

*Come Holy Spirit
Use me to Your glory*

Precious Pilgrim,

“Do you need a hug from your Daddy?” That was the question I asked Jo, my beautiful stepdaughter when she phoned today and sounded a little bit under the weather.

After receiving a positive answer, I then, without hesitation, phoned that dear precious husband of mine at work. I knew he was busy, for we had just arrived from overseas the day before and he had a lot of catching up to do. I knew, he knew, I wouldn't call unless it was important. And I knew beyond a shadow of a doubt this request he would consider not only important, but of utmost importance.

How did I know this man's priorities? That's an easy answer for I have been keenly observing and personally experiencing the way this man loves.

One memory that is still very fresh in my mind happened a little over two weeks ago. It was the tenderness of the scene that made it stick in my psyche. Let me see if I can replay it for you, Pilgrim.

“Are you all right?” “No.” The father asked the question. The daughter responded. He walked over to the hospital bed and sat down beside her. He gently enfolded her in his arms. She softly wept.

Over the last three years as a result of a horrendous car accident this beautiful young woman has been in the hospital

-- first for months, then there was a reprieve, then for weeks, then another reprieve, and now, once again, for a day and a night and a day.

Although the shortest of visits, in many ways it possibly felt the longest -- because of her indomitable spirit and skillful doctors she had begun regaining a rhythm of normalcy to her life. She could walk. She could drive. She could live on her own. She could love and be loved. Oh, but come to think of it, the loving ability, giving and receiving, had never been thwarted or dormant, but rather had been fine tuned during this life-threatening ordeal. But alas, she was once again in the hospital for yet another operation. I had just recently come on the scene for I had married her father only six months previously. It was a profound privilege for me to witness this sweet scene -- a father loving and comforting a daughter. This dear girl had introduced us. I had admired her from day one -- and, I must admit, I also admired her Daddy; in fact I was drawn to him from the first glance of his gorgeous, kind blue eyes. When he looked at me, I felt he saw me, truly saw me. But then, Pilgrim, that's another letter!

Today I'd like to focus on this hospital visit. It was so intimate. I felt self-conscious witnessing the exchange, (and I will ask for permission from both before I share it with you -- Permission granted). I was sitting in the corner and my exiting the room would somehow have been more disruptive than my presence.

I could sense the hurt and pain and then the comfort given. Those big arms of my husband's encircled his daughter. It was a timeless gesture, one as ancient as parenting itself. It didn't matter the age of the child, for as long as that relationship is intact such a gesture of loving comfort is possible.

"Daddy kiss and make it better" is the sentence that just popped into my mind as I revisit this scene with you, Pilgrim. What surprises me is not the father-daughter exchange, for it was a completely classic one, but rather, my own response right now.

The scene touched an aching bruise, a soft spot in my own heart, one I wasn't even aware that I have. I sensed a deep, deep yearning for my own earthly father who had died over 20 years ago. I have moved on, adapted, rearranged, and changed -- one has to in order to survive losses, but oh, at this moment as I write to you, Pilgrim, I feel that piercing sense of loss.

"Daddy kiss and make it better."

Pilgrim, I think that's a little girl talking inside of me, one that still has some hurts that aren't quite healed, ones I didn't even know I had -- for I am big and strong and tough! Right? Wrong!

And you know what? I'm ashamed to say, but I think that little girl in me is a little jealous of Jo's hug. "Hey, I want one of those! Please ask me the question, 'Are you all right?' So

that I can answer 'Well, now that you asked...' Isn't that pitiful, Pilgrim? But, not really. We never outgrow our need for hugs, do we? Fortunately for me, my earthly daddy was one of the best huggers going and, of course, I miss that and I miss him. Pilgrim, that might not have been your personal experience, but I pray there has been someone, or there is someone, or there will be someone who awesomely hugs you.

I remember during my divorced season I mentioned to a dear friend and her husband how I really missed hugs. Ross, with his wife's permission, took on the assignment seriously, and after each church service, he would say, "Come and get your hug, Lucy" and he would give me a bear-like one. Goodness, how that lifted my spirits! It reminded me that I was loved by our Father God and that that love was not dependent on situations or circumstances. It was a given. It was based on the firmest of foundations -- our Father God's love for each and every one of us as shown through His Son, our Lord and Savior's death and resurrection.

It is amazing, but sometimes a human hug can remind us of who we are in Christ Jesus.

I'd like to end your letter today, Pilgrim, by reading Psalm 71, verses 20 - 23.

*20 You have showed me great troubles and adversities,
but you will restore my life and bring me up again from
the deep places of the earth.*

21 You strengthen me more and more, you enfold and

comfort me.

22 Therefore I will praise you upon the lyre for your faithfulness, O my God, I will sing to you with the harp, O Holy One of Israel.

23 My lips will sing with joy when I play to you and so will my soul, which you have redeemed.

Those verses feel like a hug and “a kiss to make it better,” don’t you think? Especially “you will enfold and comfort me.”

God bless you, Pilgrim. My precious husband will be home soon and you know what? I’m going to ask him for one of those big old hugs that he is known for. And may I encourage you to go and ask for one too, Pilgrim, from a loved one.

Remember we are loved by LOVE. That’s with a capital L. A hug can act as a good reminder.

Peace.

I am your sister in Christ,

Lucy