

*Come Holy Spirit
Use me to Your glory*

Precious Pilgrim,

If I could have, I would have changed his bronze medal into gold.

As you might know from your previous letter, my husband and I are in Aspen, Colorado on a vacation. We're celebrating his retirement. It's a once-in-a-lifetime trip - 8 weeks in this glorious Rocky Mountain town. We have settled in nicely. I can nest about anywhere as long as I have pictures of my family, a few favorite books, and a yellow pad and pen. What also has made this place like home away from home is the little church we've been attending.

Yesterday they had their monthly Sunday breakfast before the 10 o'clock service. It was delicious (as usual) but there was a more festive atmosphere than customary, reason being the church's very own member Olympian was present. He had just received the gold medal at the Winter Olympics. During the previous past four Sundays that we've attended there have been updates given about this young man. Posters, pictures, stories. The enthusiasm was contagious. Although I'd never laid eyes on this athlete, I was claiming him as my very own fellow Christian too.

He could not have been more gracious at the breakfast. His proud Mama and Daddy stood by as he passed around the medal and had his picture taken with the minister and his

wife and all the church children. It's a small congregation - about 75 gathered. It really felt like a family celebration, which it was. After breakfast we all went upstairs to the sanctuary for the real family celebration, the Church family celebration - a church service.

It's funny how your mind wanders. I wish mine didn't so much. It's just sometimes my mind is so full that I can't take everything in and that was the case during the preacher's sermon. I know it was a good one; my husband gave me a detailed synopsis later. The main thing I heard was the phrase, "vulnerable to the moment," that the minister used. I like that line - "vulnerable to the moment" - the idea being there are precious gifts given by the Lord - right now - this very moment - in the present - if we have eyes to see, ears to hear, hearts that are open.

And during that sermon, I must admit my eyes wandered, and I beheld another sermon being acted out which continued throughout the rest of the service. I became so mesmerized watching. There sat our Olympian on the front row - big, strong, good-looking. And there came along this precious, adorable, "Dennis the Menace" type child. I give this description with love and affection. I'd been drawn to this gorgeous blue-eyed, black headed kindergartner carrying a beloved blanket ever since I'd laid eyes on him our first Sunday attending. He runs to Sunday School - jumps up to receive Holy Communion - wanders around visiting others. If he has a

question, he asks it out loud and then tries to change it into a whisper. He is a ball full of energy, fully alive, and fully excited about every experience. What I loved watching, what was so precious to me was our Olympian's reaction. He was so calm, so loving. The little boy sat on his knee, knelt when he knelt, listened when he listened. You could sense that this was his hero. You could also sense that the athlete liked this little creature a lot. It was amazing to see the calming effect that total acceptance had on this little boy. Oh, he did get up and run back and forth down the aisle, but he still seemed more relaxed, more at ease with himself and the world.

Total acceptance -- total love. Pilgrim, our Lord Jesus Christ totally loves you and me - loves us like no other. Do you know that? Do you believe that in your innermost being? You can rest in that blessed assurance -- assurance of His love for you.

I love the scene in the Bible when the little children come to Jesus. It's told in each of synoptic Gospels. It's that important. It reminds me of my favorite picture as a child. I'm about 4 or 5 standing with my head in my earthly Daddy's lap, sucking my thumb and he's embracing me. I felt total acceptance - total love. Do you have such a memory, Pilgrim? If not, that's all right - just close your eyes and listen and climb into this scene with your Loving Lord Jesus - who is always, constantly, continually, loving you, whether you know it or not. Let Him today, Pilgrim.

Matthew 19:13-15 says: Then little children were brought to Jesus for Him to place His hands on them and pray for them. But the disciples rebuked those who brought them. Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these." When He had placed His hands on them, He went on from there.

Luke 18:15-17 says: People were also bringing babies to Jesus to have Him touch them. When the disciples saw this, they rebuked them. But Jesus called the children to Him and said, "Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.

Mark 10:13-16 says: People were bringing little children to Jesus to have Him touch them, but the disciples rebuked them. When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter into it.

Peace, Pilgrim. Accept His love today.

Lucy