

*Come Holy Spirit
Use me to Your glory*

Precious Pilgrim,

Write. I must write. I must try and get this heart hurt out. I just finished reading the book which deals with Governor Lurleen Wallace's last years of life and her courageous battle with cancer. I am left with the realization that we would have liked each other. I think we would have been dear friends if our life experiences had overlapped -- if we had been neighbors or contemporaries. She with her four children, I with mine. I think we would have enjoyed sharing early morning cups of coffee. I think we would have spent hours together sitting on a porch watching our children play. She with her three girls and a boy and I with the opposite. My boys would have been showing off a little for her girls and her son and my daughter would have been shyly checking each other out. As we'd shell peas and drink iced tea or knit and have a bit of lemonade, we would have often looked up and proudly watched those children of ours, for they were our proudest possessions.

I think Lurleen and I would have felt comfortable with each other -- not only because of our shared love of children, but also our shared appreciation of nature. We'd have watched the birds flying and the bees buzzing. We'd have petted our dogs often. We would have enjoyed the changing of the leaves and the seasons as they'd come and go.

We might have even gone hunting or fishing a time or two. Of course, we'd have been proud if there was a catch and, of course, there would have been a little bit of healthy, playful competition, just because there's supposed to be. But what we would have really relished was just being out in nature -- smelling a brim bed, hearing a turkey gobble, hoping he'd strut himself by.

We would have slipped away to the beach whenever we could. And there we would have taken long walks on squishy sand -- sometimes talking, other times not. We'd have watched the tides come in and out and allowed that rhythm to cradle our psyche as if in a mother's arms. Of course, the children would have been with us, for it was usually a package deal. We'd have helped them build numerous sand castles, looked for cochina butterfly shells and dug for sand fleas. We would have watched out for rip tides and undertows and jellyfish. We would have insisted on daily naps for all so that we could have some R and R adult girl time. We'd have polished our finger nails and rolled our hair. We'd have shared jokes and magazines, books and advice. We would have laughed a lot, smiled a lot, giggled some like school girls.

As that awful disease of hers came and went and came and went and came -- seeming to have a life of its own, our friendship would have never wavered. It would have been refined. Words would have become unnecessary for communicating. Our shared bonds of motherhood and

wifehood would have been strengthened. Our relishing the incredible creatures and sights of nature would have been broadened. A shared third dimension would have surfaced more. It would have always been there, of course. It would have been the bedrock foundation of our soul sisterhood. We would have become prayer warriors for each other. Her concerns, her worries, her fears and mine would have been shared and then lifted up. Her joys, her thanksgivings, her celebrations and mine would have been shared -- then lifted up. Ah, yes, we would have been friends, close friends, if given a chance, and I suspect you would have been too, Pilgrim. We would have all been on pretty much even ground -- but then, Lurleen had an opportunity to soar and that she did and that is when she far surpassed the norm. Let me repeat, she far surpassed the norm.

Right now I'm sitting outside at Lake Martin. The moon is full. Its brilliant light is casting a golden line across these still waters. It's gloriously beautiful. It reminds me of the Olympic torch and being handed over from one appointed torchbearer to another. All across this country during the Olympics this same activity took place. One runner would do his or her part running to his designated destination and then passing this illustrious flame on to the next. It was an awesome, inspiring journey, a pilgrimage of great worth.

Maybe that's what we're about -- maybe each one of us is to be a torchbearer, taking the light a little bit farther --

helping the dream of our Lord's to become a little bit more the reality.

Today I read a story about an incredible lady. I know she and I would have been friends. I know you and she would have been friends. She was a torchbearer. She was the first lady to be governor of Alabama, only the third in the country. She cared about many of the things we care about. She wanted this state to be a better place, this world to be a better place. When she took hold of that torch, it flamed a little differently. It seemed more vibrant, more alive. A mother's touch has such an effect on things. Don't you think? There was a softness, a gentleness, a sense of hospitality and of grace as never before. I think it would have delighted her deeply that here we are today, willing to carry that same torch. She was a lady of great humility and she knew it was out of that fertile ground that love, our Lord's type love, could flourish. She was a realist. She knew where her real strength lay. The scripture which I would like for us to consider, that I'd like if possible for it to be etched on our hearts as we go forth is Mark 14:8. "She did what she could."

In our family, we have had a few discussions over this verse. It is carved in a granite plaque in the chapel at Sewanee, Tennessee, under a lady's name. One of the members of the family thought that it sounded so pitiful, like an excuse, that surely it meant that this woman hadn't done much. I, on the other hand, thought it was an incredible statement of

accomplishment. Can you imagine what this world, our world would be like if each and every one of us in deep humility and prayerfulness -- did what he or she could? If we sought the Face of our Lord daily asking for His guidance, His direction so that His will would be done. That we prayed daily that His justice -- His peace -- His love, His harmony would flow mightily over this land so that it will become a grace-filled sanctuary for all. Can you imagine? Can you imagine? And, Pilgrim, this is about torchbearing. It's about what you can do and what I can do, by the grace of God, and then pass it on to the next. Lurleen Burns Wallace gave us a grand example. In her time, "She did what she could." And now ladies and gentlemen, may each one of us be challenged -- be challenged to take up that torch and by the grace of God, do what we can for our generation and then pass it on.

*I am your sister in Christ and,
by the grace of God, torchbearing,
Lucy*