
No fighting, no bickering,
No grudges held close.*

*No crying, no tears,
Pain and suffering has ceased.
All are well and whole.*

*The burdens of life
Have been lifted off our backs.
All debts have been paid.*

*Now, all are equal.
Only the Lord has power—
Merciful and just.*

*Full of compassion,
He knows of what we are made—
Silly, sinful sheep.*

*But, He still loves us.
Incredibly amazing!
His sufficient grace.*

*He wants us with Him
He wants us in His kingdom
Unbelievable!*

*Glorious glory!
A rainbow encircled throne
Here our Lord resides.*

*A host of angels
Sing "Holy, Holy, Holy"
Saints and martyrs, too.*

*And we're invited!
We're blessed beyond compare.
We made the guest list!*

*Jesus knows our names:
He wants us to be with Him—
All eternity.*

*Your presence and mine,
He yearns for each one of us—
Individually.*

*Can you believe it?
I yearn for Him, too—
With my whole being!*

*Be in His Presence
Eternally give glory
Worship, honor, praise.*

*Lord, you died for us.
Thank you for taking our sins,
Said "Yes" to your cross.*

*We say "yes" to you
As Lord, Savior, Redeemer
Come, Lord Jesus, come.*

*Fill us with your love,
Then use us to Your glory
Bring us home to You.*

*"The Gathering Place"
Meet in the heart of Jesus.
His sanctuary.*

*See you there—
Amen and God bless
Your sister in Christ,
Lucy*