

*Come Holy Spirit  
Use me to Your Glory*

*Precious Pilgrim,*

*"We don't know our way back from this place." That was the statement made by the youngest cyclist as they sped by our cottage. My husband and I are at Monteagle Sunday School Assembly in Monteagle, Tennessee. It's a 119-year-old establishment based on the Chautauqua Institute in Chautauqua, New York. It was founded to train Sunday School teachers and today continues as a non-denominational Christian educational family camp. I use the word "camp" for although the facility is made up of 170 Victorian cottages nestled in the woods along with a chapel, dining hall, swimming pool, it has the feel of a camp.*

*There are scheduled activities for both adults and children each day and an hour and a half mandatory "quiet hour" from 1 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. I love that this hour is stretched out to a more leisurely amount of rest time, 90 minutes instead of 60. This is totally in keeping with the atmosphere, for when you enter the gates, you feel as if you have entered a time warp.*

*I first experienced this unique place a year ago when I rented a cottage for a month. It was love at first sight. It is here that I met my husband, Duncan, also love at first sight. We've now been married a little over seven months and have just arrived from England where we live to spend "the nine-week season" at the Assembly.*

*It's located on the Cumberland Plateau. The topography is made up of hills and dales, meadows and woods, with a little creek flowing through the middle. Squirrels, chipmunks, frogs -- birds, butterflies and fireflies roam or flutter freely and so do the children. It is an ideal bounded space. The main mode of transportation within the Assembly grounds is walking for the adults and bicycling for the children. That's why the three children that passed by our cottage at first didn't catch my attention for it was such a typical scene. It was the littlest one's statement that did however: "We don't know our way back from this place."*

*My ears perked up. I was sitting on the swing on our porch. Every cottage has at least one porch. It is from this vantage point that most activities in the Assembly are observed or activated. The porch is the central hub, the heart of each dwelling.*

*At this moment, it was my mind that was activated by this five-year-old's declaration. "We don't know our way back from this place!" I'd been in a similar situation. Being the youngest in my family of origin, often on adventures, I found myself following as opposed to leading. Such a position is not all bad. When you are trailing at the back of the line, the pressure is off. You don't have to be the biggest, the best, the fastest and in charge. You can be the observer, the historian. You can watch the dynamics of the group and see how everyone is faring. The first in the line or those trying to become first in*

*the line can become so preoccupied with the position that they miss what's happening in the process.*

*With this memory, it made perfect sense that it was the littlest trailer behind that made this statement. "We don't know where we're going." Have you ever found yourself in such a position, Pilgrim? As I said, I have. In fact, the very next day I found myself walking with my husband the 3-1/2 mile Fiery Gizzard Trail. The glory held in these woods is beyond description, far surpassing any known cathedrals. The sunlight cascades through the trees, dancing as if a ballerina. The rock formations, the moss and fern and mushrooms -- all perfectly placed by the greatest of landscape architects, our Father God. The rushing waterfalls, the still, stagnant ponds all blend into a symphony of sounds with the fast and slow, powerful and gentle movements rhythmically orchestrated. We both were encompassed by these surround sounds so much that there was little need for talking. We were experiencing together, which can be even more profoundly intimate, don't you think, Pilgrim?*

*White circles are strategically painted on the rocks or trees to mark the path. This trail was cut during the 30's by the civilian conservation core and is maintained by South Cumberland Mountain Rangers. Most of the markers, these white markers, are easily found and followed. At one point we came across a steep incline which had been naturally paved by a rock slide. Although not the steepest of terrain, it was the*

most precarious, for this sea of stones could move if you didn't step carefully. My place was my usual of old, behind the leader, so wherever Duncan went, I went. We both were looking down and concentrating, concentrating on our steps, but not on our location. All of a sudden, Duncan stopped and looked up and said, "Where's the trail?" Instantly my mind dropped back into the five-year-old's statement, "Help! We don't know our way back from this place!" There was not a panic or even an uncomfortable moment for I was with my man, my husband, my friend, my companion, my love. We stopped and looked and learned that the old white dot of a spot was precariously painted on a few yards above us on a rock. So without much effort, we were able to regain our correct position and eventually make our way back home. Why I wanted to revisit this scene and the bicyclers with you, Pilgrim, is to reflect on Who is the way, the truth and the life. It's interesting that when the walk became difficult and when the children's bike ride became long, we all tend to get our eyes off of our Guidepost. Our eyes seem to focus on the immediate problem -- we can feel isolated and think, "Help, we don't know our way back from this place." Ah, Pilgrim, as Christians, is that ever our true reality? Can we ever truly be lost? Oh sure, we might have that "Dark Night of the Soul"-like experience. We might feel in the dark, for often that is part of the journey. It is a fine-tuning, dependency part of our journey. Ah, but the reality is that our Guidepost -- our Friend -- our Companion --

*our Love -- our Loving Father God, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, our Holy Spirit Guide is always with us to show us the way back home.*

*Ah, what a reunion there's going to be, Family Reunion, Pilgrim, that is. See you there! God bless.*

*Your sister in Christ,*

*Lucy*

*P.S. Here's some good traveling words from Paul. "For I'm convinced that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creative thing shall be able to separate us from the Love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Amen. God bless.*