

*Come Holy Spirit  
Use me to Your glory*

*Precious Pilgrim,*

*It took exactly one hour to cover approximately 1.5 miles. This speed was absolutely perfect for the activity. It was my grandson Jud, Jr.'s second birthday. The party was held in the country at his other grandmother's home. We spent the majority of the celebration time sitting on hay bales in a wagon while being pulled by a tractor or a "tractour" as the honoree would call it. It was better than any amusement park ride I've ever experienced. We slowly bumped down their driveway, turned onto the paved county road and with a truck escort, ventured a few yards to a fenced pasture. After stopping to open and close the gate, we entered the world of "moo cows." Jud Jr. was doing the driving, with the help of one of his dearest friends and farmhand, TaTe or Tommy, as we would say. Jud took this responsibility (which he shared on other visits quite seriously) never taking his two little chubby hands off the wheel. We headed straight towards the herd. They calmly continued their grazing with a few side steps and "moos." The toddlers were enthralled with this activity. (I was enthralled by their response.) Their glee was contagious; this premiere experience for these city slickers warmed my heart. They were laughing and pointing and "mooing" themselves (taking in the action of each and every cow and calf.)*

*Slowly we retraced our tracks through the thick pasture*

*grass once again stopping to open and close the gate, then back onto the paved county road for a few yards and then back onto the dirt road. I thought we were headed for home, but no -- we ventured past the house to yet another field. Once again stopping, opening and closing the gate like "Pandora's Box," except it was filled with wonderful, wonderful surprises.*

*In this world there were three horses grazing in the far corner. The toddlers and pre-schoolers once again responded with enthusiasm. The adults were beginning to catch the spirit too. Instead of going towards the horses, however, we verged to the right towards a pond. There we stopped and unloaded for Poppa Sanders had preceded us and was throwing fish food in the water and huge catfish came swirling to the top. I tried not to be too forward, but I'm afraid I was one of the first to grab a handful of food from the bucket. I tried to share with two of my other grandchildren, but when they weren't looking, I had to toss a few pellets myself. It was so much fun. Two turtles also surfaced to complete the show.*

*The good news is that we didn't lose anyone in the water, neither adult nor child, even though we had each stood precariously close to the water's edge. By this time, the average age of the audience had dropped considerably in sophistication. We had all become rather pre-schoolish, "ooing" and "aahing" with each acrobatic flutter of a fish.*

*Then it came time to load up and head for home, for we needed to have that required birthday cake. The honoree*

*came back to the wagon and sat on my lap. I was quite flattered. For him to have chosen that spot over the tractor seat gave me quite a vote of confidence. I beamed. Does life get much more better than this, Pilgrim?*

*On returning to the backyard, cake and lemonade and peanut butter and jelly sandwiches cut into circles were served on a long picnic table. Rocks from the garden held the paper tablecloth down. Fold-up chairs were arranged in a wide circle to keep the party participants loosely gathered. A few drifted over to a trampoline and we hoisted them up so they could jump. A few rambled over to two saddled horses and were hoisted up for a ride. Most of the group ran to the barn to watch a one-day-old calf being fed a bottle. One precious explorer was rescued from playing ball with horse "road apples." Ah, new adventures were had by all.*

*Jud Jr. did few of the listed activities. He did blow out his birthday candles with help from his cousin Hall, age 4. He did grab some of the green grass icing, leaving the rest of the cake's decorated barn scene intact. Then, he resumed his place, the one he occupied throne-like when he was allowed any free time. He sat and he sat and he sat on his shiny new dark green John Deere toy tractor. This metal replica looked like the real McCoy. Although a miniature, Jud's legs still couldn't quite yet touch the pedals, so he just contentedly sat. Occasionally, he'd receive a push from a passerby and that was all he required. He was a very contented king for the day.*

*What I want to take away from that day and share with you, Pilgrim, and there are so very many precious moments from which to choose, is the wonder of it all -- the absolutely thrilling joy of it all -- a fresh new experience -- to see cows, afresh -- horses, afresh -- to get back into the skin of a toddler and see God's glorious creation, afresh.*

*But then, Pilgrim, I was reminded that I didn't need to become a youth again to experience this zest for life. It wasn't required. It shouldn't be required. I was reminded of this fact from last week's drive to Birmingham and back with a dear couple to attend a meeting. I love them both. They are a unique couple. He was the minister of our church for 25 years and is now retired. His wife and I sang together in the choir for years. They now run a bed and breakfast and our car conversations were non-stop, back and forth. They are actively involved in numerous causes and concerns. Their interests are vast and varied. I mainly sat on the back seat and listened. I was enthralled by their enthusiasm and passion for one project after another. They sounded more like two college students on the brink of their careers rather than two seniors beginning their golden years.*

*At one point on the way home we were going along the interstate and swerved sharply to the right. Our driver was questioned by his wife about this startling maneuver. He responded, "Did you see? Did you see the leaves?" He was referring to the varieties of new spring green the trees were*

*showing forth. There was as much excitement expressed in his voice as the toddler used when seeing "moo cows" for the first time. I knew, however, that this was not this precious man's first springtime experience -- but ah the wonder -- the wonder was still there. The praise for his almighty God's glory as seen in his creation was still there.*

*I'd like to end our time together, Precious Pilgrim, today by quoting one of my favorite praise hymns.*

*O all ye works of the Lord, bless ye the Lord;  
Praise Him and magnify Him forever.*

*O ye angels of the Lord, bless ye the Lord;  
Praise Him and magnify Him forever.*

*The words are based on Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego's song they sang in the fiery furnace. This commands every part of the universe to "bless ye the Lord." (And you know what, Pilgrim?) I believe we can't help but bless and praise our Lord God all the days of our life with regenerating freshness as long as we draw near to Him and see that His glory abounds all around. Today may we each see His world afresh and give thanks like a toddler or better yet, like a senior who sees His Lord's creation afresh each day. Peace.*

*I am your sister in Christ,*

*Lucy*

*God bless.*