

*Come Holy Spirit
Use me to Your glory*

Precious Pilgrim,

In my household for years there has been an ongoing discussion over the verse in Mark 14:66, "She did what she could." I think it's a fantastic, positive statement. Can you imagine, Pilgrim, what this world would be like if each one of us did what we could, what we were supposed to do, what we were meant to do, created to do? Wow, would this be an incredibly God reflecting place or what? Why, this earth might shine more radiant than our planetary sun itself if we each totally emulated God's Son. It also is the verse that has lived with me over the last week and a half because of three women's deaths -- Mother, Dì and Donna. I'd like to just briefly talk about each.

First, Mother. I'm referring to the diminutive little Mother Teresa of Calcutta whose sole mission in life was to love and to minister to the poorest of the poor. She said she saw Jesus in each individual. She was humble. When I heard she had died right after Princess Diana, I smiled to myself, for I thought that would be the only way she could have gotten second billing, which she would have liked and wanted. My Roman Catholic friend said probably the only way Mother finally got to go "Home" was that the sisters were briefly distracted in their prayers because of Diana's death and had let up just enough so that Mother was finally able to slip away.

I watched much of her funeral on TV Saturday. For literally

hours they showed religious and political dignitaries from all over the world placing wreaths at this saint's coffin. Then there was a procession to the Mother House where she was to be buried in part of a converted dining room.

The image I want to cherish, to keep, to file away for a rainy day, is the military gun salute which was given right before her body entered the Sister's of Charity Home for the last time. The two TV commentators were carrying on a conversation about how ironic and inappropriate such a display was for Mother, who epitomized peace. Suddenly, the comments stopped, seemingly in mid-sentence. Silent awe took over. There were two parallel lines of soldiers facing each other. Each held his gun high. As the coffin went by, with precision the guns were flipped down towards the ground, arms slowly gave a wave goodbye and then heads were lowered in respect. It was a strong image, one reminiscent of Isaiah's prophecy: "They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nations will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore." (Is. 2:4b) Peace. For a brief moment, there was a sense of everlasting peace.

But if I had to hang one word onto Mother Teresa's life, it wouldn't be "peace," but rather "hope." She gave hope -- and "she did what she could."

And then there was Princess Diana's untimely, tragic death to which I have already referred. "Regret" is the strong cloud of a feeling, which seems to come over me when a life is cut short. I watched the televised ceremony mesmerized like millions from

predawn until well into the day. Sad. What a waste.

A few days after the service, I happened to be at a dinner where Charlton Heston, the actor, was the honored guest. Someone asked him if he had known Princess Diana and he made some disparaging remarks. Chicken that I am, I didn't think it was appropriate to challenge him. I mean, after all, he did play Moses! But his comments did make me later reflect on Diana's life:

--her upbringing and its challenges

--her marriage at such a young age and its challenges

--her divorce and de-frocking as Her Royal Highness and its challenges.

Not to make excuses, but the images I want to keep of Diana are her as a mother, of her selling her gowns and giving the money to charity, of her walking through land mines, and her holding an AIDS baby.

If I had to hang one word onto Princess Diana's life, I'd have to say "sparkle." She did "sparkle" -- and "she did what she could."

The last lady, or rather, sister, for this week's experiences has given me a profound appreciation of the universality of our female sisterhood, is Donna. Donna died of cancer. She had been fighting it for years. I didn't know her well, but she was a gift. She worked at a local department store. I don't know how our relationship started, whether it was because of books or friends, or what. All I know is that I knew she was a Christian and she knew that I was one also.

Over the years our relationship consisted of running into each

other maybe two or three times a year. There would always be a hug and a "How are you doing?" and I'd stand back and listen and Donna would give a testimony -- her life was a testimony. She fought the good fight. She persevered and then, she died.

If I had to hang one word onto Donna's life, I'd have to say "faithfulness." She was faithful and "she did what she could."

Mother, Dú, Donna. Three women who lived and died and "did what they could." What an incredible legacy each has left and what an awesome challenge for us, Pilgrims.

And may it be said on our day of departure to the great beyond when we go home to our Lord: while here, on this little planet, "She did what she could."

Mother gave us "Hope."

Dú gave us "sparkle."

Donna gave us "faithfulness."

And what, Pilgrim, what gift will be your fill in the blank?

May the Lord Jesus and His love shine through each and every one of us.

I am your sister in Christ,

Lucy

P.S. This letter today was written on September 14, which is Holy Cross Day. It marks the day in 335 that the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem was dedicated. Helena, King Constantine's mother, established this church along with others to commemorate Jesus' birth, death, and resurrection. Now talk about a lady who in

her time "Did what she could!" - Peace.